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Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY



Mistaken Identity

Claudia Perkins stood on the front porch with her daughters and watched in shock as her husband was led off in handcuffs. She later said she felt as if she was living in some kind of a horrible nightmare. She knew beyond a shadow of doubt that her husband was innocent; she had been with him all evening. They took him anyway - no one seemed to listen, or care.

***Also in this issue:* Aunt Eunice Remembers; On Hurricane Creek; Goldsmith Schiffman Field History; The Big Lie; Broken Heart and Trouble; Aunt Sealy; Mason Brown Coal & Ice; Recipes and much much more!**

Snapshots in Time



VETS REUNITE FOR FIRST TIME SINCE KOREAN WAR

Rolland Thomas loves Huntsville and North Alabama and considers himself a Southerner even though he has never lived here. He is a Korean veteran and has lots of good stories to tell. This is a photo he sent us recently. He's on the right.

Rolland Thomas and George Kelley were two of the eight Harrison County boys on a train leaving Omaha in 1953 for basic training in the U.S. Army. Some of the boys were dropped off in Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri and the remainder continued on to Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

Rolland and George were together during their basic training and then shipped out for service in Korea. They were separated in Japan and went to different assignments in Korea. It wasn't until almost 70 years later that the two would reconnect.

George and his wife, Imogene, moved to Independent Living in Council Bluffs, IA in September and realized that Rolland was a neighbor in the next building. The Heritage at Fox Run arranged a meeting for the two. Brian Mastre and photographer Roger Hamer of WOWTv in Omaha documented the reunion.

As Rolland came into the lobby George said, "Who's this old guy coming in here?" Rolland replied, "You don't look like the last time I saw you." George Kelley, who is 90, grew up in Woodbine. Rolland, who is a year younger, was raised in Mondamin.

After their time in the Army George spent his career with the U.S Postal Service in Omaha and Rolland farmed and sold DeKalb seed in Mondamin, IA. Their meeting was emotional for the two vets, their families and the staff at The Heritage. For half an hour they didn't miss a beat. George said that he can't remember what happened yesterday but the old stories are as clear as can be.

Rolland had photos to share and George displayed his old uniform. The two were still sharing stories long after the tv crew was gone and could have talked for hours but they made a date to continue later to catch up on the past 69 years.

Mistaken Identity

by Tom Carney

The skies seemed to reflect the gloom of many people struggling through the Great Depression in 1935. Huge storm clouds were swirling over Madison County and lightning danced from one thunderhead to another. People everywhere rushed to finish their chores and get home before the rain began. Suddenly, just as the whistle at Lincoln Mills began blowing for the evening shift, the heavens opened up. Torrential rains, whipped by cyclonic winds, began pounding everything in its path. Trees bent in the wind and roads became small rivers as the storm unleashed its fury.

It was a good night, everyone agreed, to stay home.

A few miles north of Huntsville, on Winchester Road, Bill and Claudia Perkins were sitting in the front room of their small home listening to a radio program broadcast from Chicago. Their two daughters, aged nine and eleven, were playing in another room. Several times, as the noise of the storm increased, Bill leaned forward to turn the sound up. Glancing at the dying embers in the fireplace he berated himself

for not bringing in another load of wood before the storm hit.

Reluctantly he got up and put on his coat before going outside in the rain. A few minutes later he returned with a load of firewood, his clothes soaking wet. After tending the fire he went into the bedroom and changed, leaving his wet clothes on a chair.

The radio program ended several hours later, at nine o'clock, and the family was preparing for bed when there was a loud insistent knocking at the front door. It was Ben Giles, Sheriff of Madison County.

By the look on the sheriff's face the couple knew it was not a social visit. "Bill, where have you been tonight?"

With no reason to be alarmed, Bill replied that he had been home all night since getting off from work at five o'clock. He had not left the house all night. The same question was asked of Claudia and she confirmed what Bill said.

While they were talking a deputy went into the bedroom, returning a few minutes later with a wet shirt and pair of pants. "I thought you said you had not left the house all night," he asked.

Bill explained about going outside in the rain to get firewood but the deputy seemed not to hear. Suddenly feeling alarmed at the strange questioning, Bill began demanding to know what it was all about.

Sheriff Giles looked at him for a long moment, as if trying to decide something, before finally replying. "Son, you're under arrest

"I'm not saying I'm old and worn out, but I make sure I'm nowhere near the curb on trash day."

Jere Foster, Athens



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for armed robbery. Ol' Man Tipton was robbed about an hour ago and we have two witnesses who identified you."

Claudia Perkins stood on the front porch with her daughters and watched in shock as her husband was led off in handcuffs. She later said she felt as if she was living in some kind of a horrible nightmare. She knew beyond a shadow of doubt that her husband was innocent; she had been with him all evening. Her children had also told the deputy that their father had been home all night but no one seemed to listen, or care.

At first light the next morning Claudia walked to a neighbor's home and begged him to take her to town to try to find out what was happening. The news was even more disheartening than the night before. Mr. Tipton, a rent collector for the Mills, had been robbed as he was making his rounds. A person who lived across the street from where the robbery occurred, and who worked at the Mill, had given a statement that he saw Bill running away from the scene with a pistol in his hand. Another person who also worked at the Mill said he was walking down the street and saw Bill waiting in the shadows at exactly the place where the robbery occurred a few minutes later.

Claudia spent the rest of the day going from one office to another trying to find someone who would listen to her story. Repeatedly she was told that the evidence was overwhelming. At one point she was even warned that she could be prosecuted for lying to authorities and insisting she had been with her husband all evening.

The neighbor who had given her a ride had stayed with her all day as she beseeched authorities to listen to her. On the way home that afternoon he was strangely silent. Finally after clearing his throat several times he blurted out what he had been thinking all day.

"Mrs. Perkins, I know what you are trying to do. I might do the same thing if it was my kin, but you need to stop this before you get in trouble. We all know that he did it and you are just going to have to learn to live with it."

Almost as an afterthought he added, "That boy has bad blood running all through him. It's a wonder he ain't been in prison before."

Claudia bit her tongue to keep from saying what was on her mind. When they pulled up in front of her home she got out without saying a word, not even bothering to close the car door.

It was true, she thought, that Bill had been in trouble before but never for anything serious. He had a hair trigger temper and would fight anyone he thought was insulting him. Several months earlier he had been fired from the Mill when he got into a fight with one of the foremen. The Mill pressed charges and Bill was locked up for several days but eventually the charges were dropped. He had also been arrested several times for public intoxication but had been released after paying a twenty-five dollar fine.

Claudia had actually separated

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from Bill at one point; taking the children and moving back to her parents' home in Fayetteville. She knew the fights and the drinking were Bill's fault and had loudly told him so on more than one occasion.

But....this was different. She knew there was no question that her husband was innocent of the robbery. Bill would have had to drive to town, rob Mr. Tipton and then drive back home in the three or four minutes he was out of her sight getting firewood. It was impossible. There was no way.

News travels fast in a small community. The next day brought a steady parade of family and friends stopping by to offer their condolences, and most likely hoping to pick up some juicy gossip. Claudia told her story over and over again, as did her two daughters, but no one really listened. One of her cousins, a large overweight woman known for her holier-than-thou attitude, began harping at her about leaving Bill. Another person, a neighbor whom Claudia had tried to sell Bill's car to in order to hire a lawyer, told everyone who would listen that he had always predicted that Bill would end up in prison.

Claudia's oldest daughter, Betty, tried to tell everyone that she was with her father that night but no one was interested. Almost sixty years later she could still vividly recall that day. "When no one would listen to me I started crying and screaming that my father was innocent. I told them that they didn't know what they were talking about."

"I still remember one woman who kept watching me like I had a contagious disease. She leaned over to another woman and said,

"Sometimes I lie awake at night and ask, 'Where have I gone wrong?'

Then a voice says to me, 'This is going to take more than one night.'"

Charlie Brown, Peanuts

"It ain't right what they are making these children do."

Unable to post bail, Bill Perkins remained in jail until his trial. That only served to intensify the gossip.

Human nature can be cruel. While people will swear undying friendship and loyalty, few can resist the temptation of listening to, or repeating, gossip. As Bill Perkins sat in jail, his whole life became fodder for the rumor mills. Stories were told about his grandfather who had been locked up one time for bootlegging, and of a cousin who had been divorced two times.

People began to tell stories about Claudia; about how she must be a loose woman to live with a man like her husband. Parents warned their children about playing with her daughters, saying they came from bad blood.

The trial itself only lasted a few hours. A witness took the stand and testified he saw Bill Perkins running away from the scene with a gun in his hand. He described the gun as being a nickel-plated revolver. Bill's lawyer never asked the witness how he could identify Bill, or a gun, from almost a hundred feet away at night during a drenching thunderstorm. The next

witness testified about seeing Bill near the scene. He described Bill as wearing a floppy hat that covered almost half of his face. Although there were no lights and a violent thunderstorm was raging, the witness still insisted he recognized Bill from almost half a block away.

Bill's lawyer never asked how that was possible.

Claudia and her oldest daughter, Betty, both took the stand and told their stories. Betty remembered a juror shaking his head the whole time she was on the stand. The jurors had already made up their minds.

Bill Perkins was sentenced to three years in Kilby Penitentiary.

"Mama almost lost her mind," remembered Betty. "Sometimes she would cry all day long. Other times she would go out next to the wood pile and just stand there screaming. The bad thing was there wasn't nothing I could say or do to help her. I felt the same way she did. It was like the whole world was ganging up on us. After the first few months Mama changed. She wouldn't go around people anymore. All she would do was sit at the kitchen



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table every night with all those papers in front of her. There was a cold hard look about her that I had never seen before."

"We moved to town and Mama got a job working at the Mill. Every spare minute was spent working on her papers and talking to people at the Courthouse. One judge she talked to told her to not worry, that "three years would go by in a hurry."

"We didn't have any money but Mama kept talking to lawyers anyway, trying to get them to take the case. One lawyer actually read all the records and told Mama there would be no trouble getting it overturned but he needed two thousand dollars up front. He said justice might be blind, but it wasn't cheap.

Bill Perkins spent almost two and a half years in the penitentiary before being released. The homecoming was bittersweet. The family was together but would have to start all over again. His car had been sold to pay the lawyers. Most of their furniture had been repossessed. Adding insult to injury, the Mill informed Claudia that if Bill stayed with her she would have to move out of the Mill home she was renting. "We don't want people like him living here," they said.

"Daddy tried hard," remembered Betty. "He knocked on about every door in Huntsville trying to get a job but when they found out who he was they wouldn't hire him. His cousin finally loaned him the money to buy an old truck and he spent weeks working on it trying to get it to run. Later on he started hauling timber from sawmills out in the country. It didn't pay hardly nothing but Daddy made up for it by working seven days a week, morning to night."

Suddenly, about six months after Bill got out of prison, it seemed as if a miracle was about to happen. A Huntsville policeman, who was married to Claudia's cousin, stopped by the house one day with astonishing news. A man had been arrested for armed robbery and while being questioned had confessed to the crime Bill was convicted of. For the first time in three years there was something to really celebrate.

"We all loved ice cream," said Betty, "and after Daddy heard the news he went out and bought two gallons of it. We sat on the front porch and ate every bit of it with Daddy just sitting there grinning the whole tune."

Strangely, although another person had confessed to the armed robbery Bill was convicted

of, the authorities did nothing. It was decided to just let matters stay the way they were. Reopening the case would have forced the jurors and prosecutor at Bill's trial to admit they made a mistake, something prosecutors in Alabama rarely, if ever, do. Besides, they probably thought, Bill Perkins is out of prison and it's over with.

An attorney speaking on behalf of the persecutor's office and off the record, told Claudia and Bill that his case would never be reopened. "There's just too many things involved that you don't understand," said the attorney. "We know you got a raw deal but I have the word of certain people that if you apply for a pardon, they will go along with it."

"That means they would forgive me for the crime, even though I didn't do it," said Bill. "Yes, basically that's what it means."

Bill's face had grown beet red. "You tell them to take that pardon and I ain't committed no crime and I ain't going to ask forgiveness for something I didn't do!"

Life should have become easier for the couple, but it didn't. Bill Perkins wore the label of a jail bird and regardless of what happened, no one would change their minds. Once started, gossip and rumors take on lives of



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their own.

One day while hauling a load of timber from New Market, Bill's truck broke down. It was pouring rain with the temperature hovering around the freezing mark. Reluctantly, Bill decided to hitch a ride into town to get a tow truck. Car after car slowly passed, with some of them almost coming to a full stop before recognizing him and speeding away. Finally, after standing in the cold rain for almost an hour, he got a lift from a complete stranger.

"I remember Daddy coming home that day," said Betty. "He stood in front of the fireplace for the better part of an hour without ever saying a word. Finally he looked at me and told me to go get Mama and my sister. When we were all gathered in the front room Daddy announced we were moving to Chicago. He would go first, get a job and find a place for us to live. Then he would send us the money for bus tickets."

"I ain't living no place where they treat a man worse than a mongrel dog!"

"The next day Daddy left," continued Betty. "That was the last time we ever saw him. Two days later a deputy knocked on the door and told us that Daddy had died in a car wreck near Evanson, Indiana."

"Mama didn't have the money to have Daddy's body shipped home so they buried him in a pauper's grave."

As news of Bill's death spread people began stopping by Claudia's house to offer their condolences. In a sick sort of way, many of the condolences were coupled with ".....It's probably the best thing. Now he is out of your life for good!"

"Mama sat there in a chair not saying anything, just listening to people talk about her husband. Finally Mama got up and went into the bedroom. When she came back she was holding my father's old shotgun."

In a voice barely above a whisper Claudia ordered everyone out of her house.

"It was almost funny to watch that bunch of hypocrites fighting one another to get out the front door," remembered Betty. "After that people pretty much left us alone but it didn't help Mama. She had been through so much that she was just drained inside. Four years later, on my 21st birthday. Mama died."

"That same summer I visited my father's grave in Indiana. I had never been there before but the grave was easy to find. Mama had ordered a tombstone for it."

William Perkins

1894-1938

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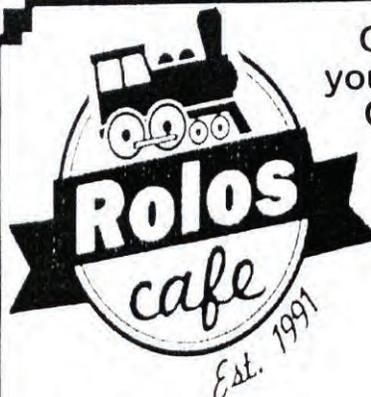
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**"If I have any beliefs about
immortality, it is that
certain dogs I have known
will go to heaven, and
very, very few persons."**

James Thurber

Thoughts of Home

by "Aunt" Eunice Merrell, 1998



Feb. 2016 Old Huntsville Mag

During the almost half century that I have been in the restaurant business I have seen literally hundreds of thousands of people come and go. I have watched the high and the mighty, the rich and the famous, share tables with people who could barely afford to pay for their meals. I have watched as politicians poured coffee for house painters and I have watched as many of my customers grew up, got married and brought their children and grandchildren back to visit with me.

Some of them went on to become famous and wealthy while others chose a different path and ended up in jail or in disgrace.

The one thing all these people had in common though, was their heritage and the love of the city they called home.

Huntsville has a certain mystique about it that is hard to describe, even if you have lived here all your life. Most cities are characterized by their buildings and attractions, but Huntsville is different. While we have our share

of historic antebellum homes and tourist attractions, it's the people and their stories that make Huntsville the unique place it is.

When I first entered the restaurant business there was no such thing as television. People would come in and sit around for hours drinking coffee and catching up on the news. Once the current events were exhausted, people would tell tales about the old days, of people they had met and of things that had happened.

These stories were the one thing that everyone shared. We all had tales about forefathers who fought in the Civil War, of bootleggers, moonshiners, crooked politicians and of people who picked cotton and went on to become millionaires, I remember once when Huntsville elected a sheriff as a joke. Few people from out-of-town ever believed the story though, because in reality it was almost unbelievable. That's probably when the tradition of the "Liar's Table" began in my restaurant.

After World War II, Huntsville began to change. Thousands of people began moving here and cotton fields became subdivisions. For many of these people, it was the first time they had ever lived in the South.

I remember when the German scientists first moved here. Many of them could barely speak English but within a few years it was common to hear them say "y'all."

Of course, it was still with a German accent!

Regardless of where people came from, Huntsville has always had a way of adopting them. Huntsville's history became their own and the stories and legends became a part of their heritage. These people adopted our customs and became our friends and neighbors. Within a few years so many newcomers had moved here that it became almost a rarity to meet someone who was actually from Huntsville.

Times have changed. Huntsville has grown, but the people are still the same. While many have different accents and different places of birth, they still sit around the restaurant arguing about current events. And when that subject is done, they always come back to the stories from Huntsville's colorful past when we were just a small cotton town.

In recent years Huntsville has seen a resurgence of interest in its history. More and more stories are being printed and occasionally you will see a piece on the local television stations. Legends that have been lost for over a century are now becoming commonplace in our folklore.

Recently I asked one of my customers, who moved here from St. Louis, about his fascination with our local legends. After pausing in deep thought for a few minutes, he replied, "Because they're about my new home."

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Sugarfoot

by Bill Alkire



On one of my road trips to Louisiana I encountered a heart-warming incident I must tell you about. Having boarded dogs, cats, turtles, lizards, squirrels, birds, guinea pigs and spiders, I've noticed that animals often are smarter than we give them credit for. The jury is still out on cats.

Hurricane Katrina in 2005 had stranded a puppy of Great Pyrenees origin at my friend's home near Baton Rouge. The puppy was traumatized and nearly starved from going through the hurricane. She was sweet and gentle. With no owner located, my friend decided to raise her. The concern was with the animal's eventual size. My friend's brother agreed to help with food, medicine, what ever was needed; the dog had found a forever home. She had woven herself into everyone's heart.

The puppy was a beautiful furry white ball, and it was decided she should be named "Sugarfoot." Now for the event that gave evidence of how special this dog was. It was 2011, I had traveled down to Louisiana to take part in Mardi Gras. Each time I visited Sugarfoot, she would get her leash for me to take her for a walk, or was she taking me for a walk? My friend lived in a rural area. One could walk a good distance on a firm surface without concern for traffic.

This time I was walking Sugar-

foot, we were about 1/2 mile from the house. She abruptly stops. Her ears went back, showing great concern for an open ditch area. She pulled her leash strongly and at one point tried to drag me into the ditch. Weighing over seventy-five pounds there was little a person could do if she did not want to obey commands.

I approached the ditch cautiously and proceeded to investigate with her to ascertain what she found so intriguing. A light "meow" could be heard. Sugarfoot became excited, her tail was straight-out and about to wag off. She reached her snout into the end of a drainage pipe while standing in two inches of water. She pulled out a small kitten by the scruff of its neck and set it down in front of me.

Sugarfoot began to lick the small creature from head to tail. The kitten looked like a drowned rat. Attempt by me to pull her away was futile. The small creature clung to Sugarfoot's long hair on her hip and would not let go.

Sugarfoot would not nudge without the kitten. She proudly walked home with the kitten clinging to her long hip hair. The kitten could be heard purring while clutching onto Sugarfoot. My friend provided food and water for the kitten. The kitten however preferred to drink from

Sugarfoot's water dish. Sugarfoot was very protective of her food area and had been known to get aggressive.

The kitten was taken to the local Veterinary Clinic to be checked. Sugarfoot insisted to go with the kitten to the clinic. She observed the kitten closely, to assure treatment met the dog's approval. The kitten feared humans and found Sugarfoot something she could trust. After the kitten was checked, Sugarfoot had to be forced into the car. She did not want to leave her new friend.

Sugarfoot grieved for the kitten for many days. The kitten found a new home with a Clinic staffer. Sugarfoot came to Huntsville to live with her co-owner for a time. Being such a large dog, and her fear of storms, the small facility hindered her spirit. She tore the place up and disrupted the complex. She traveled back to Louisiana where she lived out her good life bringing joy to all who knew her.

We humans can learn a lot about compassion and how to treat those different than us.

"We are a nation of sheep, and someone else owns the grass."

Bob Renold, Madison



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The Story of 408 Holmes Avenue

by Penny and Steve Sumners



Strange things often happen at the least expected time! At a board meeting of the Huntsville Pilgrimage Association, a middle age lady who was just joining us asked me if I lived at 408 Holmes Avenue. Startled and excited, I said yes and I didn't know it then but Tiny Cole's granddaughter had just introduced herself. Thus, I began to learn more about my beautiful old house and the beautiful people that had lived there. I call my house "Miss Tiny" in appreciation of Mrs. Tiny Cole who made 408 Holmes, her home for over 60 years. This is our story.

In 1805 the land where 408 Holmes Avenue is located was purchased at the land auction by Leroy Pope. He planted or cultivated a pecan orchard from his house on Echols to Walker Avenue. Many of the pecan trees are still around and can be viewed from the air in rows. Pope sold the land to Thomas and William Brandon in 1818 who were establishing themselves as developers in the area. The land sold about every 20 years to different people until 1873 when Robert Searcy sold the property to Milton Humes.

The 1880 Sanbourn maps show a house on the property as well as the house extending on the property of 410 Holmes. The home did not look as a Victorian style in the drawings on the maps. When Milton Humes bought the property in 1873, he was moving here from the beautiful little town of Abington, Virginia to marry Ellelee Chapman, daughter of the former Alabama Governor Reuben Chapman.

Humes, an attorney, had met Ellelee when he was a Confederate soldier stationed in Huntsville. When he returned, Milton Humes built a huge mansion off of Meridian Street calling it Abingdon Place. Then, he built two identical houses on the property with 408 completed in 1888 and 410 completed in 1894. History lore says "the twins" as they were

called by some, were built for his twin girls but the Humes' did not have any children. He didn't have any sisters here and Ellelee did not have any sisters that lived here either.

So why? This could have just been rental property for the northern industrialist that Humes, Halsey and other Huntsville leaders were trying to attract to the area. Merrimack Mill had been started by a group from Massachusetts in West Huntsville. The eastern part of the city with Humes leading the charge looked for help from Tracy Pratt, McCormick and others with connections to northern dollars. They were instrumental in Dallas and Lincoln Mills getting started. Milton and Ellelee were both community active and involved leaders in Huntsville.

Ellelee was a leader in the Women's suffrage movement, help for children in the mills, the creation of a library and the creation of a hospital. She had no children but she was working for everyone's children and Milton did the same.

In 1906, Milton sold the house to Leo Marshuetz, a rising entrepreneur in the area but in 1912, Marshuetz took a position with the up and coming Montgomery Ward company and moved to Birmingham. Marshuetz sold the house to a middle management salesman, Wiley Cole

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and his wife Tinnea "Tiny".

The Coles had been living on Clinton Avenue and when their young three-year old son died of diphtheria in 1910, they wanted to move. At that time, Huntsville was a busy thriving place with a street car traveling down the middle of Holmes Street. (It became Avenue in the 50s).

The Coles had a daughter Belle in 1917 and life seemed to be picking up again. Belle was the center of their life. Then, Cole's health started to weaken and in September of 1925, Wiley Cole died at 52 years of age. Now the beautiful Tiny had to make plans for her and her young daughter.

In the coming year Tiny married David Young, another middle management sales manager for Dunnnavants. They lived in the house until 1938 when Mr. Young died. At that point, the world was being thrust into war so Tiny made some major decisions to help her economic situation. She worked part time in sales in Dunnnavants department store and she renovated her house so that she could take in boarders.

In 1910 or so, an apartment had been created on the west side of the house. She could accommodate a boarder in that structure but now she reconfigured so that she could accommodate other boarders as she redid up the inside of the house, decreasing her living space.

In 1967 at the age of eighty-three, Tiny died after living in the house through World War I, the Women's Suffrage movement, the Roaring 20s, the Great Depression, World War II, the Korean Conflict, the Cuban Missile Crisis, a lot of the Civil Rights

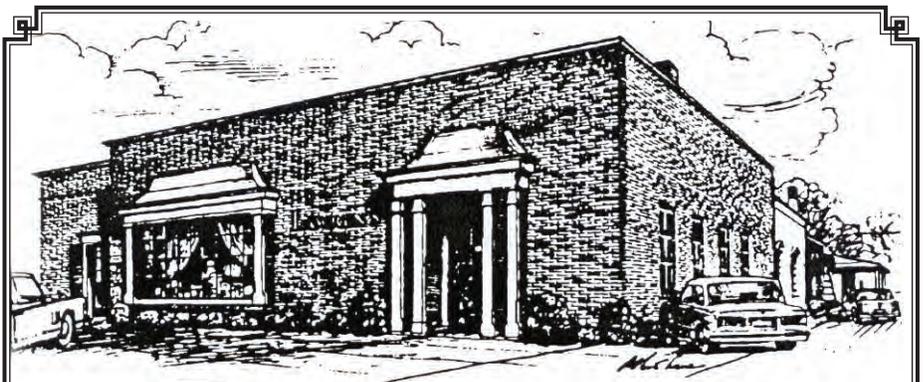
movement, part of the Vietnam war and two husbands. Her life had been full! The neighborhood didn't look the same. Many of the houses were boarding houses and the houses needed repair. The house stayed in the family until the family sold it in 1977 in bad need of repair.

A young attorney named Clem Cartron bought the house and made lots of renovations and repairs and practiced law from this location. He kept the house for about 13 years and then he sold it to a family that wanted to make it into a Bed and Breakfast. The Historic Commission had just been recently created and this was considered outside of the guidelines so it never opened as a bed and breakfast. The house was put back on the market but did not sell for a number of years. Around 1996, local realtor David

Martin bought both houses, 408 and 410 and made major renovations. Martin sold the houses at different times to others and we bought the house in 2011. The house is now a single family dwelling with so much character and charm that I smile just thinking about my Miss Tiny.

Mrs. Tiny Cole's picture is on the wall in my dining room and I hope she would be proud of the way the house has been restored. I am proud of the strength of the home that Milton and Ellelee Humes made a reality. These homes are treasures from the past that live on in the present.

Written by Penny and Steve Sumners, current owners of 408 Holmes Avenue in Old Town.



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"Why is it that none of those guys in beer commercials have beer bellies?"

Bubba Jacobs, Gurley



Well, another year has come and gone. I guess there is no need to make a New Year's resolution this year since I never seem very good at keeping them. I plan to eat right, exercise and hopefully stay out of the hospital. That might be good advice for all of us.

Covid may be even more of a problem in January from all the gatherings over Christmas and New Year holidays. With more hospitals being flooded with Covid (approximately 325 people are still dying each day in the U.S. from Covid as of the end of December), flu and RSV. I urge everyone to get their shots. If you get either of the illnesses, your case might not be as severe, and it could keep you home rather than in the hospital. It is still recommended to wash hands frequently and wear a mask in large crowds.

I checked with our pet centers; they need families to foster cats or dogs even if they can't take on an animal full-time. Who knows, you might change your mind when those sad eyes look into yours, saying, "Please let me stay. I like it here." I know you've heard of the studies that say an older person with a pet lives longer, right? There are several reasons, I think. First, just the stroking of fur on a cat or dog can be relaxing and lower your blood

pressure. Having a pet to care for gives you more motivation to get up, get around, and fix a meal for your pet. Dogs need walking. Cats need the sandbox changed. If you have other pets, so much the better.

January is when the larger stores have their "white sales." It is a great time to stock up on sheets and towels at a discount price. These items make great wedding and graduation gifts. If you stock up on white items, it makes a wonderful gift to add a monogram to personalize the present, and who doesn't love something monogrammed? Even without special equipment, you can do "iron-on" ones at home. If you haven't already, please think about taking your real Christmas trees to the Botanical Garden for them to chop up. It helps the environment and uses the trees that would otherwise just go to fill the garbage dump.

I remember when I was a Brownie and later a Girl Scout. Now my granddaughter is doing what I did – selling cookies. Orders started December 12th and go through January. Scouts will sell them in front of Walmart and thru Brownie and Girl Scouts. Thin Mints are my favorite. They can be frozen and eaten whenever you get the urge for something sweet.

We have the most snow in January and February, so keep warm and have plans in case the power goes out.

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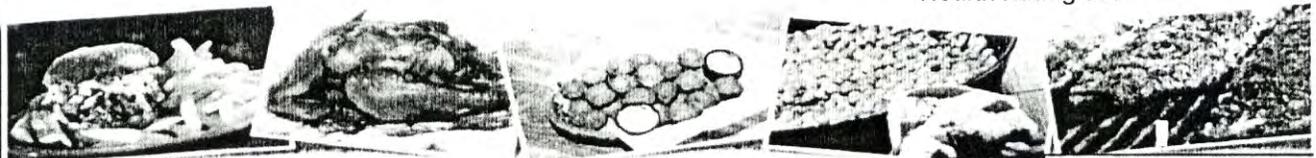
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Another Huntsville Icon Announces Major Change

by Jerry Keel

Another chapter in the long history of Huntsville is soon going to be ended. The announcement in November of 2022 that The Huntsville Times will no longer be published in the printed form was a shock to me and many others, I'm sure. The change will take place in early 2023.

My entire career was spent at The Times. I have so many memories of that place and the many people I worked with there as we went about publishing the paper each day. Most of the memories remind me of happy times but there were a few memories that were not so pleasant. I think of some of my former workmates who are no longer with us and can't help but feel sad.

When I began with a paper route at the ripe old age of eight I thought there would always be a printed newspaper in Huntsville. When I reached fifteen a job in the Circulation Department came open and I inquired about it. I was hired and began a string of 44 1/2 years of paychecks every Friday. That amounted to more than 2300 paydayes for me. Add to that a pension check every month for 25 years since I retired and you can see how The Times took care of all its employees.

After two years in the Circulation Department a job in the Composing Room came open. I applied for that job and was accepted. The Composing Room was where the pages of the paper were put together and made ready to print. There I learned to run a Linotype machine and soon found I had a knack for that. The Linotype machine got its name from the way the individual letters were assembled to form a line of words for the columns of the paper.

After several years the owner decided to change to a computer system to ready the pages for printing. No longer was the molten metal used to assemble the lines of type for the paper. Instead the information was typed into the computer where it was stored until the time the pages were ready to be put together.

"Every few days try on your jeans just to make sure they still fit. Pajamas will have you believe all is well in the kingdom."

Betsy Allen, Huntsville

This process involved cutting the film from the computer and pasting said film into-page form. Then the page was photographed and the large negative was exposed onto an aluminum plate that was placed on the large cylinders of the press where the images were transferred to large rolls of newsprint. The pages were cut by the press and assembled into the finished product.

I know all this sounds confusing but I guess you would have to be there to fully understand how it all came together to form a newspaper.

The Huntsville Times was a great place to work. There were better-paying jobs but the closeness of all the employees was much better than many other places of employment.

The Times was founded on March 23, 1910 by Emory J. Pierce and was located in the two bottom floors of the old Times Building downtown on the corner of Holmes Avenue and Greene Street. When that space became too small the decision was made to build a new building on the new Memorial Parkway.

When the new building was completed we moved there. The move was made on two week-ends and we managed to not miss a single edition of the paper. That was quite a feat. In order to accomplish this major undertaking several

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sections of the Sunday paper were printed in advance and stored in the basement of The Times Office Building.

Once the move was completed everyone was happy at the new location with many improvements including a new press and all new office equipment. It took a few weeks for everyone to get familiar with all the new things but we made it work.

At the old location all the carriers would assemble on the sidewalks or in the hallways of the building to wait their turn to get their papers. The papers were counted out by hand to the carriers. The two paper counters each had a list of routes and the number of papers each carrier was to receive. Things were much different at the new building. Since the building was on the busy Parkway it was decided to have several branch offices throughout the city where the carriers could pick up their papers. The carriers then could receive their papers in their individual neighborhoods which helped them get their routes done much quicker and much safer.

Once a major flood at the new Times building caused water to back up two or three feet in the basement. The black ink was stored in a large tank there and when the water filled the basement the tank and the pipes that carried the ink to the press were ripped out.

Fortunately there were several 5-gallon cans of blue ink available so the paper was printed in blue ink that day.

The Times then made arrangements for the paper to be printed at area newspapers until the black ink tank and the pipes were replaced. Once again The Times did not miss an Edition.

The Huntsville Times as we have known it for so many years will be no more. It will surely be missed by many who enjoyed taking their newspaper and a cup of coffee and sitting in their favorite chair while they

caught up on the news of the world. Maybe we can all make the adjustment without too much trouble. Only time will tell.

Most of us former carriers miss riding our bicycles down the street and throwing the papers onto the customers' porches (or sometimes in the bushes or on the roof of the house).

True, there were some drawbacks to being a paper carrier. When it rained or the winter brought snow it was bad but we made it because we cared about the paper and the subscribers who looked forward to receiving their newspaper.

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Turn to the experts



Mason Brown Ice and Coal Company

by *Mason B. Daniel, Sr.*

When I was growing up, most homes did not have refrigerators. Most homes depended on "ice boxes". Our home ice box had two doors. The top door is where the block of ice was stored, while the bottom was used to store milk, eggs, etc.

My dad, *Barnie Lee Daniel*, also known as *Po Boy* (I don't know why he was called by that name) worked for Mason Brown Ice and Coal Company. The company was formed on April 18, 1927 and dissolved on September 30, 1952. The business was located on Meridian Street. I believe it was next door to Ray's Auto, a Ford Dealership.

The company sold blocks of ice and also sold coal. You could pick up your ice at the ice plant, have it delivered, or buy it from a horse drawn wagon that would patrol the East Huntsville neighborhoods. Kids would chase the wagon to get a chip of ice when the delivery man would stop to make a sale.

The ice was usually sold in 25 or 50 pound blocks. The canisters used to form the ice would produce score lines to show the various block sizes. An "Ice Pick" was used to chip the ice along the score line to give you

the desired weight. Ice picks were a normal part of your kitchen equipment. There was also a gadget you could buy to make ice cubes. The unit included a top canister to pour hot water while the bottom unit had grids that would melt into the block of ice. You would then remove the unit and use your ice pick to produce ice cubes.

The company also sold crushed ice. You could have your ice block crushed at the plant at the time of purchase. The crushed ice was also sold to homes, restaurants, clubs, etc. I recall helping my dad fill a bag made of canvas with a round metal bottom with crushed ice, load up the truck and head out to the various locations. My favorite delivery location was to Max Luther's home just off Meridian Street. His father owned several beautiful horses and I loved to walk through the huge barn.

Another service provided by Mason Brown Ice & Coal at no charge was the chilling of watermelons. Customers from all over would bring their watermelon to the plant for a few days of chilling. Usually a smaller melon was included for my dad.

My parents named me after Mason Brown. I never got to know Mason Brown because he had passed before my birth. I wish I had had the chance to meet him.

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Local News Briefs in 1916



Wanted - I am a wealthy young farmer and desire a house-keeper or companion. Fact is, I would like to come South and prefer a young lady of the South to share my life. Please communicate with G. Y. Watts, RFD No. 3, Eldorado, Kansas

Lost - Gentleman's small pearl handle knife; two blades. Return to the Daily Times for reward.

Successful Skin Grafting in Dallas Village

Dr. Caldwell has performed a successful skin grafting operation on a little five year old girl, he operated on the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. C. Wright in Dallas Village. The child had been seriously burned and had just reached that stage permitting skin grafting and the skill of the splendid physician was remarkable. A very moving note was that quite a number of able bodied men bared their arms and permitted their skin to be grafted in order to save the life of the little girl. Her case was a very bad one but with the successful operation by Dr. Caldwell it is believed she will come out all right.

Deputy Sheriff N. L. Pierce today arrested 2 men - Celie Conley was charged with burglary and grand larceny and Will Wise on a peace warrant and using obscene language and both were placed in jail.

S. L. Terry, who recently purchased the goods formerly belonging to Ezell

"I never thought the comment 'I wouldn't touch him with a six foot pole' would become a national policy, but here we are!"

Annie Kirkland, Scottsboro

Bros. and Terry Co., corner Washington and Clinton Streets, announces that the new store will open on Jan. 8, 1916 with the largest bargain sharing ever to happen in Huntsville. Due to the critical illness of Mr. Terry's mother, the big public sales opening has been postponed for a few days, but notice will appear in the newspaper.

Mrs. Esther Daniels, the pretty 18-year old bride of Ashford Daniels of this city, is suing her new husband for divorce because he represented himself to be rich and turned out not to have anything. She says she is giving up on him not because he only makes \$30 a month, but because she has observed that he is not worth more than \$30 a month and if anything, is overpaid at that amount. During the courtship he entertained her with fabulous stories about the number of plantations and banks he owned.

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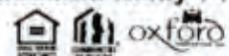
SQUEEZE ALL THE JUICE FROM THE LEMON AND STIR IT INTO THE MAPLE SYRUP. ADD THE HOT WATER AND BRANDY. DRINK THE ENTIRE RECIPE. TO USE: BUNDLE YOURSELF UP IN YOUR WARMEST PJs AND SLOWLY SIP WHILE IT'S HOT, GO TO SLEEP FOR 8 HOURS - SWEET DREAMS!

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Heard On the Street

by **Cathey Carney**



John Richard of Berkshire Hathaway was our first caller to correctly identify the Photo of the Month from last month to be that of **Bill Miller**, who built most of the bridges in this area with his company Miller and Miller. Bill was a sweet, kind man who was super loyal to his friends, and is missed every day. Congratulations to John for recognizing him.

And our hidden item for December was a tiny **candle**. Our winner for that was **Jeannie Worthey** who lives downtown and loves looking for our hidden items every month. It was on page 34, to the right of the tiny lady in the picture (she's far right). See it now? Congratulations to Jeannie.

We lost a very dear lady recently. **Martha Lee Lanier Seay**, 73, of Huntsville passed away on Nov. 5, 2022. Martha was

born and grew up in Owens Cross Roads and was raised by **Lois Beatrice Kent** and **Grady Dennis**. She worked 20 years in the banking field and fifteen years for the federal government, retiring in 2000. She loved her church and did numerous things such as WMU and Hospitality. She enjoyed playing cards with friends and family. She also loved playing the piano, but later in life arthritis in her fingers prevented her from playing. She also of course loved shopping. She loved to go to the Smoky Mountains and other places and she especially loved taking care of her grandchildren. Martha is survived by her husband of 39 years **Stanley Donald Seay**, her sister **Gurtha Pemberton**, her brother **Lee "Bubba" Lanier**, her daughter **Michelle Lee Keel (David)**, her son **John Tabor Ikard, Jr. (Wanda)**, her son **Mike Wayne Seay (Pam)**, her daughter **Melanie Lynn Quillen**, 5 granddaughters, 2 grandsons, 3 great grandsons and one great granddaughter. We send condolences to the family who will never forget this lady.

Phyllis Lawrence called to tell us that she and her husband **Billy** will be leaving Murfreesboro to be close to their son. they are moving to a tiny town in South Carolina that has a couple of stores and peach orchards. It sounds like heaven to me! Billy attended Butler High School here

years ago and he and his brother played football for Butler. They still have friends here in Huntsville and are amazed about the changes we are seeing. Safe travels **Phyllis** and let us hear from you.

We all know that cases of the flu, Covid and RSV are on the increase and we must be prepared. Have your thermometer, aspirin/medications, heating pad, everything your doctor tells you that you need in one place. You don't want to be searching for these items when you're sick - be prepared and you'll have it!

Happy Birthday to Decatur's **Lawanda Allison**. She lives in a beautiful old Decatur home and when she decorates her home for Christmas, it is gorgeous. She won Bronze again this year and some people just have that skill - not me! Her day is January 7.

Speaking of birthdays, did you know that **Tallulah Bankhead** was born right here in Huntsville? She was born on Jan. 31, 1902 in the Schiffman Building, East Side Square downtown Huntsville. She would go on to

Photo of The Month

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

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This boy headed up an orchestra with his name on it!



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become an international film and stage star, and was quite a character. She was beautiful as well as smart and got her start right here.

This month I have hidden a tiny antique heart pendant. Find it and call first, you're the winner of a \$50 subscription to Old Huntsville! I expect no calls, it'll be my best hiding job ever.

New residents are coming by the hundreds every day to live in this area and there is really alot going on in the way of activities for the whole family. Looking online is probably the best to find a complete listing for each venue but here are a few I found with phone numbers.

Downtown Events: Craft Coffee Trail <https://www.downtownhuntsville.org/craft-coffeetrail>

Secret Art Trail <https://www.downtownhuntsville.org/secretarttrail>

Pick up a map from the Downtown Huntsville Visitor Information Center, grab a drink to go (served in a purple cup) and take a stroll through the downtown Arts & Entertainment District. Peek around corners, peer down alleyways, or simply look up!

The Visitors and Convention Bureau can get you all types of event information: <https://www.huntsville.org/visitor-info/visitor-centers/>

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chocolate shop, and a community garden. Our open door policy allows the public to visit artists and makers during the different stages of their creative process.

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Burritt Museum on Monte Sano - want to learn how to make Sourdough Bread? Registration for this workshop is open now - deadline to Register: January 14th at 5:00 pm - Cooking: "Sourdough Bread".

Burritt Museum is an eclectic estate & park with a historic mansion, restored 19th-century houses, farm animals & trails.

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A special thank you to our city workers - sanitation, Public Works, road crews - we appreciate each of you. And those who have to get out every day like delivery people, USPS mail deliveries, food and medicine delivery in this bad weather - THANK YOU!

Happy New Year to All.

"I swear my fridge just said, 'What the hell do you want now?'"

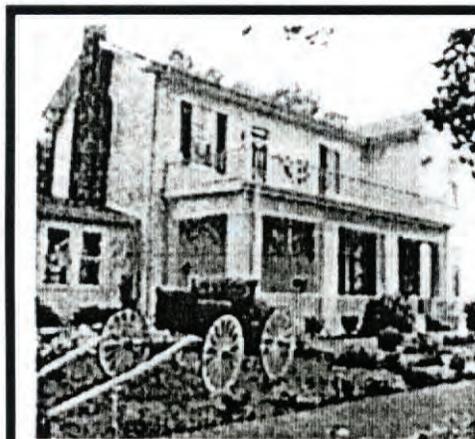
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Happy New Year to All and Stay Safe!



Stephanie Troup's Favorites

Garlic Lime Chicken

- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons pepper
- 1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon onion powder
- 1/2 teaspoon thyme
- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves
- 1-1/2 tablespoons butter
- 1-1/2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/3 cup chicken broth
- 3 tablespoons lime juice

In a bowl, mix together first 6 ingredients. Sprinkle mixture on both sides of chicken breasts. In a skillet heat butter and olive oil together over medium high heat.

Saute chicken until golden brown, about 5 minutes each side.

Remove chicken and add lime juice and chicken broth to the pan, whisking up the browned bits off the bottom of the pan.

Keep cooking until sauce has reduced slightly. Add chicken back to the pan to thoroughly coat and serve.

Hot and Cheesy Shrimp and Grits

- 1 can Rotel tomatoes
- 3 cups chicken broth
- 1 cup cream
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 cups instant grits
- 1 cup shredded sharp cheddar
- 1 cup shredded pepper jack
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1/2 cup chopped green onion
- 1 red bell pepper chopped
- 1 clove garlic minced
- 2 pounds shrimp, cooked and peeled

Bring broth and cream to a boil, add salt and grits and simmer 5 to 10 minutes. Meanwhile saute garlic, green onion, and red pepper in butter for 5 minutes or until tender. Stir together Cheddar and pepper jack with grits and add sauteed vegetables, Rotel and shrimp. Pour into a lightly greased casserole dish and bake at 350 until bubbly (around 20 to 30 minutes) Let stand 15 minutes before serving.

Broccoli Casserole

- 3 tablespoons butter
- 1/2 large onion, chopped
- 2 (10 ounce) packages frozen chopped broccoli, cooked and drained
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 2 cups grated sharp Cheddar cheese
- 1 (10-3/4 ounce) can cream of mushroom soup
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 cup crushed Ritz crackers

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Saute chopped onion in 1 tablespoon butter until onions wilt and remove from heat. In a large mixing bowl, combine broccoli, mayonnaise, cheese, soup, eggs and onions

Place the mixture in greased 13x9" pan. Top with the crushed crackers and drizzle with 2 tablespoons of melted butter. Bake for 35 minutes or until lightly browned.

Serve hot and be prepared for lots of praise.

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Squash Casserole

1/2 large onion, chopped
 2 tablespoons butter
 3 cups cooked yellow squash, drained with all water squeezed out
 1 cup crushed Ritz crackers, plus additional for topping
 1/2 cup sour cream
 1/2 teaspoon salt
 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
 1/8 teaspoon pepper
 1 cup grated sharp cheddar cheese

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Saute onion in butter for five minutes. Remove from pan and mix all ingredients together in a large bowl. Pour into buttered casserole dish and top with cracker crumbs. Bake for 25-30 minutes.

Curried Honey Mustard Chicken

1.5 pounds boneless, skinless chicken breast, cut into bite-size pieces
 1-1/2 tablespoons butter
 1-1/2 tablespoons olive oil
 1/2 cup honey
 1/4 cup mustard
 1 teaspoon curry powder
 Salt/pepper to taste

Heat the butter and olive oil in a skillet. Add chicken to skillet and cook until well browned. Remove chicken and add remaining ingredients and bring to a boil.

Add chicken back to pan, bring to boil again, reduce heat and let simmer, covered, for 30 minutes. Remove cover for the last 10 minutes to thicken sauce. Delicious served over rice. (You can double the honey mustard sauce to have some extra).

Cranberry Pork Chops

6 bone-in pork loin chops
 1(16 ounce) can jellied cranberry sauce
 1/2 cup cranberry or apple juice
 1/4 cup sugar
 2 tablespoons spicy brown mustard

2 tablespoons cornstarch
 1/4 cup cold water
 1/2 teaspoon ea. salt & pepper
 Place pork chops in a crock pot. Combine cranberry sauce, juice, sugar and mustard until smooth; pour over chops. Cover and cook on low for 7-8 hours or until meat is tender. Remove chops; keep warm. In a saucepan, combine cornstarch and cold water until smooth; gradually stir in cooking juices. Bring to a boil; cook and stir for 2 minutes or until thickened. Stir in salt and pepper. Serve over chops.

Ruby Huckaby's Grandma's Chocolate Pie

1 cup sugar
 1/3 cup flour
 3 tablespoons cocoa
 1/4 teaspoon salt
 3 eggs
 1 sm. can evaporated milk
 1 cup of water
 1 teaspoon vanilla
 1 baked pie shell
 Mix sugar, flour, salt and cocoa. Add milk to the dry ingredients. When moistened, add egg

yolks alternately. Add water; mix well, put in double boiler and cook until thickened. Pour into baked pie shell. Use egg whites for meringue.

Honeycrisp Apple Cake

1 -1/2 cups salad oil
 2 cups sugar
 3 eggs
 1 teaspoon baking soda
 1 cup chopped nuts - I used pecans
 1 teaspoon vanilla
 3 cups plain flour
 1 teaspoon cinnamon
 1/2 teaspoon salt
 3/4 teaspoon each ground cloves, nutmeg, allspice
 3 to 4 cups peeled, cored & chopped apples (Honeycrisp or Granny smith)

Mix oil, sugar, eggs and vanilla. Add sifted dry ingredients, fold in nuts and apples. Bake in greased and floured tube or Bundt pan for 1 hour at 350 degrees.

Glaze: In a saucepan put 1 cup dark brown sugar, 1 stick butter, 1/4 c. milk. Mix and boil for one minute. Pour over hot cake. (I halved this and it was fine).

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On Hurricane Creek

by Billy Joe Cooley

Her name was Mary Riddick and she was one of the area's most beloved educators during the years she taught at the Hurricane Creek and Riverton schools.

She started teaching as a substitute teacher shortly after the second war, never having attended college. Almost a quarter of a century later, when the education powers-to-be mandated that a college degree was a necessity, the furor in the community was such that she was given special dispensation to continue teaching. Her students were special people to her. No child would ever enter her classroom with a dirty face, or perhaps with a tear in his or her eye, without Mrs. Riddick immediately taking notice and providing the comfort that a small child needed so bad. People in the community later said that she could have bought a new house with the money she spent over the years buying food and shoes for the children. She taught three generations, and they were all her children.

She never asked anything in return.

Outside the classroom she set an example in compassion and caring. She was always ready to help the community's ailing, the poor, or just anyone that needed advice or a shoulder to cry on. For newcomers to the area, she would invariably bake a loaf of her mouth watering homemade bread.

"You could tell when Mrs. Riddick was coming up the path by the smell of that delicious bread," recalls Margaret Frazier Tucker, who along with her husband J.B., are natives of the valley.

Time has a way of standing still, but only in our minds.

This was my thought the other afternoon as some of us drove up along Hurricane Creek, listening as we went, to Thomas Frazier relate tales of his young years, many of which were spent in that scenic community.

Before the day was over we had visited with several old-timers, and a few new residents, of the area.

While several prominent people have their roots, or graves, in this beautiful valley, few, if any, reside there today. Yet, there are still some characters living in this refuge of days gone by, and the memories of the community's mile markers are as vivid as the day they were made.

Mrs. Riddick's son, Frank Jr., followed his mother's inclination and became a public servant; Probate Judge of the county, to be exact. Buck Watson became a noted Huntsville lawyer. Alvin Blackwell attained several high chairmanships, including the county Democratic Party helmsman for many years. Herbert Ray went on to head one of the state's leading Ford dealers.

There were others who made their mark, of course, and to continue listing names would take more space than we have room for in this story. Such a list would certainly have to include the unsung heroes who have contributed much to the area while avoiding the illumination that often comes with good citizenship.

Gus Peavy, known to all the children as Uncle Gus, always had a smile on his face and a place in his heart for the youngsters living on the creek. Thomas told me that uncle Gus never forgot the names of any children, and sure enough, while sitting in the front yard of some local citizens, he drove up in his old pickup truck.

He immediately recognized Thomas and called him by his name (which was Tommy in those long ago days on Hurricane Creek).

I later asked Thomas how long it had been since he had last seen Gus.

"Oh, about thirty or thirty-five years."

These were also the days when politicians would hold rallies and provide watermelon cuttings, barbecue cookouts and fish fries. They don't do

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"Have you noticed that bottled lemon juice contains mostly artificial ingredients but dishwashing liquid contains real lemons?"

Cindy Havron, South Pittsburgh

that much anymore.

Hurricane Creek had other interesting happenings, like the time Elvis Presley's father, Vernon, brought his new bride to the Ray's ranch house for their honeymoon. Vernon wanted a place where he could get away from the press to relax and the valley was a perfect haven for the lovebirds.

During the heyday of moonshine, some mighty fine brew was produced in the area, but the Tuckers don't remember any thing about it, they being from proper Christian homes and all. "Some of the men-folks would go up to Jones Hollow in Lick Skillet to get liquor. They never caused no trouble, they'd just get together down on the creek and play cards and tell lies," said Tucker, who was born in 1922.

If Hurricane Creek ever had such a thing as a "town hall," it was Bobby Bragg's Grocery Store. Someone sitting on the old wooden bench in front of the store, maybe whittling on a piece of wood, would sooner or later hear of everything that happened in the community. The store first opened in 1903 as the J.H. St. Clair Grocery. Mr. St. Clair also owned the local sawmill, cotton gin and coal mine. St. Clair was loved in the community and often spearheaded movements to help widows and orphans, providing food and coal to them. His grocery, if hard times necessitated it, would operate on the barter system when people had no money, or it would operate on the generous credit system when people had nothing.

There have been some anxious moments on Hurricane Creek, too. Like the time a shotgun was fired through the store's front door. It was the result of a dispute between two feuding families, one member of which was inside the store buying groceries and the other outside waiting to waylay him. Patience wore thin for the ambusher, however, so he fired into the store, hitting nobody.

That was the most serious violence that ever occurred at the store, although Bob Blackwell, who was a deputy, once arrested a drunk who took the whole matter personally. The drunk returned that night and burned the Blackwell barn.

The store was also a voting place, which attracted more than usual interest. A common practice in those days was for unscrupulous candidates to pay for votes among the rougher elements. One voter, known for his close kinship with John Barleycorn, boasted that he sold his vote three times to

various candidates. It was noted, however, that he got so plastered on "candidate whiskey" that he passed out before he got around to casting his vote for anybody.

Other remembrances among the residents reflect lives of good morality and of helping fellow citizens. Take Milam McGee, for example. He would stop his school bus every day at the store and let the children buy candy. Of course, he always used the excuse that he needed some tobacco. He must have had the biggest stock of tobacco in the county.

Hurricane Creek has changed a lot over the years. The old dilapidated homes, with privies out behind the woodsheds, are now being replaced with modern brick homes. The fields where whole families toiled in the hot sun, picking cotton, are now home to expensive hybrid cattle. The old wood stove is gone from the store, as are the kerosene lamps, overalls and candy counters. The school bus doesn't stop there anymore and men will never again gather at the store to swap hunting and fishing tales with Bobby.

We all grow up and most of us move away to pursue different careers. We spend our lives chasing a dream called wealth and recognition.

It's only when we begin to get old that we realize that the true dreams are about places like Hurricane Creek.



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Were You There During the "Good Ole Days"?

by Jean (Brewer) McCrady



My purpose here is to establish a Good Ole Days Club, and it's up to you to determine whether you are a member, and at what level. If you answer Yes to 35 or more of these 50 items, consider yourself a Charter Member; up to 20 you're an Associate Member; if fewer than 10, you're outside the Club. Grab a pencil and for each Yes, circle the number as you read, then count them when finished. Here goes—

(1) You were raised on a farm. (2) You have plowed a field, without a tractor. (3) You have plowed a field with a tractor. (4) You chopped cotton in the July sun and picked it in the September sun. (5) You have taken your Saturday bath in a No. 2 washtub or something smaller. (6) The biggest event of the year, aside from Christmas, was a day at the county fair. (7) You looked forward all week or all month to going to town on Saturday. (8) Somewhere on the premises of your home place was a structure called the outhouse.

(9) A room was added or a porch enclosed and the outhouse was moved inside. (10) Your family was poor—but you didn't know it. (11) You could mail a letter for .30, or .50 if it was Air-mail. (12) You said Yes Sir, No

Sir, Yes M'am, and No M'am to adults, especially your parents. (13) When the cousins spent the night, you all slept on pallets, built with quilts your Mama had made. (14) When adults were talking, kids did not interrupt. (15) You bought bread for 1.20 a loaf and got change back from a 5 bill after filling your gas tank.

(16) A typical Saturday night date was sitting in the living room with your Feller or Girl listening to the Grand Ole Opry. (17) You wouldn't even think dirty words in the presence of your parents, much less say them. (18) You learned early that the noblest activity one could do was work—hard work.

(19) You also learned that next to work, nothing was more important than honesty, unless it was cleanliness. (20) You believed if you ever told a lie, especially to your parents, in the next instant you would drop dead, or worse. (21) It was your job to do one or more of these things, at one or both ends of the day: milk the cow(s), feed the pigs and chickens, churn butter, draw and bring in water from the well, bring in coal or stowood (as stove wood was called). (22) Walking was a means of transportation, not a fitness routine.

(23) When you finally got a telephone in the house, the line was shared with 4 or 8 of your (nosy) neighbors. (24) You had a pair of Sunday shoes that you didn't wear any other time except to funerals or maybe to town. (25) Kids chased and caught lightning bugs and stored them in a Mason jar. (26) You ate wild plums picked straight from the bushes along dusty country roads. (27) You wrote your name on your cotton pick-sack with polk berries. (28) You built playhouses by sweeping the ground clean and outlining the rooms with rocks.

(29) You respected your

school teachers, and the principal even more. (30) You knew for certain if you ever got paddled at school you'd get a harder one when you got home. (31) There were two kinds of books in your home—the Bible and your school books. (32) The Sears Roebuck catalog was kept in the outhouse. (33) The only kind of running water you knew was that in the creek running through the pasture. (34) Your Mama had an automatic dishwasher—and it was you. (35) You met the Peddler and traded him eggs or butter for chewing gum and candy. (36) The gravest crime you could ever contemplate was playing hooky from school.

(37) You looked forward to May 1st every year because that was the first day of "barefoot season". (38) "I love you" was not often heard or said in your home, and you've wished you could go back and change that. (39) You listened to Fibber Magee and Molly on the radio. (40) You listened to Sterchi's Jamboree on the radio while doing house work. (41) When you got a whipping, you had to go to the orchard and get your own switch. (42) You remember when "eating out" was having the noon meal in the cotton field rather than going to the house.

(43) A man's word was his honor and he lived and died by it. (44) Verbal agreements were sealed with a handshake and were seldom if ever broken. (45) Parents made the rules and children followed them. (46) Your parents told you "You'll never pay for your raising till you have kids of your own." (47) You are a parent and now feel like you are out of debt. (48) Being educated meant you graduated from high school. (49) You realize, "Good Ole days" does not define a time in the past, but the conditions that made you who you are in the present. (50) You can say "I wouldn't change it if I could" and mean it.

Now count your Yeses and see where you stand in the Good Ole Days Club. I wish I could know how many Charters, Associates and Non-Members we have. Needless to say, I am a Charter Member. I didn't make this stuff up. I lived it.

The Mission of a Cat

Author Unknown



Most people think that cats do nothing, are lazy and just eat and sleep. It is not so!

Do you know what a cat's real mission and purpose is?

All cats have the power, every day, to remove the negative energy accumulated in our body... as soon as we fall asleep, they absorb that energy. If there is more than one person in the family, and only one cat it can accumulate an excessive amount of negativity by absorbing energy from so many people. When they sleep, the cat's body releases negativity it takes away from us. If we are too stressed, they may not have enough time to release all that negative energy, and so, as a result, it accumulates as fat, until they can release it. So, they get fat and you think it was the food you were feeding them... or because they don't move enough... and the truth is, they don't. It is nice to have more than one cat in the house, so that the weight is divided between them.

They also protect us during the night, so that no unwanted spirits enter our house or our room while we sleep... That's why they like to sleep in our bed. If they think we're fine, they won't sleep with us. If there was something strange around us, they jump into our bed and protect us... If a person comes to our house, and the cats feel that that

person is there to harm us or that he is bad, the cats surround us to "protect" us...

If you don't have cats, and a stray cat comes into your house and adopts it as a home, it's because you need a cat at that particular time... So the stray cat volunteered to help you. Thank the cat for choosing your home for that job. If you have other cats and can't keep the stray cat, find a place for him. The cat came for a reason unknown to us on a physical level, and in dreams you can see the reason for the appearance of the cat at that moment. There may be a debt, some karma he has to pay... "So don't freak out or frighten the cat." Well, "he" will have to come back, one way or another, to fulfill this obligation... Cats heal us.

Cats are adorable creatures, and they love their owners above all else, but they have a different way of loving...

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Local Street News in 1885



- A Huntsville washer woman was arrested Thursday on a warrant from Judge Richardson for larceny. It is charged that she received clothes to wash, and sold them instead of returning them.

- There is a new manufacturing enterprise locating in our city. It is a cigar factory, to be located on Franklin Street, below the post office. The proprietor, J. B. Dierke of Cincinnati, wisely decided on Huntsville after surveying several other cities. He informs us that he will use only the finest of goods, and his work will be handmade. So we will be seeing cigars made of only purest of tobacco, without the use of cabbage leaves, old rusty pieces of nails and leather.

- Stolen last Thursday night from Thomas Gore near Huntland, Tennessee a black horse mule. A reward of ten dollars will be paid for the return of the mule and ten dollars for the apprehension of the thief. The lucky man can address this newspaper or Thomas Gore in Huntland.

- Gas Cooking Stoves - Best of stoves for use by families, hotels and restaurants, supplied with di-

rections for use, gas at reduced prices when used for cooking or bath rooms. See J. W. Murdock, Northeast corner of Huntsville Hotel.

- In front of Charley Cummings' grocery store, corner Holmes and Washington, we notice a very neat invention, known as the "Patent Well Windlass." Mr. Cummings has the county right for its sale.

- The ladies held prayer meetings at the same hour at the Methodist Church, and we hear that the proceedings were very touching. The good which has been done here cannot be estimated and an impression has been made on the citizens which will perhaps last forever.

- The air of quiet which prevails around the Mayor's office, proves that we have either the finest police in the world, or we live in the most law abiding city on the continent. If any other city of our population can say as much, we would like to hear from it.

- Captain A. B. Jones and family have removed from Monte Sano to the city, in order to make preparations for the opening of the next session of the Huntsville Female College, of which Capt. Jones is the President.

- Mr. and Mrs. De Young, formerly of Pulaski, Tennessee and now living in New Market, had a little son Robbie bitten by a rattlesnake about eleven o'clock Sunday morning, while walking on the Chapman place, near the Barracks. The snake hung its fangs in the boy's heel, and as the boy ran he jerked the snake several feet.

An older brother witnessed the whole thing and killed the snake, which had one button and no rattle, showing the snake to have been one year old. The little sufferer was treated by Dr. Ridley and is now recuperating. This is the third child to be bitten by snakes in Huntsville this year.

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Broken Heart

by Gerald Alvis

The Trimmers were considered inseparable, and a few hours after hearing of her passing, Mr. Trimmer joined his wife of 61 years. What a powerful bond. I began to ponder, and I wondered - is it a romantic coincidence, or could it be that something that is not visible or quantifiable has more influence than most acknowledge? Curiosity got the best of me as I began to research the matter. I found other incidences online, and it turns out that the effects of this union can be measured in one vital area of the body. The medical term that describes the condition is stress cardiomyopathy or Broken Heart Syndrome.

I believe the mental and spiritual can be manifested in the physical and that we are intertwined with those around us. We feel empathy for those we care for; we share their joys, passions, and pain. Often, even remotely, this feeling can be extended outwardly to people we have never met. They are to us unknown, but in whose struggle and triumph we can identify.

Others reciprocate for us, but oh, there are those most precious people. Those that would lay down their lives to protect ours.

It is not a sad thing or just an act of chivalry; to me, it's proof of something greater than self, of a force that changes lives and relationships, whose effect benefits even those who are yet to be. Its power comes from unselfishness, the ability to love more than we love ourselves.

At least for me, that is where happiness is derived.

I believe that Life Force compels us to continue. Opening our eyes in the next is a progression as natural as our first glimpse of this world. Mr. Trimmer, at the moment leading up to his death, repeatedly uttered the phrases "Pull me up" and "Hold me tighter now."

A hole was torn in the fabric where two souls were joined; I believe he went to patch things up with the Ms.'s.

To the Editor:

"In issue 72 you mentioned Star Market being the first air-conditioned grocery store in town and it brought back a lot of memories. Whenever we had company from out of town, we always went to Star Market to shop. It never failed to impress them!"

"My grandmother (born 1871) refused to go back in the store after it was air-conditioned. She said it was unnatural and would make you sick. She would sit outside while we shopped; then we had to take the groceries outside for her inspection. After she approved them we would then go back inside and pay for them."

Mrs. Lowell Younger, Nashville, Tenn.
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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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BOTTLE TREES AND TROUBLE

by M. D. Smith, IV



Have you ever seen a bottle tree? I'm talking about a tree with bottles tied to the limbs with string or stuck upside down on bare limbs of small trees stripped of branches and leaves. They now make black metal frames to hold bottles of your choice in your garden or yard.

The legend of these bottles appears to go back to the Congo during the ninth century. People believed the bottles would trap and ward off evil spirits. They preferred blue bottles. Today, people have them in gardens, even in various colors for decoration, and the legend persists that evil spirits will get trapped inside and the sunlight will destroy them.

At age nine in 1949, I emerged from the other side of woods behind my home and came upon a beautiful sight for a boy with his BB gun. The rear yard of another neighborhood had a sizeable decorative garden of rose bushes edged with azalea plants that had finished blooming for the season. In the middle was a metal structure sprouting several dozen, primarily blue bottles. What a target for a BB gun, about the only target that would shatter when hit.

I lay in a prone position, imagining myself in the trenches of WWI, firing at the enemy. Pull the trigger and "crash," another soldier obliterated

into pieces. I was having such a good time when about half of the bottles lay in pieces that I didn't hear the property owner creep up behind me until he stood very close.

"What in hell do you think you're doing, kid?"

I rolled over, stared up into an angry face, and didn't say anything. Geesh! Captured in enemy territory and no place to run.

"Well?" He put his hands on his hips, waiting for an answer. "I don't know," I said with a sheepish grin.

He grabbed my BB gun in one hand and my rear shirt collar in the other. "Well, I know what happens now. We're going inside to call your parents and see what they have to say. I believe you've set some evil spirits loose upon yourself."

I didn't know about the legend of the bottles. Once inside his house, I gave him three wrong numbers—said I'd forgotten, but soon realized I wasn't going anywhere until he got the right one. It was a Saturday, and my father was home. Both parents drove over to get me at the neighbor's house, apologized profusely and my mother took me to the car. I never knew what happened inside and they never told me. I don't think the owner could put a monetary value on empty bottles and settled for my father's promise of punishment. During the silent drive home, I cowered in the back seat. The

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"I read Shakespeare and the Bible, and I can shoot dice. That's what I call a liberal education."

Tallulah Bankhead

punishment wasn't as bad as I feared. I lost the use of my BB gun until November.

Then my father made an indoor target BB backstop in our basement from a cardboard box stuffed with magazines. He helped me join the Junior NRA from a form in the back of a comic book. I shot at "NRA Official 15 Foot" targets, mailed them in for awards, and memorized the safe handling rules for all guns. I still have my Expert Marksman bar that hung from my Junior NRA medal, but I don't know what happened to the rest.

The only bottles I shot after that were a few whisky bottles found on the sides of roads because I'd also discovered soda bottles were worth deposit money upon return. That kept me in coke and candy money.

Now let's fast forward to 1961, just twelve years later, for a nine-year-old, a lifetime away. I was newly married. Judy and I lived in the student apartments. Early December arrived and I turned twenty-one. Alcohol purchase legal, not that being underage had slowed me down too much, and I got a case of beer to celebrate until the Christmas holidays. I had a collection of empty brown Budweiser bottles in short order and hated to just bust them up in the garbage.

I remembered the bottle trees. We had a small sapling in the backyard, barren of leaves and just right to put my bottles on the limbs. So I soaked the labels off, and that's what I did with my case of empties. It brought back memories of the year when I'd used my BB gun on blue ones and later learned the mythical origin of bottle trees.

I called my new wife to see the talisman art project I'd created. "Ain't this a beauty? It'll ward off evil spirits."

"No, it won't," she said. "It'll show our neighbors that a drunk redneck and his wife live here. How about taking them all off?"

She said it in such a way that I knew it was not a request. But, to avoid frigid weather, I agreed. Not having my trusty BB gun with me at school, I took the bottles off and threw them in our dented metal outdoor garbage can, busting each one on the other as they hit.

By complying with the suggestion, I'd avoided at least one evil spirit at dinner and bedtime that night.

"I don't mean to brag, but I just put a puzzle together in a day and the box said '2-4 Years'".

Kathleen Vaughn, Huntsville

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TWO MONDAYS IN THE SAME WEEK

by Elizabeth Wharry



I love to travel. My greatest adventure was going to Australia in January 2012. I had been corresponding with my pen pal Martin for about 25 years. We heard about each other's lives through "snail mail" and then email. There were a few odd phone calls, but they were quite expensive.

I boarded my plane in Nashville on a Monday and landed in Melbourne on a Wednesday. It was pretty awesome crossing the equator as well as the international date line.

During my stay with Martin, his lovely wife Liz and their children, I had a wonderful time. Martin took me around to various sites. Altogether too soon, it was time to come home. Those two weeks went by way too fast.

As I boarded the jet and found my seat, I heard a lady with the most unusual deep drawl. For the life of me, I could not place it!

She said to the young man who was greeting passengers..."Hey...hey! We gunna cross that 'quator line' thang?"

The young man smiled and affirmed that fact. She went on to say, "When we cross it, I wanna get a picture of it. I done saw what it looks like in my daughter's jography book". (These are all her exact words) The crew member said that we were going to cross the international date line as well.

She asked, "What color is that? Does it intersect with that 'quator line' thang?" With a twinkle in his eye, and a straight face, he replied that it was blue.

At this point, I couldn't help myself...I had to chuckle quietly. Several of my fellow passengers also giggled quietly. None of us were sure if she was having a bit of fun, or she was serious. I do know that she made a rather uneventful flight somewhat amusing.

We left Australia on a Monday, and by crossing back over the international date line, we all had two Mondays in one week.

Wishing all of you a happy new year!

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The Big Lie

by Lawrence Hillis



Not long ago I was asked what was the biggest lie that I had ever told. All of my life I have tried to be as honest as possible while speaking. I don't even like to hear people exaggerate. However, one time I thought I had to tell a lie to get my point across.

My company moved from the Clinton Building to a new building in Research Park in 1987. Being in facilities, I was in charge of flying the US flag on our new flag pole. I researched the guidelines for the proper display of the American flag. If we flew the flag at night, it required a spotlight on it. The architect must not have known this because we did not have lights shining on the flag. That meant we had to take down the flag every night and put it back up each morning. After a couple of months of this, I installed spotlights.

Another guideline that is often broken is when to lower the flag to half-staff. The flag code states that the President will make a proclamation when an elected official dies or there has been a national tragedy or catastrophe. Often people lower their flag when a local celebrity or someone in their company dies. I noticed every few months the company located across the street from us would lower their flag to half-staff. Since the President had not made a proclamation, I called them and asked why the flag was at half-staff. The receptionist said an employee's family member died and they always lower their flag when that happens. I quoted the US flag code and she replied it was their flag and they would fly it anyway they wanted to. I asked to speak to the facility manager and she said he was out of town.

A couple of months later, the flag once again was lowered to half-staff. This time, I called and asked to speak to the facility manager. To get his attention I stated that I was in the Redstone Arsenal Color Guard and received reports of their improper handling of the American flag. I said, "you lower your flag every time someone dies. You can't do that bro." I also reminded him they had government contracts and it looks awkward when they do not follow government policy. The President's proclamation gives a timeline on when the flag should go back up to full staff. All flags are to be unison; lowered to half-staff the same day and then raised to full-staff on the same day.

I offered to send them the US Flag Code, but he said he would look it up and follow the guides in the future. Of course, I was not in the Redstone Arsenal Flag Color Guard so that was my big lie. However, from that time on I noticed they started following the President's proclamations. Perhaps the same result might have happened if I had just said I was a concerned citizen. As John Wayne would say, "not likely." So much for my biggest lie.

Currently, I am in the Color Guard of the Tennessee Valley chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR), and it is our goal to inform and educate the public on the proper display of the American flag. If we see the American flag improperly displayed, we should politely inform the person responsible on how to correctly fly the flag. I often see US flags still being flown when they are worn and tattered. This is a violation of the US flag code. The proper disposal of a tattered flag is to turn it over to the SAR, DAR, or VFW for proper disposal. Our SAR color guard participated in a flag disposal ceremony which is an honorable burning ceremony at the VFW in Decatur this fall.

I enjoy being in the color guard. I have a tailor-made Continental Army uniform and we stay busy providing color guard duties at many public functions. In 2022 we were a part of the wreath-laying event at the Veterans Park on Memorial Day. We also do grave markings. After the Revolutionary War, many veterans migrated to Alabama and we know of over 1,200 Revolutionary War soldiers buried in Alabama in the early 1800s. When identified, we purchase brass plaques and install them on Revolutionary War veterans' graves.

We have had several grave marking and wreath-laying ceremonies for Revolutionary War soldiers in 2022. Most of these cemeteries are in the county and very remote and often overgrown with brush, bushes, vines and trees. Before each event, the SAR cleans and clears the cemetery. We also have a team that has repaired tombstones.

We are also involved in memorial services for veterans. This year we had one in Cullman and one in Gadsden. We had a float in the Huntsville Veterans Day Parade. We team with the DAR when they ask us to provide color guard duties at their functions. We were also asked to present the colors at Huntsville and Madison County schools. The SAR Color Guard lead the parade at the Maple Hill Cemetery Stroll. The North Alabama Chapter presented the colors at the Alabama State SAR business meeting at the American Village in Montevallo, Alabama.

"By the time he was admitted, his rapid heart had stopped and he was feeling much better."

Seen on Cullman hospital chart

The History of Clayton E. Moneymaker American Legion Post 237

Revised by Ken Carpenter, Tom Hartley and Tom Paone



The history of the Clayton E. Moneymaker American Legion Post 237 in Huntsville dates nearly to the origin of the American Legion itself. It was founded under the leadership of Lt. Col. Theodore Roosevelt Jr. with veterans of the American Expeditionary Force in Paris in March of 1919, five months after the armistice that ended the Great War (WWI).

The earliest origin of Post 237 dates to June of 1920 with the activation under a temporary charter of the Peter Crump Post, the first Post in Madison County. Since its earliest days Post 237 has been a leader in the growth and development of Huntsville and Madison County and has supported our Nation's military service veterans. Its members have included celebrated military heroes from Madison County, distinguished government, civic, public service, and business leaders.

Between 1925 and 1926 the Post was reorganized as Huntsville - Madison Co. Post No. 37 and held its meetings at Riverton School near the Flint River. This early Post was active in securing military bonuses, war risk insurance, compensation and hospitalization for veterans. A permanent charter was issued for the Post in 1926. During the 1920s and the 1930s the Post provided numerous community support services including raising thousands of dollars to fund a local infants' hospital and leading a movement for creation of a municipal airport. The Post sponsored a \$7800 prize fight with 60,000 people in attendance for the development of local industry. Meetings were held in the homes of Post members throughout the county.

During WWII the Post led many community services including the establishment of air raid stations throughout the county and collection of records of fighting men. The Post donated its WWI German cannon located at the Courthouse for the wartime scrap metal drive. The Post sold \$162,500 in war bonds earning the honor of naming two bombers. The Post also sponsored a junior baseball team and Boys State and secured the assistance of the US Army for funeral salutes. It also collected clothing for

needy families and presented flags to local schools. In 1945-1946 County Post 37 was allotted a room at the National Guard Armory for its meetings. In 1950 a Post Home Auditorium costing \$20,000 was completed.

Between 1956 and 1957 a Post home was established at 313 South Memorial Parkway. Honoring a Medal of Honor recipient and Post member, the Post was renamed the Cecil H. Bolton Post 37 in 1965. Among the various charitable activities during the 1950s and 1960s the Post provided funds for a new hospital wing, a home for orphans and provided aid to veterans and their families. In the mid 1960s, a Post Color Guard was created which participated in the American Legion National Convention in Dallas, TX and the Post adopted the 93rd Evacuation Hospital in South Vietnam.

In 1967, the Post was re-established as Huntsville - Madison County Post No. 200 which leased a building at 202 Andrew Jackson Way at Five Points. In 1972, the Post was merged with Post 275 and renamed County Post 237. Post 237 was located at 421 Jefferson Street.

In the 1970s and 1980s the Post spon-



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sored Memorial Day services at Maple Hill Cemetery and distributed POW-MIA bracelets naming missing servicemen.

In 1983, the Post built its present home at 2900 Drake Avenue. In 2015, County Post 237 voted to change the post name to Clayton E. Moneymaker American Legion Post 237 in honor of a distinguished past Post Commander and Adjutant.

From the 1990s to the present, the Post has remained active in the support of veterans and the community. Among its many civic and veterans support activities the Post donates to the Tut Fann Veterans' Home, supports homeless veterans, and has collected and distributed aid to tornado and hurricane victims. The Post continues to sponsor Boys State, American Legion baseball, local JROTC programs, and the American Legion Oratorical contest. The Honor Guard conducts military funeral rites for veterans.

Post 237 is honored to have Gary "Mike" Rose as one of its members. In October 2017, Mike Rose was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his heroic actions in September 1970 in Laos.

Post 237 has grown to be the largest American Legion Post in the State of Alabama. The Post home serves as a meeting place for many other veterans' organizations in North Alabama and offers weekday lunch and nightly entertainment in the social quarters.

Ed note: John Carson, an author and frequent contributor to Old Huntsville magazine, was a long time member of the Post as well as taking part in the honor guard. John died in April of 2021 and is missed by so many.

For more information regarding the history and activities of Post 237 please visit our website at: www.legion237.com



Ghastly Discovery at Bird's Spring! Human Skeleton Found 15 Feet from Entrance, Arousing Much Interest in Late War!

from 1888 Newspaper

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

One of the curiosities of the cave trip was the discovery of a skeleton near the main entrance of the cave, the skull, and several bones of which are now on display at the office of Mr. Harris on Eustis Street. A Mercury reporter saw the skull last evening which was that of a full grown person, but how the owner of that "dead head" came to inhabit the cave is a matter in which the field of conjecture is wide.

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

Mr. Lippincott informs us that there are two apertures leading right and left after entering the cave, and he is determined to find out where they lead to, or at least satisfy himself to the probable dimensions of the cave.

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Snapshots In Time



We were 14 years old in the 9th grade at Huntsville Middle School, when it was located at the Annie Mertz Center on Randolph/White St. This was held during the Sesquicentennial celebrations in 1955.

From left to right: Anne Walker Forgey, Betty Vaughn Sisco Christian, Helen Hamm Ford, and Judy Chandler Smith



A Kid in the Country

by Clarence Golson

His education: When it came time for this kid to go to school, the idea of leaving home and going some unknown place with people he didn't know was very unsettling and really activated his shyness. First day, the kid hid under the table on the porch and his mother drove him to school but he would not voluntarily get out of the car.

His mother asked the principle to try to persuade this shy kid to come in to see what was being taught and who his classmates would be. As part of the principal's effort, he saw a road grader. The school was on a gravel road and the grader was about to begin the day's work. The sound of a small motor started and he explained that the small motor was needed to start the big motor on the big machine. But it didn't work. The principal explained that the kid would learn about these machines in school. That didn't work either. As years went by, this turned out to be a LIE. The kid didn't trust him after that and he never regained the kid's complete trust.

On the way home the kid's mother told the kid that she and his father had worked hard and sacrificed a lot so the kid could go to school. Because he didn't want to see his mother cry again he went to school without much argument.

In the first grade, the kid remembered being taught how to count up to 10. But the teacher spent so much time on that, the kid became bored. On one fateful day, the teacher was ill and a ninth grade young woman came over to keep the students in line and maybe teach something. She went past 10, then 100, then 1000 and the world of numbers opened up and the world would never be the same again. Numbers became millions, billions and on to infinity. Number puzzles were a favorite pass time.

One thing more about his education. The kid hated literature, it was useless, even painful. He had a problem that teachers ignored. The words and letters would, most times, be jumbled. So, he used his finger to keep the words and letters to force his mind to keep things in

order, teachers didn't like that and thought he was below par in intelligence and put him in "reading group two". He hated being in "reading group two." All the books teacher wanted him to read were from the imagination of people that the kid thought didn't have a real life to live. He did, so why bother reading someone's imagination, when he had a life to live. The kid still has to use his finger but reading got much easier as years went by. With the invention of television, he wondered why read when it can be watched?

The kid struggled with teachers and reading his entire years of his education.. When he graduated high school, he had read less than 10 real books because he found synopsis books and teachers never claimed they knew what he did. In life, he became a computer programmer and worked on computers that fit in his hand to ones that filled whole rooms for state governments, textile companies, banks and NASA.

Now he is retired and plays with computers.

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An (Almost) Hidden Treasure

by Iolanda Hicks



“Almost” hidden because this very special place, located in what was one of the hangers of the Old Huntsville Airport, can barely be seen if you are traveling west on Airport Road towards Leeman Ferry. If you aren't looking for it, you'll miss it. This special place protects bits of military history dating back to the Revolutionary War. It is Huntsville's U.S. Veterans Memorial Museum, a project that volunteers took in hand many years ago.

Incorporated in 1986 as a non-profit, the idea of the museum was in its baby years. The founder had been collecting military memorabilia and articles for most of his life and everything was being kept in a storage area in Gadsden. When a heavy snow storm came through one year, the unit's roof caved in and he relocated everything to a warehouse in Huntsville.

Over the years following this move, the old hanger became available and a group of supporters were able to secure the location to house this history. The location had once also been used for Huntsville's work release inmates. Much had to be done to prepare the old hanger and transform it into the home that would hold a part of our country's military history.

Many supporters helped with the transformation. On Veterans Day 2001, and as a tribute to lives lost on 9-11, the museum was officially opened. An entire military collection, acquired over a good 50 years, was now part of the museum and this was

just the beginning. Since then, through donations of memorabilia, the museum has out grown itself and volunteers are working with the city to expand the museum.

I was not that familiar with the Veteran's museum and, being a female, thought that the museum was only about war. I was so wrong! When my husband decided to volunteer at the museum and join the staff, I learned how wrong I was to think that this museum was only about war. The museum is also about progress, change and democracy. War and conflict cause us to examine ourselves more and increases our appreciation of our freedoms. Through the many sacrifices of our living and deceased men and women of our various armed forces, we are free, safe!

I have walked through the museum several times and each time I see something new. There is a British Brown Bess Musket, the first prototype jeep by Ford: the Pygmy serial number 1, a Humvee Teledyne Brown prototype #1 of the High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle (HMMWV). One special exhibit is the 40 & 8 Boxcar which was used in WWI. It was one of 49 such boxcars given to the United States, each filled with gifts of gratitude from the people of France. The museum is full of so much history, so much to see: the Revolutionary War, War with Mexico of 1846, to the Civil War, WWI, WWII, the Korean War, Vietnam, Desert Storm and present day. Many displays are to be studied and, hopefully, in the near future, with more room, more to be added. Check out the web site: www.memorialmuseum.org and you will get a really good idea of what is available at this extraordinary place.

It takes many volunteers for the museum to exist and run smoothly. I was very privileged to get to meet several of these special volunteers “behind the scenes”. Cory Kellar, retired veteran and office manager will greet you as you enter. He is very knowledgeable of the museum contents and can tell you tidbits of things you may not know. When we started talking about the museum, he asked me to wait a minute, left the office and came back with a wooden plank that was on a display from the museum. Cory tells me of a story about empty wooden crates that had once held ordnance. After WWII, these crates were for sale out on Redstone Arsenal and several construction companies bought them. The boards from these

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crates were used back then in the building of some of those older homes that are now being torn down and replaced with the modern ones. So if you happen to see a board in some of those discarded wood piles with letters and numbers stamped in black with a lot number, that's probably a board from a crate. Just a little trivia!

I took a little stroll, with David my guide and hubby, to the Library/ Archives area where I met some of the most entertaining gentlemen: Rob (Robley) Director of Archives, Ken (Magnant) IT Manager, Harlan (Hurley) Editor Manager and David (Jaekel) News Letter Editor. These gentlemen are all responsible for maintaining, cataloging and entering data for the museum's database and archives.

I met Claire and Sara just down the hall, working in the library, which now has at least 13,000 books cataloged, all pertaining to the military, past and present. Claire is a nurse at the Senior Center during the day and Sara is a student at UAH, studying for her Masters in History. Restoration is another area where volunteers help. My David has volunteered in that area.

The Restoration area is located off Lee-man Ferry in a Maintenance Warehouse. Here, procured vehicles, some from past wars, lie in wait for repair and future entry to the museum. It is slow work and tedious.

Right now, David and Don (Davis) are refurbishing an M3 Stuart Tank. Don has been a volunteer at the museum for 22 years and really seems to enjoy his volunteer work. There are probably at least 50 or more volunteers helping to maintain this hidden treasure. I was fortunate to meet just a handful.

Volunteers are veterans, students and just everyday Huntsvillians wanting to help keep this very meaningful part of our military history alive.

I would like to say thank you to the volunteers who have dedicated a part of their lives in the preservation of our military history and for contributing a lifelong collection to the museum. I also say another thank you for all the work and effort in establishing such a wonderful memorial for our veterans, past and present.

A big thank you goes out to all those volunteers who have made so much happen at the museum. The museum is open Wednesday through Saturday, 10AM to 4 pm. Check it out. I think you will be surprised at the wealth of Military History that's right here in our fair city.

THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW (FROM THE YEAR 2003)

- Red cars sell the fastest and have the highest resale value. When it comes to houses, however, yellow is the preferred color.

- Houses that sell in the month of June bring the highest prices.

- The average bra size sold in 1995 was a 36C. Ten years ago it was a 34B. Almost 85% of women wear the wrong bra size.

- Two out of five people can't resist peeking into the medicine cabinet when they use the bathroom at a friend's house. Single people are much more likely to nose around than those who are married.

- Half of all coffee users drink it black. Surprisingly, almost a third of Americans say they never touch the stuff.

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THE MISSING BUICK

by Bill Wright

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

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

As I was driving my truck to Parkway Place Mall my thoughts went back in time to years ago when I had another vehicle stolen and it was a horrible experience. In this incident the driver went around a curve too fast and

crashed into a roadside mailbox. A witness said he jumped out of my car and ran from the scene. I spent many hours dealing with the Police Department, towing company, impounding lot company and finally the auto body shop.

Additionally, I received a telephone call from the owner of the roadside mailbox wanting me to pay for his destroyed mailbox.

I explained to him that it was a stolen vehicle and I had no responsibility to replace his mailbox. I never heard from him again.

When I arrived at Parkway Place Mall my relative was upset, believing like me that the Buick was stolen. I told her we would start at one end of the parking lot and drive each parking row looking for the Buick before we telephoned the police. I told her

that as we entered each parking row to push the horn button on the Key Fob so that if the Buick was in that row, we would hear the horn blow. She told me that is what she had done when walking the parking rows in the area where she had parked the Buick and never heard a horn blow.

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

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

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

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PET TIPS FROM ANGEL

Pet Care in Winter



Along with proper nutrition, several factors will help ensure the health and comfort of pets during the winter. Pets of all ages should be in good body condition prior to and during winter months to withstand colder temperatures. Providing the special care your pets need during cold weather may require extra work, but helping ensure their well-being and comfort makes it well worth the effort.

As the temperature falls, cats and dogs need more food. On the average, dogs require about 7.5% more food for each 10 degree drop in temperature. Feeding your pet twice a day may help ensure that he gets enough food. If you do change from once-a-day to twice-a-day feeding, do so gradually over a 7 -10 day period.

During cold weather, pets should have fresh, unfrozen water available at all times. Adding warm water to a dry dog food diet can help make sure the dog's water intake is sufficient.

Even animals acclimated to the outdoors have trouble during the winter. Please do not leave a dog or cat who has become accustomed to a warm house outside. If you are uncomfortable, certainly your pet is as well. Older animals and nursing mothers and their babies need special attention and, if possible, should be brought inside.

For animals who must spend any time outdoors, adequate shelter is a must. Keeping pets dry and protected from winter winds is essential. Dog houses should face away from the wind, have warm, dry bedding such as clean straw and have a doorway that is covered by a rug or some burlap.

Our animal friends give us so much, the least we can do for them is provide the necessities to ensure their safety, health and happiness - not only in winter but all year long.

Tips and Reminders

* Antifreeze poisons small children and pets. Wipe up spills promptly. If you suspect poisoning, seek medical attention immediately.

* Warm auto engines attract cats. Remember to bang on your hood to scare away any furry friend who may be inside.

* Talk to your veterinarian about vitamin and oil supplements to help keep down your cat's dander due to dry indoor heating. Long coated breeds of dogs should be groomed all year round. Coats should be kept a little longer in winter.

* Resist the urge to give too many rich treats to your pet. Feed your dog before guests arrive and give him a nylon bone to keep him engaged.

* And very important - Please don't give a pet as a gift unless you are sure the animal is wanted. Heartache can be spared animals and humans alike if the recipients have the opportunity and joy of choosing their own pet.

Birds Must Breathe!

Please remember to keep your pet birds in mind when you are entertaining during the holidays. Scented candles, plug-in room fresheners and smoking can all be harmful to birds. Most pet birds are confined and cannot escape if their breathing space becomes dangerous.

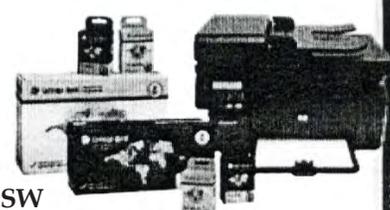
Be extra careful of those net seed catchers that go around the bottom of the cage - birds can get their claws badly tangled in that.

Remind your guests to be considerate of your feathered family members. I never realized that those oils that you burn in vaporizers can actually smother indoor birds. Be kind to your outdoor birds and scatter around a bit of sunflower seed or bird seed when the weather gets cold!

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Alabama Birdmen Lose Their Way

by Tom Carney

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

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

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

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

The roar of their planes brought alarm from the citizenry.

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

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

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

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

Hundreds of automobiles, loaded with passengers, dashed to the field that night to help break the darkness, and to aid the fliers in their precarious attempts to land;

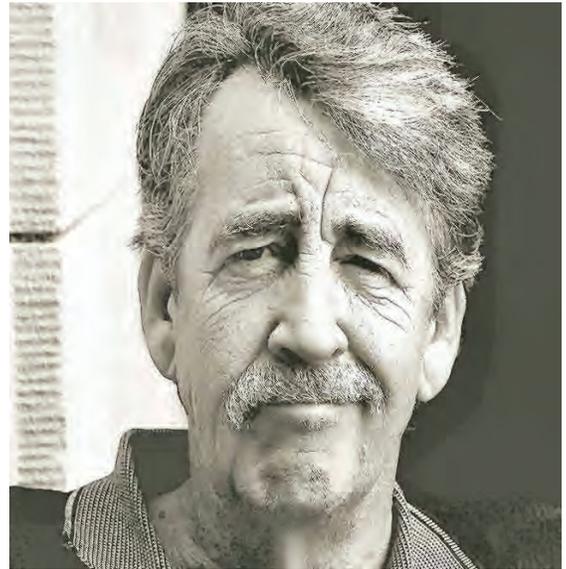
The Army birdmen, one by one, commenced to land while breathless citizens looked on. The first plane taxied back up the field late that evening.

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

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

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

The Army fliers spent the night at the Russel Erskine Hotel, having experienced what could have been a tragic land-



ing, but for Huntsville's speedy answer to a distress situation.

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

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

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

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

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

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

"The doctor told my wife to start walking five miles a day, for her health. Last I heard she was in Arizona."

Bud Carter, Madison

THE BIG DITCH

by Bob Alverson



To borrow a line from my friend Jim McBride's song Dixie Boy "I was raised in the shadow of an old cotton mill". Jim and I were both raised in the shadow of the old Dallas Mill, me just deeper in the shadow.

I grew up in the very first house on Rison Avenue in Dallas Village. Directly across the street from our house was "the Big Ditch". It has its beginning on Chapman Mountain above Saddletree. This stream meanders past Chapman School down to run parallel to Rison Avenue, under the railroad track into Lincoln Village and on to Pinhook Creek. On a Huntsville topological map, it is called Dallas Branch. To those of us who grew up on its banks in Dallas Village, it was known as "The Big Ditch."

The ditch provided a place for us kids to play. It was great for playing war, hiding in the weeds and climbing the banks. We would hunt crawfish and

use them as bait to fish in our favorite fishing holes along the ditch. At times, we even confronted water moccasins. It is amazing that not one was ever bitten; because when we were playing in the ditch, they were the furthest thing from our minds.

The real fun with the Big Ditch came when we had heavy rain. The ditch was probably 8 to 10 feet deep and 12 feet across at the top. Branches and trash washing down from up stream would block the flow under the bridges and water would overflow the banks.

Our house was one of the old mill houses. It had four steps to the porch. When the ditch would overflow, it was fun to sit on the porch and watch the water and whatever was floating down stream. Many times, I would sit there and watch the water flow over the second step

leading to the porch.

When I was growing up, there were two bridges crossing the ditch, one for cars and one for walking. I believe it was in the late 50s when the city tore out those bridges and built just one to serve both purposes. In the process, they dug out that part of the ditch to make it wider and deeper. Heavy rains would come and it would become a large muddy pool. I can remember people getting in there with homemade boats and canoes and paddling around. I never had the nerve to do that.

After building the bridge the city came back and cemented the banks and bottom of the ditch, making it a true drainage ditch. Heavy rains continued to fill it; but I don't remember it ever overflowing again. The ditch now served its purpose; but all of us neighborhood kids have our memories of "The Big Ditch".

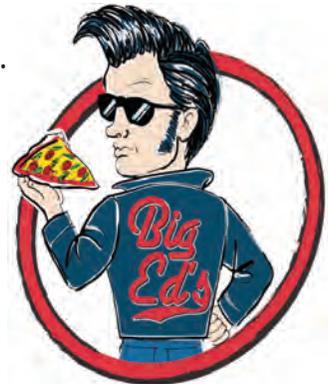
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"You know you've gotten old when 'Tying one on' means fastening your MedicAlert bracelet."

James Daly, Arab

The Goldsmith Schiffman Field - A Place of Memories

by Margaret Anne Goldsmith



It was 89 years ago when the Goldsmith and Schiffman families donated land for the Goldsmith Schiffman Field. The Civil Works Administration provided \$6,500 in materials and labor to construct the field, the first in Huntsville to accommodate night athletic games. The Acme Club raised funds for lighting through season tickets sales.

Dedication Exercises were held during the first night game on October 4, 1934, when 1,000 fans saw Coach Milton Frank's Huntsville High team defeat Gadsden High.

Not a week goes by that I do not meet someone who after hearing my name, asks if I am related to the people who gave the land for Goldsmith Schiffman Field. After I answer, "yes," they tell me about their memories of playing football there or watching games.

The Goldsmith Schiffman family donation has provided generations of residents to enjoy sports and community

events through the years. The donation of the two city blocks to the city for an athletic field was the first act of philanthropy in Huntsville made by the Goldsmith Schiffman family.

I had always wondered whose idea it was to donate the land our family owned for an athletic field and who talked to the city about making the donation. In reading the newspaper article written when the Field was dedicated, I learned that

my grandfather, Lawrence B. Goldsmith, Sr. was spokesperson for the donors at the dedication ceremony. Betty Schiffman, my grandmother's mother and Betty Goldsmith, my grandfather's mother had recently died.

My grandparents, along with other members of the Goldsmith and Schiffman families, wanted to create a memorial in memory of the two ladies. The two families owned suitable land for an athletic field located not far from Huntsville High School.

Knowing my grandfather's lifelong love of sports and his interest in young people based on his involvement with and organizing the Huntsville Boy Scouts, he may have recognized the city's need for an athletic field. He approached the other donors with the idea to donate land for a nighttime playing field in memory of Betty Schiffman and Betty Goldsmith.

The Dedication

When the land for the Goldsmith Schiffman Field was donated to the city of Huntsville, there was no historic marker. Everyone had always known that the Field was a gift from the Goldsmith and Schiffman families from the name, but over the years had forgotten the history of the gift.



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During the year 2000 I approached the Huntsville City School Board to request they provide funds for an historic plaque to tell the story of the Field and they agreed to do so.

First the plaque's history had to be documented which led to a search for the Field's dedication in old newspapers. Information about the naming of the Field in memory of Betty Schiffman and Betty Goldsmith, the names of the donors, the Acme Club raising funds for the lights, the Civil Works Administration building the rock wall and information about the first night game had all been forgotten.

Thomas Hutchens at the Huntsville Madison County Public Library found the newspaper article that documented the date the Field was dedicated and all the above information. The Huntsville Madison County Historical Society Committee in charge of Huntsville's historic plaques met and agreed on the wording for the plaque. Thank you, Thomas, and the Huntsville Historical Society!

The plaque was then constructed and on Friday October 24, 2000, at 6:30 PM a dedication ceremony was held just prior to the Huntsville High/Sparkman

High game.

I had asked former manager of the Russel Erskine Hotel and Chairman of Huntsville's 1955 Sesquicentennial Celebration, my grandfather's good friend Jimmie Taylor, to chair the event with me. Jimmie had been manager of the Huntsville High Team at the time the Field was dedicated, and we were lifelong friends.

Jimmie knew several players who played during the first game in 1934, Ernest Bailey and Hershel Bingham and invited them to join us and wear sweaters with their HHS letters attached, which they did. Friends were invited together with Huntsville's City Board of Education, the Mayor and Huntsville dignitaries.

The event was open to the public and a large crowd attended. Jimmie and I both spoke. I wore a traditional Huntsville High School white mum corsage with a red letter "H" attached.

In my speech I recounted the history of the Field and at the end I thanked everyone who had been involved with the event and most of all my ancestors who had had the foresight to make the donation in 1934.

I quoted a phrase made by

Sears Roebuck heiress, Edith Stern, who said, "It is easy to give away money, what is difficult is to give it away wisely." I felt that the gift of land for the Field was an exceptionally wise one as history had proven.

I then asked everyone to stand and join me in a round of applause for my ancestors' spirits that I knew were with us. Everyone stood and applauded. The plaque was unveiled, and pictures were taken celebrating the story of the Field that had been made known that evening.

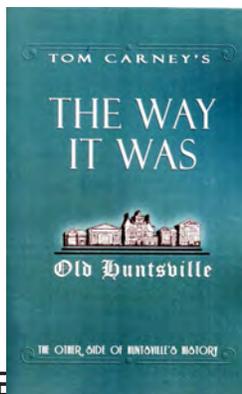
The historic plaque on the wall surrounding the Field reads as follows: On January 25, 1934, Oscar Goldsmith, Lawrence B. Goldsmith, Annie Schiffman Goldsmith, Robert L. Schiffman, and Elsie Steiner Schiffman gave this property to the City of Huntsville for an athletic field.

The gift was in memory of Betty Bernstein Goldsmith (wife of Oscar and mother of Lawrence) and Betty Herstein Schiffman (wife of Isaac and mother of the other donors.)

My hope going forward is that the field continues to be used by the community and to build good memories for generations to come.

"THE WAY IT WAS,"
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BY TOM CARNEY



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Mud, Odor and MOS Huntsville Area National Guard in Korean War (Chapter 4)

by Giles Hollingsworth

Our troop transport ship, the Marine Phoenix, landed in Pusan, Korea, on February 9, 1951, and we went ashore, anxious to feel good old solid ground under our feet after about three weeks of walking and standing on swaying, tilting steel floors. We had vowed to welcome Mother Earth with a kiss. But boom! Reality hit us! You don't kiss mud! Especially stinky mud. And there was mud everywhere.

For readers not familiar with the war details, North Korea invaded South Korea on June 25, 1950, and with a much larger army, drove the South Korean army and American occupational forces southward, nearly to Pusan, Korea's southernmost city, greatly overcrowding it with refugees and soldiers. By the time we arrived there United Nations forces (mostly Americans) had pushed the enemy back northward past Seoul, the capital, to about where the hostilities had begun. But by then the deluge of people and war vehicles had reduced Pusan to one huge slum, even much worse than Huntsville's Boogertown.

Now about that mud. Like back home, February in Korea was winter-time. Pusan is a coastal city, so gentle ocean breezes had helped to keep the winter milder than inland areas but still it was cold, and there was a thin layer of soft snow covering some of the ground.



But most of the snow had become part of the mud, squished into it by military vehicle tires, and thousands of army boots and Korean refugee shoes. Next, and this isn't pleasant, think about the sanitation problem there. With the population suddenly doubled, hundreds of outdoor privies were necessary. And I'm convinced that some of their odor, as it blanketed the area, was also squished into the mud.

For the first few days, while things were being readied for us to move to up near the front, our home was a tent in a staging compound appropriate-

ly called "Tent City". There I got more acquainted with Lt. Birmingham, Sgt. Hudgins, Jody Gibbs, and a few others, including George Roach, a special character. George had been the assistant manager of the Russel Erskine Hotel, hence the sign in the picture with J.O. Jennings.

While there my Communications Sections Chief, Sgt. Drummond, and I, got a big surprise. Sgt. Rice, the Company Sgt., informed us that he discovered my MOS (Military Occupational Specialty) was that of a truck driver, not a radio operator. You'll just have to go figure on that one because I was a doggone good radio operator but had never even learned to drive a car, let alone a truck. Sgt. Drummond and our Communications officer argued the case, but lost, because we learned once MOS'd you stay-MOS'd until it's officially changed, which takes a while. In the meantime I would have



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to learn to drive, and then drive a loaded truck, in a convoy, northward about 240 miles. It was all foolish, but it was the Army way. But it created for me an arduous, dangerous ordeal.

Not too surprisingly I got only about one hour of driver instruction/training. Steering was scary but I could do it well enough. But shifting gears was a nightmare with those big two-and-a-half ton army trucks.

Most readers of this have never even seen a gear-shift (a metal rod extending upward from the truck floor), or a clutch (a floor pedal in addition to the brake and accelerator). Well, to change gears from first to second I had to depress the clutch, move the gearshift position from first to neutral, push the clutch again, then shift from neutral to second. It's called double-clutching, and it's hard as hell for a beginner to learn how to do it, believe me.

When departure day arrived we headed north on the main highway to Taegu, about 70 miles away. Fortunately my vehicle to drive was a weapons carrier, a smaller truck, rated at about a ton-and-a half. It was loaded with wooden boxes filled with supplies, equipment and arms. Right away I was surprised to see that the "highway" was unpaved. I don't know if it had never been paved or if it once was and the pavement had been pulverized by tanks and half-tracks.

A few miles out of Pusan we passed through the aftermath of the Battle of Pusan: pushed off into the ditches on both sides of the road were remains of tanks, trucks, half-tracks, and jeeps, ours and those of the enemy. It brought on eerie feelings of awe for the magnitude of it and reverence for the horror and sorrow of it,

At about 30 miles into the trip, as we neared the summit of a small mountain, my motor started knocking loudly. I drove

on to the mountain top, then pulled over to the road-side and watched the rest of the convoy pass by and continue on. Then there I was, alone on that mountain top. It was quiet - too quiet. I was hoping to hear the sound of another truck, the one that Sgt. Rice had promised would be there, the one driven by the motor pool trouble-shooter, Cpl. Bob somebody. Not hearing that sound was increasingly unnerving. The first minute had already seemed like ten. It was common knowledge that there were a few enemy guerillas hiding in the mountains! But finally, after about two minutes I heard a truck coming. Thank goodness, it was Bob!

Bob was cryptic. He said it was the fly wheel knocking, that there was no quick fix, that he would have to tow me. He coupled our trucks with a 25 foot long chain, and off we went. But Bob had no way of knowing that I was not a truck driver, that I had never towed nor been towed. He thought I knew to keep the chain taut. But I didn't, so when he slowed for curves we got slack in the chain, and then when he accelerated it jerked out the slack, and jerked my truck, causing my cargo to

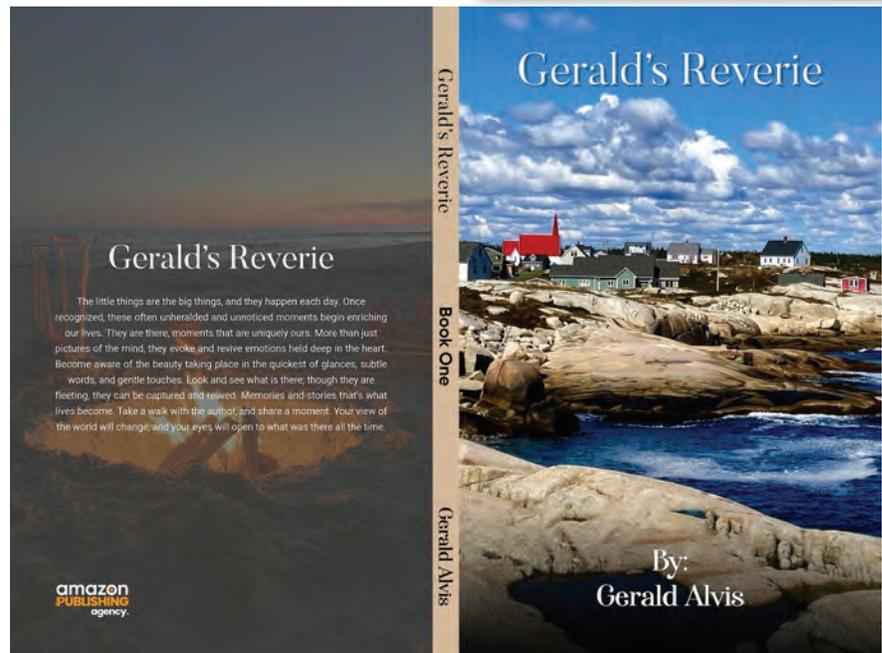
slide a little to the rear.

After several such jerks Bob stopped and told me I would have to almost constantly ride my brakes to keep the chain taut. I did that for the rest of the way to Taegu, about 40 miles.

Then as we drove the trucks down into a six foot deep motor pool bomb shelter the master cylinder burst and I crashed into the rear of Bob's truck, bringing my cargo of wooden boxes forward, just short of pinning me to the steering wheel.

The next day I had to drive about 100 miles, to Taejon, still in tow, still braking to keep the chain taut, but now using the (hand) emergency brake. Had to crouch forward, hold the brake with my left hand and steer with my right hand. There was just no end to my acquisition of driving skills! I must have been born to that MOS! Did likewise on the third day, the last 70 miles, from Taejon to Suwon. I can laugh about it now, but it was very grueling.

"You know how to tell if your teacher is hung over? Movie day."
Billy Davis, 8th grader



AUNT SEALY

by Ruby Crabbe 1994



The first time I saw Aunt Sealy, I had no way of knowing the joy and happiness that short plump woman would bring into my life.

Aunt Sealy was a black woman who earned her living by washing and ironing for people in Dallas Village. She also did work for a few families in Lincoln Village. No matter how hot the sun, or how cold the day, Aunt Sealy toiled long and hard, bent over a washboard in someone's back yard. Every time you saw her you would see the little cloth sack and walking stick she carried everywhere she went. At the end of a hard day she was never too tired to stop and say a few kind words to everyone she met. To say Aunt Sealy was a permanent fixture in Dallas Village would be putting it mildly, she was a permanent fixture in the hearts of all those folks who were fortunate enough to know her.

I remember the early mornings when the kids would gather together to see who would be the first one to see Aunt Sealy coming down the street. We would all run to meet her and by the time she got to where she was going

half the kids in Dallas Village would be behind her. All the children loved Aunt Sealy and she dearly loved all the children.

Mama had to be on her job at the Dallas Textile Mill every morning by 6 o'clock. Bless Aunt Sealy, she got to where she would come to our house every morning to "help" Mama get us kids up and ready

SOCIETY HAPPENINGS -1923

* The Echols home on the hill overlooking town was built, it is said, before the war between the states. It is of brick and two stories in height and well preserved.

* Found - light bay mare, age 6 years, small, hair worn off hind leg, sore back, skinned place on side. Pea Ridge, southeast of Merrimack. W. W. Mitchell. Owner can have same by paying upkeep and this advertisement.

* Lost - gold breast pin. Finder please return to bungalow, corner White and Randolph Streets.

* For rent - furnished room in private home - apply at 302 West Holmes Street.

* For sale - Oakland six touring car, newly painted, good tires, run less than 600 miles, price \$500. Baxter Brothers

* John Brown, a department superintendent at the Lowe Mill, has purchased the old Echols property on West Clinton Street and will remodel it for the use of himself and family.

August 2011

Old Huntsville
HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE HUNTSVILLE VALLEY

The
Life and
Death of
Bulldog
Daniel

Bulldog Daniel was an icon of a bygone era... (text is small and partially illegible)

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for school. Mama didn't ask her for her help because she knew she couldn't pay her on the meager salary she made. Aunt Sealy cooked our breakfast every morning and the only pay she asked was the food she ate from our table.

Then came the night my family and I will never forget. It was the last time we ever saw our beloved friend, Aunt Sealy. That night will stay etched in my memory as long as God grants me the privilege of life.

On this cold, wintry night the ground lay hidden under a blanket of snow, and the still falling snow promised another foot or two before morning. The air was filled with our enemy - the North wind. At around 11 o'clock that night someone knocked frantically at our back door, and with every knock could be heard someone crying loudly.

When Mama opened the door there stood Aunt Sealy, almost frozen to death. She was shaking and crying so hard her words were hard to understand. When she was finally able to speak she told us that some boys had torn her house completely down. You see, Aunt Sealy lived in a tent beside the railroad tracks. Her tent was located between Beirne Avenue and the Dallas Mill. That little place had been her home for many years. She told us she had no place to go, on that night so many years ago.

Mama assured her she did have a place to stay, and that place was with us. She told us to just fix her a pallet in a warm place, behind our cook stove. We fired that old cook stove up for all it was worth, and it wasn't long until Aunt Sealy had a nice warm place to sleep.

Next morning Aunt Sealy was gone. When our household woke up we found the pallet quilts neatly folded but no Aunt Sealy. We hunted for days and days for her but no one seemed to know where she was. She had just simply vanished.

After all these many years I still wonder what happened to her. I know it is impossible to do, but I wish I could reach back to the morning she left us just to tell her how much we all loved her.

She was our beloved Aunt Sealy.

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BODIE

Hello my name is Bodie. The volunteers here at the Ark Animal Shelter think that I am a Great Dane Mix. I am a very tall dog but very thin. I was found in a neighborhood by myself and was hungry and skinny. People there started feeding me but weren't able to take me in because they had other pets so I was brought to the Ark Shelter. I have begun to put on some weight and am getting healthy. Soon I will be ready to be adopted. I am a young dog and sweet and friendly to all the people I meet. I am only just learning to walk on a leash but am making very good progress. I would love to have a big fenced yard to run in and a nice family to live with. If you come to the Ark, will you ask to see Bodie? That's me.

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