



No. 365
July 2023



Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

Building Huntsville Roads



Also in this issue: Remembering George Bennett; A Tribute to Aunt Eunice; The Gurley FFA String Band; Snake and Eggs; The Wilbourns of Brownsboro; A Hobbs Island Family; McCullough Avenue Playground; Recipes and More!

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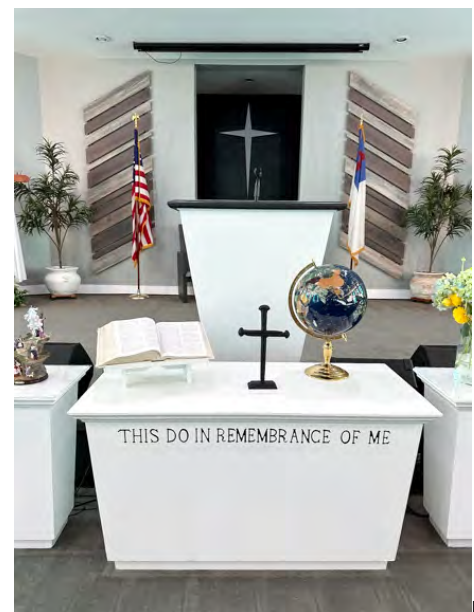
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Building Huntsville Roads

by Tom Carney



Left, Cecil Ashburn
Right, Bill Miller

By the time James Cecil Ashburn was born in 1920, his family had already been part of Madison County for well over a hundred years. Originally from North Carolina, the family had followed the emigrant trail to East Tennessee where they settled briefly before joining thousands of others who came to Madison County in search of cheap lands and adventure.

As they settled and began to clear the lands, their family

history became a part of our history. A small log cabin was built in Ashburn Cove (now Big Cove) where they raised a family. Their children grew up, got married and had children.

Some of them fought with Andrew Jackson during the War of 1812. Their grandchildren took up arms in defense of the South during the Civil War while their wives stayed at home, struggling to keep body, soul and family together.

Reconstruction found the family trying to rebuild from the ashes of a horrible war. With the country devastated and cotton prices at all time lows, it was almost impossible for small farmers to earn a living. By the early 1900s the Ashburns had moved to Killingsworth Cove where they opened up a small general store.

"The store was the center of the community," Cecil remembered. "Many people still traveled by horse and wagon and the roads were so bad that most people rarely came to Huntsville. We sold about everything you could imagine, from coal oil to patent medicines. If we didn't have it, we would order it."

The Ashburn family, like millions of others, found it harder and harder to make a living as the country slid into the Great Depression. "Back then," said Cecil, "most people didn't pay cash. They would

"If at first you don't succeed, try doing it like your wife suggested in the first place."

Bubba Kay, Athens



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(*in memory*)

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

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

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buy on credit and pay when they sold their crops. When they went broke, we were right behind them."

The family moved across the mountain to a small house in Shares Cove where they began farming. Tom Carney laughs as he remembers living in the same house years later. "Cecil might have lived there," he said, "but he sure didn't fix any cracks in the walls or ceilings. I remember one time it snowed and I woke up the next morning with snow on top of the bed."

Money was tight and Cecil, although a small boy, was expected to help in any way he could.

"Cecil was determined to make money," recalled J.B. Tucker of Hurricane Creek. "One year he decided he was going to grow a bed of tobacco seedlings. That was just about the hardest thing anyone could grow around here because it took so much work, patience and luck. Everyone told him he couldn't do it but he just kept on anyway. Every morning and every afternoon, after school, he would be out there watering, pulling weeds and picking worms. After a while everyone in the neighborhood began stopping by to watch."

"Cecil probably grew the best bed of tobacco anyone had ever seen around here and when they got big enough to transplant Mr. St. Clair bought them for \$500. It was the most money anyone had ever paid and people still talk about it today."

When asked what happened to the money, Cecil laughed, "I don't know. Mama got it!"

Cecil's first real experience in road building came while living on Hurricane Creek.

"Back then," Cecil recalled, "You could pay your land taxes by working on the roads. We paid ours with a team of mules spreading gravel."

"My grandfather was a road commissioner back then. He was paid \$100 a month which was good money for those days."

At that time the government passed a law saying that every road project had to have an engineer assigned to it, and assigned them a pay scale of \$150 a month.

"I will never forget," laughed Cecil, "About my grandfather shaking his head and telling me I needed to be an engineer. 'That's where the real money is,' he told me."

In 1937 Cecil graduated from Riverton High School and went to work for Arthur Milsap helping run a general store in Maysville. As part of the Federal Farm Pro-

gram the government was paying farmers a certain amount per acre not to plant certain crops, but they insisted on accurate surveys before that could happen. In 1939 and 1940 he worked on this program.

"I got to know every creek, hill and hollow in that part of the county," Cecil said. "One thing I noticed was that much of the land was worthless because it flooded during every hard rain."

"Everyone knew war was coming," remembered Cecil. "I knew it was just a matter of time before I got drafted so I decided to enlist so I could pick my branch of service. They asked me what experience I had. I replied I had been a surveyor, so they said they were going to make me an engineer."

"They sent me to Engineering School at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. It was hard but it was also probably the best education money could buy. As part of our classwork we visited the New Jersey Turnpike that was under construction. It was amazing! Thousands of cars going back and forth on well built highways while back home we couldn't even go to town unless we carried a shovel to dig ourselves out of mud holes!"



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"I knew right then that someday I was going to build roads in Madison County."

After finishing school he was sent to a camp in Louisiana where they were issued summer uniforms.

"We were supposed to have been going to Trinidad, in the Caribbean, but when we got on the train and it started in the opposite direction I told the boys, 'This doesn't look good!'"

A few days later they ended up in Cold Bay, Alaska, in the Aleutians, where the Army had decided to build an air base.

"That was about the most miserable place in the known world," Cecil remembered. The closest town was about thirty miles away and it wasn't really a town; just a fish canning factory. The only thing to do was work and play poker."

"I had a Major who stayed drunk all the time and a Colonel who didn't care so they just let me build the air base anyway I wanted to. I made every mistake in the book but I learned from my mistakes."

"There weren't many books to tell you how to build an air base on a frozen island. That was really 'on the job training.'"

In 1944, while home on leave, he married his childhood sweetheart, the beautiful Margaret Goodson.

The honeymoon was brief, however, as he soon received orders for France where he was assigned the task of helping rebuild the bombed out docks and shipping ports.

"It was a huge job," remembered Cecil, "but we had all the help we could use from the


nearby German POW camps. Sometimes I would be the only American on the job with hundreds of POWs working for me. I didn't worry about them escaping, though. Their homes were behind the Russian lines and that was the last place they wanted to go."

After returning home in December of 1945, he talked to his uncle, Pat Gray, about the possibility of going into the road building business. Gray also had a certain amount of experience, having worked on the massive TVA project in Knoxville.

A short time later they formed the partnership of Ashburn and Gray.

"We had a business," recalled Cecil, "but no equipment and no customers. All we had was an old pickup truck and a little money I had saved from playing poker while in service."


"We heard about a government surplus sale in Atlanta where they were selling equipment. We drove over there but couldn't afford a hotel room so we slept in the back of the pick-



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up. The way the sale was set up, we went to the desk, looked at the listings of what was for sale and then went out to the yard and inspected the equipment. Once we found what we wanted we went back to the desk to pay for it."

"The first day we went in, inspected the equipment and went to pay for it but they told us it had already sold. The second day we got there at the crack of dawn but the same thing happened - it had already sold. We quickly figured out that someone had inside information and while everyone else was out inspecting the equipment, they were paying for it."

"That night we parked our pickup right in front of the door and when it opened the next morning we were first in. We scanned the list as fast as we could, picked out a couple of pieces of equipment and told them we wanted to pay."

"Aren't you going to inspect it?" they asked. "No," I said, "I'm first in line and I want to buy it."

"They weren't very happy about it but we got a bulldozer and dragline for \$1,600 - the rest of my poker winnings."

The first job they got was cleaning a ditch in Hurricane Creek. As part of the Government Flood Control Plan the government was paying half the costs for landowners to dredge creeks and ditches to prevent flooding. Their first job was for \$40 but when the owner said he couldn't afford to pay his half, Cecil agreed to do it for the \$20 the government paid.

Cecil remembered his days as a surveyor when much of the land he walked over was useless because of flooding. During the next year he talked to about every farmer in the county explaining how the government would pay half the cost and then the land would be worth much more.

As the reputation of Ashburn and Gray grew, they began to attract other jobs. At first it was small jobs - driveways, clearing lots or straightening creeks. Then they decided to get in the pavement business.

"He had built a company that was already the envy of most businesses," recalled a friend. "But he wasn't satisfied, he wanted to build roads."

At that time many of the road builders, asphalt plants and concrete companies were conspiring to keep prices high. The closest asphalt plant was in Birmingham and if a road builder got a contract in North Alabama he had to pay shipping fees to have the asphalt shipped in by rail. This could add millions of dollars to road projects.

Cecil solved the problem in a manner that would become his trademark. He built his own asphalt plant. In the next few years he applied the same philosophy to other parts of his business. If he needed fill dirt he would buy the land rather than the dirt. If he needed gravel he would purchase his own gravel pit and have his own trucks haul it.

In the early 1950s Ashburn and Gray was awarded the contract to build a 27-mile highway through Bankhead Forest, a job that would take almost two years to complete.

"It was the kind of job Cecil had always wanted," recalled a friend, "and he never looked back. After that job there was no stopping him!"

As Huntsville began to grow, so did Ashburn and Gray. Thousands of people were flocking to Huntsville to work on the space program and they needed lots cleared, roads paved and highways built. Before long it was almost impossible to go anywhere in Huntsville, or on the Arsenal, without seeing a piece of equipment with the name Ashburn and Gray on it.

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The rocket program changed the face of Huntsville but it was "Big Jim" Folsom who changed the roads.

While Folsom was running for Governor in 1952 he spent a lot of time out in the county shaking hands and introducing himself. Most of the roads, once you left the city limits, were either red clay or gravel. In dry weather cars would raise billowing clouds of red dust behind them. Folsom noticed how every time the housewives saw a car coming in the distance they would rush to get their clean laundry off the lines before the dust settled on them.

The promise of good roads (and clean laundry) became a major part of Folsom's campaign and he easily carried the rural votes. After being elected he sent his Highway Director Herman Nelson to Huntsville with simple instructions, "Get the roads built!"

The next decade saw one of the biggest road building projects in Alabama's history, with Ashburn and Gray doing much of the work. The company quickly grew to become one of the largest in the country with branch offices in other cities and jobs spanning all of the southeast. Their projects included everything from simple driveways, rocket test towers, highways and even airports.

Of all the projects Ashburn and Gray was involved in, it is probably the Memorial Parkway project that most people remember. (Ed. Note: Both the limited access and frontage roads are referred to as Memorial Parkway. Originally

constructed to bypass downtown Huntsville and officially opened on December 1, 1955, the highway is the major commercial thoroughfare through Huntsville, a status it has held since the mid-1960s.)

Ironically, it could have been their last major project. The day it opened two deer hunters ran off the pavement and into one of the company's Caterpillars. A lawsuit was filed, but fortunately the company won.

Bill Miller recalls Cecil helping many people get a state license while serving on the state licensing board. "I remember when I approached Cecil he said, 'I need somebody to subcontract building bridges for me.' So I got the license and we have been building bridges since then."

"Cecil was, always thinking about business," remembered a friend. "Once we were watching a baseball game and he made the comment that there was a lot of money to be made in that business. I thought he was talking about playing baseball so I didn't think anything of it. A few months later I learned he had signed a contract to supply Major League baseball fields with red dirt!"

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Louise Avery, Huntsville

faced with its biggest crisis when Pat Gray, one of the partners, died. The government levied huge inheritance taxes on his heirs. Their only alternatives were to sell part of the company, go public or close the business, none of which Cecil wanted to do. He decided to borrow the money and buy the heirs out.

"Mr. Ashburn called a bunch of his key people together," remembered a long time employee, "and explained what he was up against. He told us he couldn't promise us anything right then but if we would help him he would make sure we were taken care of. For the next year every employee he had must have worked twice as hard. Mr. Ashburn was a man of his word - he made some millionaires and took care of a lot of families!"

It was almost an unspoken rule at Ashburn and Gray to hire college students during the summer. Calvin Perkins remembers working for the company while going to school at Auburn. "Mr. Ashburn stopped by the job site one day and asked me how school was going. I told him that I was thinking about quitting and working full time. Mr. Ashburn looked at me for a moment then asked when school started back. When I told him he said, "Son, I hate to tell you this but your job ends the week before school starts. Go on back to school and your job will be waiting for you next year."

Ashburn always attributed his success to his employees and the people of Huntsville. Years earlier he had vowed that if he was ever successful he would give part of it back to the community. In 1993 he donated 100 acres of land to Madison Academy for their new campus. Several years later he gave the land for the Children's Advocacy Center on Pratt Avenue in Huntsville, in addition

to donations to numerous other projects.

In 1991 Cecil retired but he left a legacy that will forever be a part of Huntsville. He had built one of the largest road building companies in America and today it is almost impossible to go anywhere in Huntsville or North Alabama without driving on a road built by Ashburn and Gray. It has been estimated that they have employed over six thousand people and paved enough roads to stretch from New York to California and back.

He was also the first living person to ever be inducted into the Alabama Roadbuilders Hall of Fame.

In 2002 the Huntsville City Council, acting on a resolution introduced by City Councilman Glenn Watson, named a

road in his honor. The very scenic road, Cecil Ashburn Drive, crosses Huntsville Mountain to Hampton Cove.

At the official dedication, Cecil sat on the stage with his wife, Margaret, surrounded by well-wishers and lifelong friends. There was a marching band and politicians made speeches. Everyone agreed it was a fine day. Cecil remarked later that he was really proud of the road name, but thought it funny that Cecil Ashburn Drive was one of the few roads he had not built.

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He Will Be OK

by Bill Wright

Jake was nine years old when his Dad took him to a tryout for a Travel Baseball Team. Travel Baseball is different from Little League Baseball because players must try out and be selected to play for a team. Parent must also pay a fee for their child to play for a Travel Baseball Team. The competition is very intense in Travel Baseball.

When Jake and his Dad arrived at the baseball field, Jake's Dad told the coach Jake was only interested in playing baseball during the Spring/Summer seasons because he wanted to play football during the Autumn season. The baseball coach shook his head and said that would not work because he needed players for all seasons. However, he added he would let him practice with the other nine-year-old boys trying out for his team.

The coach took turns hitting infield and outfield balls to the tryout players and all of them looked good. He then let them take turns pitching. Most

of them could throw hard but had control problems with their pitches.

When Jake had his turn he had excellent control and velocity with his pitches. The catcher's mitt was popping. At that moment the coach waked over to Jake's Dad and said, "He will be okay, just bring him back out next Spring." Jake would play for this coach the next two years and was clearly his best player.

The years went by, and Jake continued to play and pitch excellent at all age levels. When Jake was a high school 10th grader, he was recruited by many colleges. He eventually accepted an offer from Vanderbilt University, perhaps the most elite college baseball program at that time in America. During Jake's freshman year at Vanderbilt, he had the honor of playing in the College World Series in Omaha, Nebraska. While playing at Vanderbilt University Jake earned All American honors and would be selected to play for Team USA against Japan, Taiwan, and Cuba.

At the end of Jake's third year at Vanderbilt University he was a first-round draft selection by the Atlanta Braves and would receive a significant signing bonus. During Jake's first four years in professional baseball Jake would alternate between Major and Minor League baseball.

In year 2022 everything came together for Jake in baseball as he became one of the best baseball pitchers in the Major Leagues. There are approximately 420 pitchers in the Major Leagues and Jake with 22 wins led all Major League pitchers in game wins.

As a former Little League Baseball Coach, I have often thought about how a coach almost turned away a nine-year-old boy who years later would be an outstanding Major League Pitcher for the Atlanta Braves. I do commend that coach for a last moment decision to give Jake an opportunity to show his baseball skills. As the coach told Jake's father, "He will be okay."

Jake is not his real name. His real name is Kyle Wright, a Huntsville native. Yes, I am related to him. I am his proud grandfather. I share the same thought his Dad once expressed when being interviewed for a news video: "Sure, his mother and I are proud of what Kyle has accomplished in baseball, but more importantly we are proud of the fine young man he grew up to be."

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Remembering George Bennett

by Corrinne Bennett



George Bennett- December 18, 1943- March 16, 2022

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When George passed, we all felt the outpouring of love for this Southern Gentleman. Generous to all who knew him, self-taught encyclopedic knowledge of plants, trees and flowers and as gentle as his care for his plants.

George was soft-spoken and very creative. His artistry and commitment to our city is evident in many areas of our City, including Big Spring Park, the Von Braun Civic Center and many homes and neighborhood entrances in Madison County.

George beautified many of the communities where I worked for builders and developers throughout our area.

Some are: Morningside Patio Homes, Stonemark (which he won the National Association of Homes Builders Gold Award for Best Landscaped Home and Entrance). The home was the "Southern Living Magazine Home" designed by Southern Living and built by the late Jeff Lee of Lee Building Company. The home was furnished by Southern Living and it had a view of

South Huntsville and the Tennessee River.

There were donations to a home for children in the area. The home sold the first day. I entered it into the National Awards in Texas and as we sat in the audience never thinking that an Alabama builder would win, the spotlight fell on us and they announced name. Speechless he accepted the award for Triad Properties (the company I worked for as manager and agent). With this and the sale of the home on the first day that community came back to life after being idle for awhile.

George knew how to use plants that were native to our area and blended well to show the natural beauty of that mountainous terrain. Never using metal around beds and always using natural material, he stayed away from anything that was not natural. Our personal home in Tennessee was landscaped with rare trees and rock walls the same as Bennett's Nurseries on North Memorial Parkway.

George LOVED gardens. Everywhere we traveled we had to search out the Botanical Gardens. If there was one, he would find it.

He was very committed to the Huntsville Bo-

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tanical Gardens and participated in their plant sales each year. He also served on their Board for several years.

He was awarded the Neil Bragg Award for his outstanding efforts to make Huntsville a Beautiful City on July 27, 2018. The timing was perfect since he had just started the long journey of his diagnosis and illness. The saddest part of this was his knowledge of the Latin botanical names of all the plants and trees started to leave his mind.

So, he left the day-to-day work and we moved to Huntsville selling our beloved farm and settling in to a neighborhood familiar to us both that was part of Huntsville in our youth.

When our priest, Father Mike MacMahon, celebrated his 50th year jubilee as a priest, George planted a tree at Holy Spirit School on Airport Road. He supervised the entire planting like it was surgery. Years after that he would go by and take gallons of water to water the tree, afraid it was not getting enough in our dry seasons. It stands there now. No monuments, just a tree planted by his hands.

He assisted me in so many communities that make them special: One was the beginning of the Village of Providence. The very first street there needed a strong statement reflecting a new kind of community for Huntsville and George did it. He helped with many of the builder's homes, including Brent Neely and many others that were part of the Builder's Guild. He wanted to make sure that the homes had landscaping that was part of an Era of historical time.

I remember even when he couldn't work anymore, he would have me drive by Breland Homes office building on Clinton Avenue downtown to see if it was being maintained. He had done many of the neighborhoods for Louis Breland in the years gone by.

I guess the thing about George is that he didn't stop caring about his job after it was finished. He wanted it to stand the test of time.

Many home gardens and landscaping of Huntsville have been skillfully and lovingly created by his hands.

When he passed away, I received an entire volume of comments on Nextdoor about him. One kind person printed them all out and delivered it to me at our home.

Before finishing I want to tell you of his love of ALL people. When you came to the nursery or wherever he was it didn't matter if you could ever afford anything, he would run get you a Coke and sit you down to enjoy the garden. He is in heaven now tending GOD's Garden.

The loss of George is felt by many because of his impact on our lives. He was my soulmate. George was a Huntsville native and grew up on Pratt Avenue in Five Points. His Mom was his influence as a master gardener and his mentor David Byers (Byers Nurseries) who hired him as a manager and later sold it to George thus... Bennett Nurseries.



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July and summer are here and so are temperatures in the nineties - - in other words, it is officially hot in Alabama. Pray we don't have another July like 1930, which set an all-time heat record EVER for Huntsville at 111 degrees on the 29th.

All the beautiful flowers are in bloom and I have finally gotten my patio all cleaned up just in time to have company in town for my class reunion in June. The weather was beautiful, and it was such fun seeing classmates that one hasn't seen in five to ten years. My problem was trying to remember who was who from so many years ago.

While out shopping, I found all of the cute and clever items to plan a 4th of July party. I know some people who are taking a very long weekend from Friday afternoon through Tuesday the 4th for an extended celebration. Others are attending or hosting an event on Saturday or Sunday before the actual holiday on Tuesday.

Mosquitoes are out at sunset in many places near water and there are some great products available these days. They are like the bug-zappers you plug in, but they are battery powered and work up to a 350-foot circle killing specifically those little biting insects and similar ones as well. So, whether at a picnic in a park or

near the water, or just at home in your backyard, think about these. Lots of different models if you just Google them.

Free Concerts in the Park started in June, but are in full swing behind the art museum. Most of them start at 6:30 each Monday evening and continue through all of July. Enjoy some splendid music, take a cooler and snacks and go early to set up your chairs in the shade. I have a chair that folds and fits over my shoulder, and my husband has a lightweight soft cooler with wheels that is easy to carry.

I hope you have some place to swim. I taught swimming to small children for nearly twenty years and all your grandkids need to know how to swim. It is cooling fun for you, too, and you can do water aerobics that is healthy and goes easy on your aging joints. Even if you walk briskly in the shallow end, you can still get excellent exercise that can prevent falls as you continue to get older.

Be careful of fireworks. I once saw a Roman candle explode in the center of the tube when something got plugged up. Thank heavens the child was holding it near the end and didn't have any severe burns. These things can also shoot out the back end of the tube, so don't cover it with your hand either.

Have a safe 4th, eat a lot of cold watermelon and barbequed ribs. My favorite thing to serve to my family not only on the 4th, but anytime during the summer, when it's "hot as a firecracker."

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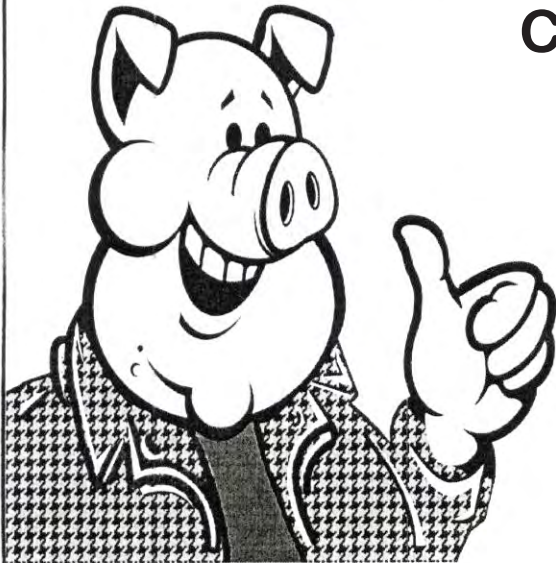
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Richard and Joe Lewis

by Iolanda Hicks

I met a man named Richard the last week of March. We were at Jack's on Jordan Lane and I was waiting in a booth for David to bring the specialty sandwich we had seen advertised: the BBQ Pup. An older man had just come in to the booth area on the other side and looked at me, smiled and said "Good afternoon".

In the instant of that smile, the name Joe Lewis popped up in my head. Joe Lewis the boxer? I am sitting there waiting on David, thinking that this random thought, triggered by a stranger's smile, was significant. Of course, I start googling Joe Lewis. It's amazing how much information is within an almost instantaneous touch of a key on your cell phone!

- Joe Lewis: World Heavy Weight Boxing Champion from 1937 to 1949, and fought an upcoming champion Rocky Marciano in 1951.

- He was nicknamed Brown Bomber and defended his title 25 times.

- He was born in Chambers County, Alabama in 1914.

We ate our new Jack's sandwich and enjoyed the fragrant smells. In my head, I kept rolling around the thought of Joe Lewis. We finally finished our meal and David got up to throw our trash in the bin. I got up at the same time and said "David I have to go talk to this man before we leave." David looked at me not understanding. I got up and walked around the section. The gentleman had his eyes closed and his legs stretched out on the booth seat.

"Hey there. Are you sleeping?" I said.

He opened his eyes and looked up at me and grinned. I immediately said "I want you to know that when I saw you, Joe Lewis popped up in my mind. Did you know that you even look a little like him? Do you know who Joe Lewis is?"

There was that grin again and you could see his face becoming alive. "Oh yes! I do!" And oh my! An animated history lesson followed, describing and praising that long gone champion. It was as if I opened up long forgotten memories and they were good memories.

Once he had come to the end of this quite interesting lesson he looked at me and said "I'm Richard" and I immediately said "I'm Iolanda."

He then said "You have made me happy!"

I looked at Richard and smiled and realized David was waiting on me. I said "I have got to go. Thank you. So glad to have met you Richard. You have a good afternoon!" We never know in life how our words or our actions will affect another. That random thought of Joe Lewis might have been God's way of using me as a conduit to a stranger now known to me as Richard.

It was a most memorable encounter and I just had to share it!

"I always carry a knife in my purse. You know, in case of a cheesecake or something."

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Snake and Eggs (1954)

by Bill Alkire

Mrs. Rhoda Swick would often on occasion have me gather the eggs when she had not had the opportunity to do so. There is a period when the hens seem to work overtime, and eggs require checking more often. Mr. Bud Swick had shown me how to gently raise the hen if she becomes too possessive and is not happy for someone to take her eggs.

The chickens would require fresh water and more feed if needed. If you clean their water feeder each time, I found it much easier to keep their water clean. The more the hens see you, the more they get to know you and they trust you. Chickens can get a little aggressive - that never happened to me. The rooster was different, however. He liked to show his authority. The hens were his and he wanted everyone to know and understand this premise.

Mr. Swick had made me aware of the rooster and instructed me on how to avoid turning in such a way as you could lose awareness and could compromise alertness and the rooster would go after you. The rooster was fearful of Mrs. Swick and would avoid her to the point he seems to disap-

pear. It was uncanny really.

This afternoon I had stopped after school to facilitate any chores that may need

to be done. Mrs. Swick had not taken care of the chickens for two days - I took over and told her I would take care of everything for her. I started with the floor in the hen house. I replaced any straw needed. I advanced to the water trays both inside and outside. I checked and added feed where needed. These actions usually drew most hens to the feeders, leaving egg gathering much easier. If a nesting hen needed new or more straw, it was much easier to complete the task with them off their nest. I started in gathering eggs without any hindrance.

I was surprised to find that there was one hen still on her nest - this was highly unusual. I approached her quietly, stroked her gently, talked softly to her, she did not budge or even show any awareness of my presence. I gently worked my hands under her to manage the lifting of her from the nesting box. Instead of feeling soft, she stiffened - I had never met any resistance from a hen before. I held her firmly and gently lifted her from her box. I set her down, she ruffled her feathers, stretched, and walked away leisurely.

I turned back to the nesting box and I saw why the hen was reluctant to move from her nest. There in the box where her eggs should have been, were the eggs - however the eggs were now located in the belly of a large black snake. Curled up in the cradle of the box - the snake had swallowed all the hen's eggs and had remained under the nice warm hen. The snake had now lost its cover and warmth and decided it was time to go.

He slithered quickly from the nesting box and dropped to the floor and headed for the door which was approximately twelve feet away. Surprise, a well-placed garden hoe found its way about 1-1/2 inches behind the snake's head. My shoe was placed on the rear portion of his slithering body. He was all stretched out and was left immobile - with hoe in hand the head became separated from the body, where the two parts moved for a short time.

A cat had been watching from the doorway and snatched up the longer piece of the snake. The cat made a weird sound and took off with the snake's body hanging from its mouth and the rest dragging behind.

I kicked the snake's head out the door and finished the egg gathering. I had been told by Mr. Swick that such a thing was possible. Eggs had been coming up missing, however he was reasonably sure it was a fox or other critter. When he came home, Mrs. Swick rendered the story of the snake, and he was not surprised. We did wonder why the cat had not gotten the snake before now.



Rhoda & Bud Swick



The Gurley F.F.A. String Band

by G. W. Robinson



Left to right: G. W. Robinson, Jimmy Mills, Buddy Martin, H. L. Lewis, Alvin Gipson

This was 1952 - my senior year in high school. Gurley (Madison Co. High School) started their Vocational Agriculture and F.F.A. Program in the school year 1949-1950, so we were in our third year. The F.F.A. (Future Farmers of America) is a program that provides boys in the Ag class to compete with other schools throughout the state in such events as animal judging (cattle, hogs, etc.), also in personal talent events such as Public Speaking, Quartets, and String Bands, along with some other events. The winners of these events were awarded a banner in the school colors with the event, the year, and the place (1st, 2nd, etc.) printed on it, rather than a trophy, as in athletics.

Our teacher and F.F.A. director, Mr. B. C. Adcox, was desperate to win a banner of any kind. He didn't care in which event, he just wanted a banner, since he had not won anything yet. Well, he learned that some of us boys were just beginning to learn to play a little music, so he insisted we form a band and enter the F.F.A. String Band contest. We were hesitant at first, because we knew we were not that good. But when he offered to let us out of class two days a week to practice, we quickly agreed.

So that's how the Gurley F.F.A. String Band began. There was H.L. "Red" Lewis playing guitar, Jimmy Mills, guitar, Clarence "Buddy" Martin, a tenth grader who was a very good piano player, Alvin Gipson, who couldn't play anything, so we made him a wash-tub bass (and he really became quite good at it) and me playing fiddle. So now we began to practice in earnest, and to be completely truthful, we were one step below pitiful! But we worked hard and by some miracle we began to slowly improve.

Now the contests were held at the end of the school year. Beginning with the County, which we won by default, because no other county school had a string band (NO banner)! Next was the District, which consisted of several North Alabama counties, I don't remember how many. This was a one-day event held at Gadsden, AL. Mr. Adcox loaded us in his 1950 Studebaker and drove us down there. We honestly didn't expect to win anything. But we had no idea how good the competition would be, so we held onto a glimmer of hope.

We arrived in Gadsden, located where the contest was to be and got ready to play. Each band played two tunes. We were not scared or nervous (as we expected to be) and this enabled us to play "over our ability," so to speak. I don't think we missed a single note. As a result, we won 1st place! Mr. Adcox was elated! Not only had we won his first banner, it was a 1st place at that!!! Of course we were all excited and happy too. It was a happy ride back home.

Now by winning 1st place in the District event, it qualified us to advance to the State Finals. These were held in the middle of June at Auburn University. Again, we loaded up in Mr. Adcox's 1950 Studebaker and off we went to Auburn, AL. This was a 3-day event. We only needed to be there one day for the String Band contest, but Mr. Adcox wanted to see all of it, so we stayed the three days.

Well, the competition was much stronger here, being statewide, so we really didn't expect to come close here. Only four of us went to the state event. Jimmy Mills could not go for some reason. It was me, "Red" Lewis, Buddy Martin, and Alvin Gipson.

Again, we were not nervous (we should have been), so we played our best and by some miracle we won 4th place! The 1st place winner was Othel Sullivan, who at that time already had a 30-minute radio show on W.V.O.K in Birmingham. That was the kind of competition we had. 4th place in the whole State of Alabama!!!

Now, 4th place statewide meant more to us than the 1st place in the District. Mr. Adcox was "on cloud nine!" He now had two banners to put on his classroom wall - one a 1st place and the other a statewide win. I do believe at that moment he was the happiest and proudest man in the whole State of Alabama! When you consider where we started from, this was a great accomplishment. It was a proud moment for all of us!

I write this as a memorial to Mr. B. C. Adcox and all the band members, of which I am the sole survivor. I still enjoy playing music. It has been my hobby all these years.

If you would like to hear some informal, unrehearsed old time Country and Bluegrass music, visit us in Ardmore, Tennessee at the City Hall Annex Building next to the Burger King on Thursday night at 6:00 p.m. You might see some of your friends there. There is no charge and we would love to see you!

Heard in the News Through the Years



Looking For a Horse Thief November 23, 1827

Be on the lookout for J. Wilbond. He sold me a horse and said he was going back to Huntsville, from which place he came here; I paid him, he then took the stage, went a few miles, whereupon the driver said he got out and went into the woods.

That night my stable was broken open, and the horse I bought from him was stolen out, with a new saddle and bridle. As said Wilbond has not been heard of since, no doubt but he returned that night and stole my horse. Wilbond is a large man, blue eyes and fair complexion, and says but little. He usually wore a black cloak, and black cloth coat.

Since he was a saddler by trade, he no doubt recognized the value of the article. His name was Thos. J. Wilbond, had on a brown or red brown set of pantaloons, probably pirated from someone else.

I will pay \$50 for the delivery of said Wilbond and the horse to me, living at the Bell Tavern in Winchester, Tennessee, and for the horse alone, \$25.

Wm. Rawkins.

He Needs to Find Another Job from 1912 newspaper

Martin Johnson, a would-be desperado, was injured yesterday during an attempted armed robbery of Yarbrough Grocery.

While in the act of pulling a pistol from his pocket the gun discharged, shooting him in the foot. He then dropped the gun to the floor where it discharged again, sending another ball into his right arm. He is currently an unhappy guest in the city jail.

Shoes Must be Worn - 1894

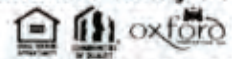
Patrons of the public market are warned that shoes must be worn at all times. Failure to do so can result in a fine.

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Heard On the Street

by **Cathey Carney**



Many of you found the hidden rings in different parts of the June issue but **Irish Langham** of Huntsville was the first correct caller. The rings were on page 20 and on page 46. Do you see them now? I did a good job this time of hiding them.

And the little boy who grew up to build most bridges in Madison County was **Bill Miller**. A humble, funny, sweet man who worked closely with **Cecil Ashburn** for many years. Our first correct caller was **Joan Preston** of Arab, her husband worked for Bill and Cecil many years ago. Congratulations to Joan and Irish!

Happy Birthday in June to **Billy Lenox** - he turned 60 on June 5 and that's a big number. Still young though. Billy and his wife celebrated by taking a trip out of state and we hope they had a great time and ate a lot of good food!

Delores Forsman of Huntsville is a long-time reader of Old Huntsville and she will have an 85th birthday on July 7th. We've spoken with her several times on the phone over the years and what an interesting lady she is. Her daughter **Dana** loves her and called in this important birthday!

Sweet Huntsville Hospital nurse **Lori Walters** just celebrated her birthday on June 9 and she and hubby **John** did it in style by taking a trip to New Orleans. They met friends there and found their favorite spots to eat and drink! Happy Birthday to you Lori.

For those of you who are new to TV streaming and have cut the cable, I found one the other day just by accident. It's called Kanopy and all you need to join up is a library card! It's free and has old movies, foreign movies, documentaries, court cases, etc. Totally free. Google it and you'll find out how to get it added to your line-up.

Beta Sigma Phi is an international women's service sorority that got its start in 1931 at the beginning of the Great Depression. There are 4 chapters in Huntsville and ladies get together to socialize, eat and contribute time and money to needed service projects in Huntsville. Recently one of the chapters, **Preceptor Alpha Gamma**, held a very special ritual for a long-time member. **Bobbie Peterson** of Madison has been a member of Beta Sigma Phi for 60 years!

Bobbie has traveled around the world with her husband Karl and in each locality she would find a chapter to join. Bobbie was presented with the prestigious Diamond Circle pin and a beautiful bouquet of

flowers. Congratulations to Bobbie and you'll be reading more about her in an upcoming issue.

Happy 62nd anniversary to **M.D. and Judy Smith**. They celebrated on June 8, 2023 at Char's Restaurant and that's a lot of years of togetherness!

I caught up with **Durwood White** recently, over the years he's written several stories for Old Huntsville. He said that all 15 of his books are now on Amazon!

We heard recently from **Juanita Adcock** of Huntsville who used to read the Huntsville News, then the Huntsville Times faithfully every day for many many years and just can't believe it's not here anymore. She and others have asked us if it would be possible to do a daily or weekly Old Huntsville magazine with current events. It's a great idea and we sure wish we could, but we're a very small Huntsville business with just a couple of people and cannot take on that large of a project. We appreciate the faith in us tho!

It still feels odd that a small local paper like "Old Huntsville" magazine outlasted the Huntsville Times. We are very grateful to our readers and advertisers who are keeping us in print! Thank you.

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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Many of us have pets who mean the world to us. **When they get sick**, we have to make the hard decision to end their suffering or let them continue on. We've all been through it. Did you know that in Huntsville there is a lady veterinarian who will come to your home and provide comfort care for your furbaby, similar to Hospice care for people? I was personally involved with saying goodbye to a sweet 12 year old rescue dog, **Katie**, who had been diagnosed with congestive heart failure and was recently finding it so hard to breathe. When it became apparent that she was suffering, her family had the choice of bringing her to their regular vet, which terrified her, or having **Dr. Rebecca McClellan** come to their home. She sat with the family and petted Katie, she took time with the family. She answered all questions then gave her the sedation shot that relaxed her. When it came time to euthanize Katie, there was no pain, no flinching, no fear. It was a most peaceful, calm and kind act, in her home with her family surrounding her, that I will never forget. She just went to sleep. There were plenty of tears, and still are. But when your choice is to keep your pet with you just for you, that's selfish. Our dogs and cats don't let us know how bad they're feeling, oftentimes it's way worse than we think. But the vets know. If you're a pet owner, you need to check the website for Companion Crossing at www.companioncrossing.com. Until yesterday I had never known of it, and it's an option we all need to know about.

In honor of "Katie" I have hidden a picture of her sweet face somewhere in this issue. Be the first to find it and call, you win a \$50 subscription to the magazine for you or a friend. But it will be super small so get out your specs.

Ianthia Bridges is that beautiful lady you see at the drive-through window at Truist Bank on Church Street. She let us know that her niece **Carianna "Cari"** will be celebrating her Sweet 16 birthday on July 3rd. Also her daughter **Brooke** has a July 10th birthday and she will be 27. I remember those young days, barely.

I know we have several good coffee shops in Huntsville, some local and some US franchises. I visited a small one the other day that was so cozy and had the best sugar-free Hazelnut iced latte I've ever had. If you've noticed, many of the coffee shops now don't offer sugar free flavors and it's difficult for diabetics or people controlling sugar intake. **Roosters Coffee** is located at 8402 Whitesburg Drive next door to Lily Flag furniture, and

you've got to try it if you're a coffee addict like I am. It's a good place to meet with friends also; quiet, private, and the people who work there are super friendly. Another small business that we need to support rather than the US wide businesses.

Aug. 20 is the **Elvis show you DON'T want to miss**. At the VCB Concert Hall at 6:30, Sunday evening. Grab a friend or spouse and you will not forget it! Still a little bit of time but these shows always sell-out. **Shawn Klush, Cody Ray Slaughter and Ryan Pelton** make up the show.

Happy July 31st birthday to my sweet brother **Ken Owens**. Can't believe he'll be 74 years old - seems like just yesterday we were playing outside til dark and our mom called us in to eat. I wish kids these days could feel what's it's like to live a simpler, exciting, non-phone life. Walking in the woods, playing kickball and jacks, exploring all of the outdoors. Growing a garden. Paying attention to nature, really seeing little flowers and noticing how critter families take care of each other. Maybe one day there will be more outdoors and less depression and sadness among our younger folks.

Special hello to **Shea and John Crow**, whom many know and call friends. They lived in Five Points for years, then moved years ago to Athens. They sure do miss their old friends and love getting together to catch up. We miss you and hope to see you soon!

My daughter **Steph** came up with a good tip recently. She has a small spray bottle that she adds water to, then mixes in 1-2 teaspoons of Skin So Soft. Shake well and spray yourself before you go outside - the mosquitos hate it and you aren't all greasy since you are not using it full strength!

Have a good July and get out and walk - the weather has been really beautiful lately.

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Use about 1-2 c. each vege. In a large bowl, break up the washed vegetables into bite-sized pieces. Pour the whole bottle of dressing over the vegetables and mix well. Seal and let set overnight in fridge, turning at least once. Drain and serve with toothpicks.

Savory Ranch Mixture

Pretzels
Pecans
Cheerios
Rice Chex
Corn Chex
Cheesits
1 envelope Hidden Valley Ranch dressing mix (dry)
1/2 bottle Orville R.'s popcorn buttery oil

In a large bowl, mix about two cups each of the cereals, pretzels, Cheesits and nuts. Pour the 1/2 bottle of oil over the mixture and stir well. Sprinkle half the dressing mix (dry) over the mixture and stir well. Add the remaining mix and toss well. Serve immediately or store in Ziploc freezer bags.

Baked Cheese Bites

2 sticks butter
2 c. self-rising flour
2 c. grated sharp Cheddar cheese
2 c. Rice Krispies
1 t. cayenne pepper
1/2 t. garlic powder

Mix all ingredients together well, will be very stiff. Roll the mixture into small balls - about the size of a large pecan - and flatten gently. Bake on greased cookie sheets at 300 degrees for 30 minutes or so. These are good warm but also freeze very well.

Rolled Tortilla Bites

8 oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened
4 oz. can chopped green chilies, drained
4 oz jar chopped pimento, drained
1/2 c. chopped ripe olives
10 6-inch flour tortillas
Salsa

In a small bowl combine the first four ingredients and mix well. Spread a heaping tablespoon on each tortilla and roll it up. Place, seam side down, on a plate. Cover and refrigerate for 2 hours. Cut each roll into 6 1-inch pieces and serve with salsa and toothpicks.

Mini Cheesecakes

3 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened
5 eggs
1 c. sugar
2 t. vanilla

Mix the above ingredients til smooth and pour into foil cupcake liners that have been

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placed in the cupcake tins. Fill the liners 3/4 full and bake at 325 degrees for 25 minutes.

Topping:

- 1 8-oz. carton sour cream
- 1/4 c. sugar
- 1 t. vanilla

Mix together and put 1 teaspoon of the mixture on each cupcake while hot and back in oven for 3-5 minutes. Top with maraschino cherries.

Sweet Potato Rolls

- 4 c. all-purpose flour
- 1 t. salt
- 2 T. baking powder
- 1 c. butter, cut into pieces
- 1 c. cooked, mashed sweet potato
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 1 t. ground allspice
- 1 t. ground nutmeg
- 1 T. sugar

Combine flour, salt and baking powder. Add butter and mix until crumbly. Add remaining ingredients and mix well. Place dough on a floured surface and roll out to 1/2-inch thick. Cut rolls with round cookie cutter and place on a greased cookie sheet. Bake at 400 degrees for about 15 minutes or until lightly browned.

Sopapilla Cheesecake Bars

- 2 cans (8 oz. each) Pillsbury™ refrigerated crescent dinner rolls
- 2 packages (8 oz. each) cream cheese, softened
- 1-1/2 c. sugar
- 1 t. vanilla
- 1/2 c. butter, melted
- 1 T. ground cinnamon

Heat oven to 350°. Unroll 1 can dough. Place in bottom of ungreased 13x9-inch glass baking dish. Stretch to cover bottom of dish, firmly pressing perforations to seal.

In medium bowl, beat cream

cheese and 1 cup of the sugar with electric mixer on medium speed until smooth. Beat in vanilla. Spread over dough in baking dish. Unroll second can of dough.

Carefully place on top of cream cheese layer. Pinch seams together. Pour melted butter evenly over top. Mix remaining 1/2 cup sugar with the cinnamon, and sprinkle evenly over butter.

Bake about 30 minutes or until center is set. Cool slightly, about 20 minutes.

Refrigerate for easy cutting. Cover and refrigerate any remaining bars, if you have any leftovers!



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A Respectful Tribute to Aunt Eunice

by Bob Rothe, in 2003

Hi, there, Huntsville friends and neighbors. My name is Bob - Bob Rothe - and my wife Judy and I live in far-away Colorado. But we spent a week in Huntsville last October. Yes we did, and we learned a lot about what they call "Southern Hospitality". You know, we never met Aunt Eunice, but we did come close one morning. Judy and I were advised to take breakfast at Aunt Eunice's, so we set off to do just that.

When we got there, by golly, a note pinned to the door said something about being closed due to her being sick. Even the note made you love the lady! It went on to say something about being open again to "see all her friends as soon as she was able". Goodness me, doesn't that sound like Aunt Eunice!

Let me get to the point. Even though we never got to meet Aunt Eunice, I felt I got to know her and had the privilege to be her friend. During that week, I also got to meet Tom and Cathey Carney - the fine folk who publish this delightful journal. We returned to colorful Colorado with a handful of back issues, and I read them in bed awhile while Judy read her English murder mysteries.

With all the love and respect I can muster, I am attempting to write about our little adventures in beautiful Huntsville in the same newsy, breezy, chatty, makes-you-feel-right-at-home style that dear Aunt Eunice would have written. I hope that doesn't offend any of my good friends in Huntsville - whether or not I ever met you. Anyway, here goes...

One day in the summer of '03, Judy got a fit of her occasional "cabin fever" as they call it and said: "Let's go on a trip someplace." Good friends who go to our church in Boulder, Colorado, still own a home in Huntsville and had offered for years that we might use it some day for a week's get-away. We decided to take them up on their kindly offer. Now, a few of you know that I never do things the easy way. We could have flown right to Alabama and rented a car for the week. But no, we flew to New Orleans - Judy's never been there - just to see that famous city. Next morning we took the train to Birmingham. That's a lovely ride. If you haven't taken that train, I recommend you do so. We rented a car there and drove north to Huntsville. Sadly, a big wreck along

1-65 going south blocked up traffic for miles. Good thing we were headed north. We arrived just in time to watch the sunset from our lovely hilltop home for the week. My, Huntsville is lovely in the fall. The sun looked big as a orange-colored fried egg as it slipped below the horizon.

We wanted to try restaurants different from the ones we have back home. Logan's looked good so we went there. We were greeted by a lovely young girl with a warm and friendly smile who showed us to our seats. Peanuts, peanuts, peanut shells everywhere. That easy atmosphere ended our first day in Huntsville. Huntsville's a little like Camelot. During the entire week, it never rained except at night. The weather was always bright and sunny and comfortably warm.

One of our first chores was to buy a couple of "Huntsville Passports" to all the sights and activities you folks have to offer tourists. We did this at the Chamber of Commerce offices and met a very pleasant woman (I'm sorry I can't remember her name) who had responded to my earlier pre-trip emails about things to do there. Quite a coincidence. She was most friendly and helpful; and she helped us plan our week well. We lunched at Big Springs Park - what a lovely view - before starting our explorations. Monte Sano is lovely, isn't it? The home is a fine museum about early life in the Tennessee Valley; and the collection of buildings from around the area really gives one a sense of life in the olden days. A bunch of school kids were really improving their sense of local history that day.

Don't know if it's still there, but we saw Dr. Burritt's relative's 1949 De Soto automobile. Sure is a beauty. We

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toured the Twickenham District to see the lovely Erskine home on Franklin and another at 401 Lincoln. Didn't the Donavan Goldsmith home have a lovely Widow's Walk?

Our now-good-friend Barbara Lauster gave us a personal tour of the Weeden House and we chatted with her for an hour before even starting the tour. We invited her to join us for dinner that evening, but she had other plans that prevented that. Harrison Brother's Hardware is quite an experience in itself. We got to the Botanical Gardens less than an hour before close, so the kindly lady at the ticket table allowed us in without taking our tickets from the passes. Remember, that time of year you'd see scarecrows and tree houses. Wonderful creativity in a beautiful setting. There was an organ concert at the Episcopal Church of the Nativity on Eustis Street. If you haven't been inside that 1858 building, I recommend you do so - beautiful. Cameron Carpenter was a youngster of 21 from the Juilliard School of Music. This impressive artist contrasted high vaulted ceilings against his spiked hair, strong makeup, and leather jacket opened at the chest. Still, he improvised an entire symphony based on three hymns selected at random that night. He greeted each guest personally as they left that night.

By the way, Barbara gave Judy a copy of a cook book called "Twickenham Tables". Have you seen it? Good recipes of southern cooking.

Judy and I are addicted to massages back in Boulder; so, beforehand, we connected with Julia Carter from Huntsville. We would recommend her for a long relaxing massage. Julia gave me her copy of Old Huntsville that I'd never seen before. We took her to Ding How's for Chinese dinner that night. Saturday morning, we enjoyed a tour of the Old Huntsville Railroad Station. Make sure you go there often. We had to hurry from there to the Walking Tour of Old Huntsville led by Alice and Lucy with Cynthia Harmon as another tour guide. Cynthia and I had corresponded by e-mail before our trip; it is a small world isn't it?

We also encountered a woman along that walking tour who had taken our picture at the Botanical Gardens the evening before. Have you ever ridden the North Alabama Railroad Museum train at Chase? They were running the "Goblin Train" in honor of Halloween. Constitution Village is another fine Huntsville attraction. Kathy and Becky gave us wonderful tours in their period costumes.

Monday breakfast was to have been at Aunt Eunice's, but that couldn't be - as explained above. Mullin's has good country fried ham also; but others who have breakfasted at both will have to decide which is better. Maybe, it is better not to ask; both are wonderful.

Judy and I enjoyed visiting "Red" Williams at a retirement home in south Huntsville. He was

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ruin my life differently.
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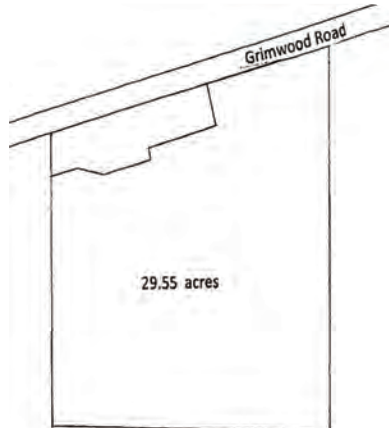
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a railroad man for the Norfolk Southern. Our connection with him is that I am a long-time model railroad "nut", and he had been a machinist on a Southern railroad.

Of course, you can't skip the US Space and Rocket Center. A bit modern for my more-historic tastes, but everyone ought to visit there while in Huntsville. That modernism was nicely balanced later that same day by Mooresville. That's a 3 block by 4 block town you got to see with its lovely older homes dating back to the 1820s.

Dinner at the Greenbrier BBQ with hush puppies is a rare delight. An ice cream cone for a quarter as dessert is a reminder from the past - as is their "Double Cola" sign. The cotton gin across the street was still in action that night.

Tuesday we returned to Constitution Village. Rebecca was cutting yarn to make scarecrows and Carol was demonstrating to school children how to make cheese and churn butter. Aren't these little outings just great for our little children?

Before going to say goodbye to Barbara at the Weeden House, we stopped in at the cozy offices of Old Huntsville. Tom and Cathey were most warm and gracious offering us friendly coffee and an hour of swapping tales.

We took lunch at O'Charlie's with Anita, a relative of our house-host. Our waiter was named John Alden, and he claimed to be a descendent of the famous John Alden. I wonder?

A week after our arrival, this Colorado couple left Huntsville with a new appreciation of that famed Southern Hospitality where folks are open and friendly and smile a lot. We say a hearty "THANK YOU!" to the whole community. On the drive back to Birmingham, we paused at Hartselle just to drive through another small Southern town. AMTRAK took us back to New Orleans for another night before our flight back to Denver.

My education about the South continued well beyond our return thanks to Tom and Cathey and a dozen back issues of Old Huntsville. I learned that Lily Flagg was a cow! The well-known Dred Scott Decision has ties to Huntsville. The many sad and often poignant stories of that tragic conflict a century and a half ago gave me a new perspective of the peoples I had been taught in Northern history classes (I was raised in Chicago) were the "enemy". In the North, we called it the "Civil War". Now I understand it was the "South's Struggle for Con-

federate Independence". In our classes, you were the "bad guys", and we were the "good guys".

Now I understand we are both just people, each with our own perspective on things.

Why do there have to be "good guys" and "bad guys"? Why did we in the USA hate all Germans and Japanese in World War II? Today, all people in the Middle East are considered suspect. Why is that? Why can't Southern friendliness touch all peoples of the world? Oh well, neither Aunt Eunice nor I can solve that problem. We'll have to hope that our children are better at that than we. Maybe some child from Huntsville will show the world that love and friendship works.

In closing, I feel assured that the breakfast aromas in heaven are vastly improved in recent weeks now that Aunt Eunice is making her country fried ham for her friends and angels. I thank this woman I never met for all she has taught me.

My Husband Ran Off

Due to my husband running off with that Davis woman and abandoning his wife and 4 children, I have no choice but to sell his farm equipment, buggy, horse and donkey. All items can be seen at my home in New Hope. Contact newspaper to get in touch with me.
(from 1892 newspaper)

Enjoy These Hot Summer Days with Friends and Loved Ones!



Love to the Huntsville High Class of 1966
From Oscar Llerena, HHS class of 1966

A New Car and a Trip

by Elizabeth Wharry



June and July of 1972 was an intoxicating time in my young life. I had graduated 8th grade and I was looking forward to being a freshman in high school.

My parents had bought a new car. It was a green 1972 Dodge Dart Swinger. Dad's vacation was scheduled for the second week of July. My mother made sure her vacation was during the same week. They decided to take the new car.

My dad wanted to visit his two brothers and their wives, then go onto Rehoboth Beach, PA. On the way to southeast Pennsylvania, we heard a rattle coming from inside the cabin. It wasn't continuous, but it was distinctive. The decision was made that we would continue with the vacation and call the dealership later. Dad wasn't only a machinist, but he was also quite knowledgeable about cars. Since the rattle wasn't from the engine, it could wait.

The vacation was wonderful. I met my two uncles and their wives. They were most gracious and charming. Instead of Rehoboth Beach, my uncles suggested going to the Delaware shore.

On the way home, the rattle seemed to intensify. We got home in time to call the dealership. Since the problem seemed to be rather minor, the car was scheduled for service the following day.

The mechanic listened to the description and location of the noise. He had my mom drive while he sat in the front passenger seat. After about 10 minutes, we were back at the dealership. He took the inner panel off the door. Lo and behold! There was of all things, a beer can with a note sticking out of it. It read, "Aren't you the lucky (expletive), you found the (expletive) rattle!" Have a safe and happy 4th of July.

"That pain in my knees tells me rain is coming. That pain in my neck tells me relatives are coming."

Maxine

NUTTY MOCHA BALLS

6 sq. semi-sweet chocolate, 1-ounce size

1/4 c. light corn syrup

2 c. confectioners sugar

2 T. instant coffee powder

1/2 c. hot milk

1 t. vanilla

1-2/3 c. graham cracker crumbs

1 c. chopped walnuts

1/2 c. finely chopped walnuts

Melt chocolate in the top of a double boiler over hot water. Add corn syrup and sugar, mixing well. Stir coffee powder into milk and stir into the chocolate mixture.

Add vanilla, graham cracker crumbs and chopped walnuts, mixing well. Chill about an hour, or until firm enough to handle. Roll into 1-inch balls. Roll balls in finely chopped walnuts. Cover and store in your refrigerator. This will make about 40 balls.



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The Hound Master Madkin Mountain, Redstone Arsenal in 1980

by Stanley Bacak



Four degrees, full moon, midnight, full flask, four hounds. Four men doing a Southern thing. It's like Talledega or Flora-Bama Bar on the Alabama/Florida line. Until you have done it, it's a mystery. Coon hunting in the Deep South is like deep fried turkey. You've heard about it, but have never experienced it. Fact is, you really don't know of anybody that has.

This was it. A happen chance invitation to run raccoons with a local legend. A haphazard "Yeah" and it was on. Frenzied hounds are rounded up, loaded and we are off. Thirty minutes later the moon is swallowed by a dark mountain with an enveloping presence. Half way up the ascending mass we park, stretch, check our gear and unlatch the hound crates. Where are we? I observe with amused anticipation. Eyes are adjusted to the night and bodily functions are necessitated. The silent cold night is muffled.

This is ridiculously stupid. What am I doing here? I'm supposed to be in bed. The icy air pricks my lungs, pinches cheeks and makes one light-headed. The hounds howl, grunt, snort and

bolt. Without whispering an utterance, the hound master strides off. Parallel to a moon-accented ridgeline, we trace an abandoned logging trail. Sporadically, feet are tamped noiselessly to sustain blood flow. I'm bundled like a mummy, but the weathered old man appears to be wearing a windbreaker. He never says it's cold. Neither do I.

The dogs are barking and jostling in the distance. A long forgotten black and white movie featuring two fugitives fleeing from hounds and the law is recalled. After a spell, the hounds are far away and barely discernible. Brilliant stars puncture the blue black sky while the moon turns opaque under the glaze of my breath. Hiking for a while, I recognize that a muted calmness has enveloped me and a pleasant frigid euphoria sets in.

Seems like everybody has actually forgotten about the dogs. My buddy, talking to no one in particular, wonders where the hounds are. The old man says that they have rounded the mountain and are on the far side. Next to his ears, gnarled hands are placed like finely tuned parabola antennas.

Incoming yelps and wails are gathered like signals from distant satellites. Rudy, the old one, had stumbled and yelped with audible pain. One of the young ones had separated from the pack and was lagging behind. How does he discern the tones and nuances? The raccoon is running for his life

as the baying hounds hunt down his scent.

Finally, a raccoon the size of a large teddy bear is treed. The hounds rip at the trunk. "He's a granddaddy, I believe. We treed him last year," says the old man. The coon's amber eyes pierce the dry foliage as a flashlight ignites his countenance. It is running season and firearms are prohibited. The old man ceased shooting them years ago, anyhow. He told us that his old Army buddy used to cook all of their game, but he died several winters ago.

He laughs, saying the big coon would be tough, but his partner had a recipe to soften them up. He snorts with fondness and a warm grin. Now, he says he hunts mostly to get away from the old lady. I can tell he loves her deeply.

Morning breaks as the hounds are corralled into the back of the truck. All except one. A blue tick is yelping in the distance. We pursue the sound. A skunk is cornered in a heap of old stucco blocks and the hound is determined to torment him. The pungent spray does not intimidate him. Finally, the last dog is loaded and pleasantly tired and exhausted, we go home.

Decades later, an inconsequential excursion rouses feelings on cold nights. Now and again, the old man's recipe for sauerkraut stuffed coon on the grill pops into my head. I still wonder if that's another Southern thing or if the old man is chuckling somewhere on the side of a cold mountain.

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City News from 1899

- John Kenny was charged \$20 yesterday in court for beating his mule in front of the courthouse. He was arrested last month for beating his wife.

- Charles Hawk, a young painter of Huntsville, about 24 years old, while attempting to jump on a running freight train that was passing Dallas Mills Sunday afternoon, missed his footing and fell with his right leg under the wheels. It was so badly crushed that it had to be amputated three inches above the knee.

- On Thursday last, Mr. John Hertzler was riding in a buggy on Clinton Street in this city. His horse took fright near the Baptist Church, ran away, and hurled the buggy against a tree on the opposite side of the street, throwing Mr. Hertzler out and breaking loose. The horse ran off. Mr. H. was knocked insensible, was taken into Mr. Thos. Jamar's house where he remained there for two days.

- M.D. Hammer was placed under a \$50 bond for grand larceny. He was accused of stealing a hog from Felix Hawkins and the evidence against him was two hams and a rack of ribs.

- Lem Johnson, of Knoxville, was arrested for picking pockets near the Post Office. Apparently he picked the wrong pocket as he is now in jail under the care of a physician.

- In search of Mrs. Frances W. Gerkin, a music teacher, nearly blind, who left Norfolk, Virginia some years ago and is reported to have been drowned while crossing the Tennessee River, four or five years ago.

- A son of Lira Elliot, of Lincoln Village, aged ten years, was

ill for a year and although having a ravenous appetite, grew emaciated. His physician gave him some medicine that produced nausea and he was choked by the appearance of a snake which required all the doctor's force to draw from his mouth. It was striped and eighteen inches in length. The lad recovered and is better.

- Miss Myrtle Holloway, a resident of Knoxville, is visiting Huntsville with the goal of securing a husband. So far suitors have been few and far in between.

- C. C. Giles, a prominent citizen of New Market, was in the city last evening and marketed 620 dozen eggs, good ones too, at a price of 12 cents. Mr. Giles is one of the county's foremost citizens.

- Mrs. William Kresh and little daughter of Birmingham, who have been the guests of Mrs. William Dilworth, on Meridian Street, will return to their home this week.

- Good clothes are made by Metcalfe the Tailor - come see him.

- A mother's safeguard - Foley's Honey and Tar for the children. Is best and safest for all coughs, colds, croup. Whooping cough and bronchitis. No opiates.

- Ladies Aid Society - Mrs. Charles Shaver, President - time of meeting Friday afternoons and Saturday mornings.

- Paris has been shocked. The French capital, the home of almost anything "ultra in fashions," has come a-cropper over the new trousers skirt. By some, this feminine contraption of apparel has been designated as the "Harem-Scarem".



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**"Apparently RSVP'ing
to a wedding invitation
'Maybe next time' isn't the
correct response."**

Jeb Brewer, Madison

A SPECIAL DAY IN JULY

by Lawrence Hillis



July in Huntsville has always been known for hot and steamy afternoons. It was one of those hot Saturday afternoons in 1974 when my friend Barry Owens and I stopped at the Farmette for a cold Coke and a candy bar. Barry was the younger brother of Freddy Owens whom I went to school with all 12 grades. Freddy and many of my friends were married or had moved away from Huntsville. Barry and I would meet at the park to play ball and then hang out for a few hours at night.

I didn't know exactly why Barry wanted to stop at the Farmette which was a small convenience store on Andrew Jackson Way where Advanced Auto is now. Before we went in, he said he hoped that Judy Landers was working because he had a huge crush on her for years. Let me explain, Barry was 18 and Judy was about 30 years old and had three daughters. Barry knew Judy for many years because she grew up on McCullough Avenue a block east of the Owens family. Even though she was married, Barry enjoyed dropping in to flirt with her. That was as far as it went. Judy was happily married.

We went in and when Barry saw Judy, he started singing Hank Williams's song,

"Hay Good Lookin', what ya got cookin". Then down the aisle, I saw a very pretty girl with green eyes and long chestnut hair walking from the ice cream cooler licking on a popsicle. Then this little "Fox" sat down in a chair behind the counter. In those days, if a girl was called a "fox", it was a compliment. She met all of the criteria - sly, mystifying eyes, slim legs, cunning, cute face.

She kept licking on the popsicle and glancing at me, and I kept glancing at her. She propped up her feet on a shelf and just kept licking that popsicle and smiling. I got to be honest with you. It was not only hot outside but getting pretty warm inside the Farmette. Being a young man and seeing such a pretty girl licking on a popsicle turned me on. I wanted to snatch that popsicle away and kiss her pretty lips. But I restrained myself and remained cool.

In 1974, I was getting interested in a new singer/songwriter John Denver. In the summer of '74, he had the big hit "Annie's Song", which he wrote about his wife. Every time I hear that song, I think about our chance meeting. If you remember the tune, hum it as you read his lines:

*"You fill up my senses
Like a night in a forest
Like the mountains in springtime
Like a walk in the rain"*

Back to the Farmette. The conversation went on between the "Fox", Barry, and Judy. By the way they were talking, I could tell that Barry knew the "Fox" also. I finally said, "Barry, are you going to introduce us or what?" He said, "You should know them; these are Johnnie Rousseau's sisters Judy and Karen". As we left the store, Karen said, "Come by the house some-

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time." As I got into the car, I asked myself, "Did she just say for me 'to come by the house' or was she talking to Barry?"

A few days later, I was taking Barry home and as we passed the Rousseau's house, Karen was sweeping the porch. Barry said, "Let's stop and talk to Karen". I was fully supportive of that idea. I don't know exactly what we talked about, but when we got back into the car, I asked Barry what was wrong with Karen's right eye? Did she have some kind of disorder or something? It kept on blinking a lot. Barry said, "You Idiot, it wasn't blinking, she was winking at you." I must have passed by her house a dozen times trying to catch her outside again "sweeping the porch" or something. Then I would stop and get out and start my flirting routine with her.

*"You fill up my senses
Like a storm in the desert
Like a sleepy blue ocean
Come fill me again"*

There are seven years difference in our ages, and I thought I didn't have a chance to date her. But a few weeks later, I asked her if her parents would permit her to go to a movie with me. To my amazement, she said yes. I also asked her to go boating and again was surprised that her parents allowed her to go. Willie Howell and I had just bought our first ski boat together. Karen was working at the Buckskin Western Ware store after school and on Saturdays. She was limited to Sunday afternoon boating on the Tennessee River. That was good enough for me. This was at a time when most girls wore a lot of makeup.

If I could take a girl swimming and when all of the make-up would come off in the water, I could see what she really looked like. I was pleased to see that Karen was beautiful without makeup.

*"Come let me love you
Let me give my life to you
Let me drown in your
laughter*

Let me die in your arms"

We dated for five years. I wanted to make sure she was the one for me. I gave her plenty of opportunities to see other guys and explore other options.

We picked July 14, 1979, as our wedding date because it was five years to the day that we had met. A day that changed my life for the better.

*"Let me lay down beside
you*

*Let me always be with you
Come let me love you
Come love me again"*

Married Life

A man brings his best buddy home for dinner...
unannounced at 7:30 pm after work.

His wife begins screaming at him, and his friend
just sits & listens.

Wife: "My hair & makeup are not done, the house
is a mess, the dishes are not done, I'm still in my
pajamas & I can't be bothered with cooking tonight!

Why the hell did you bring him home?"

Husband: "Because he's thinking of getting
married and I promised him a demo!"



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Landships and Tanks

*by Iolanda Hicks, in
collaboration with
R. W.*

Today's M1 "Abrams" Main Battle Tank is but the latest in a long series of historical developments that can be traced back to the time of Leonardo da Vinci and "Landships". In the 1400s, an armored vehicle was invented by Leonardo da Vinci, one of the best known inventors at that time. Leonardo had been commissioned to build a war machine. The designed vehicle he invented was mounted with cannons and has been thought to be the "precursor" of the tank. The vehicle had a conical shape or "covered wagon" design with interior wheels but probably would not have been practical in war since it was very heavy, causing less mobility and maneuverability.

It would be World War I before the "tank" would come into being. During the First World War, the "tank" would come into its own. The British began to develop "landships" as a counter to the stalemate of trench warfare. The British used the name "tank" as a guise of secrecy, under the pretext that they were making water tanks! The name stuck and tracked mobile armored vehicles have henceforth been "tanks".

The U.S. Veterans Memorial Museum off Airport Road in Huntsville houses several historical tanks. As one enters the main floor of the Museum, just to the right, is "Bama Belle", a fully operational-restored 1943 M5A1 "Stuart" light tank. Bama Belle has quite a history. This tank was built by Cadillac and is powered by twin Cadillac V8 engines.

This model was dubbed "Stuart" by the British after Civil War Calvary General JEB Stuart. The



British nicknamed some US tanks after famous US Generals as they preferred that to our model number designations. This particular Stuart was made in 1943, used by US forces, then rebuilt towards the end of WWII and transferred to Canada.

Canada used them for a period of time and then transferred them to Portugal! When declared surplus, a number of them were bought by a construction equipment company in Georgia, with the intent of cutting them down into log dragging vehicles. Collectors stepped up to save these historical tanks and the Museum is fortunate to have this example.

Nearby there is an earlier M3 Stuart which is undergoing restoration. This early model is put together with "rivets" and

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was built by the American Car and Foundry in Pennsylvania. The engine is a "radical" aircraft type of the same model that powered the famous "Steamer" training biplane. The British nicknamed this model "Honey" as they ran so sweet!

Across from the Stuart is a 1943 M4A3 "Sherman" (Christened by the British after the Civil War - General William Tecumseh Sherman) is a medium tank that was built by Ford. The power plant, for this model, is a giant 1100 cubic inch, 500 horsepower V8.

The M42B1 "Flame" Sherman just past the Bama Belle, was originally an M4A1 model but was converted into a flame-thrower tank for the Pacific theater in 1945. It was effectively used on Iwo Jima and Okinawa and was being prepared for the invasion of Japan. The Sherman tank was one of the most used American tanks in World War II, with almost 50,000 being produced.

Shermans continued to serve throughout the world and were used up until the 1970s.

Past the Shermans is an M24 "Chaffee". The Chaffee was named after Major General Adam Chaffee, known as the Father of the Armored Force. The M24 entered service in 1944 and was a participant in the Battle of the Bulge, the final battles in Europe, and became the first model US tank to see combat in Korea in 1950.

The M24 is a "Light Tank", yet it weighs 19 tons! As a side note, a number of M24s were transferred to France and saw service in French Indochina (present day Vietnam). A small number of them were disassembled and air dropped, reassembled and aided in the ill-fated defense during the siege of Dien Bien Phu in 1953.

Outside, on the Museum grounds, are the M47 and M48 "Patton" tanks. The Patton tanks were named after General George S. Patton of World War II fame. The M47 saw service from 1951 until the early 1960s. Although the M47 did not see combat with US forces, it was then further developed into the M48 (which did see combat in Vietnam).

The M48 Patton, on display, was in service with the US Marine Corps in 1958. Both of these tanks have the 90mm main gun.

Many stories can be told from everything one can see at the US Veterans Memorial Museum in Huntsville, and probably more than a writer can capture in a lifetime! When it comes to the tank, this war fighting machine with all its sizes, models, and names has stories that would probably fill volumes of an encyclopedia.

In a recent interview with a "tanker" (a tank crewman) it was stated that in today's times, American Armor could outpace anything on the Battlefield.

Come see the fascinating tanks on display and soak in some real history.

The Museum is open Wednesday through Saturday, 10AM-4PM, and on other special occasions throughout the year. From Parkway turn on Airport Rd. heading west and the first light take a right, in 1/8 mi. look for the military equipment and go left into the back of the museum!

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Feathered Pets Over the Decades



by M. D. Smith, IV

My wife and I have raised eight children over three decades—seven of them were boys. You can imagine the range of pets we've had over all those years extending into the early nineties. I've written before about all the reptiles, spiders, and a myriad of warm-blooded creatures we've had for pets, not including cats and dogs.

I want to focus on the feathered pets my kids enjoyed from the late 60s well into the 90s. I've always loved every kind of creature for pets, similar to what I had growing up in the 50s. At one time, I fancied myself a quail farmer and got several breeding pairs of Coturnix Quail. They are similar to the Bob White, but their eggs hatch in two weeks compared to three weeks for the Bob White. They also mature sooner. I built stacked cages and, at one point, had fifty pairs laying eggs daily. We had all the cooked and pickled eggs I could want besides quail meat.

That may have set the stage for my kids getting baby ducks or chickens from the Easter Bunny and raising them in our fenced yard. In late summer, we'd let the ducks go in Big Spring Pond, and the boys could visit after that. Chickens we had to give away when the fun was gone, but on some occasions, I built nest boxes, and we had chicken eggs to feed a growing family.

Warren is one of my younger sons, born in 1963. He loved ducks. At one time, a friend gave me eight duck eggs, and I hatched them in my heated device made out of a large cake storage container with a tiny automatic heater and thermometer. Warren took to them immediately, and soon as they could move outside, he'd play with them and feed them out of his hand. Since there were no older ducks, they took to him like he was



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their mother. All he had to do was enter the backyard, and they'd flock around him. They were used to him picking them up and cuddling them even as they matured and were fully feathered. We had a kid wading pool that they loved, but our inside fence kept them out of our swimming pool.

Warren would put one duck in the pool on rare occasions and swim while it chased after him. But ducks poop a lot, and that's not suitable for a human swimming pool, even with lots of chlorine.

Of course, we had all kinds of caged birds over the years, starting with parakeets. Those the kids could keep in their rooms. Some were tamed enough for them to put their finger inside the cage and the bird would hop on to be removed, but they could fly around the room. For these, we'd clip the extended tip of just one wing, making it unable to fly, and that solved that problem. One of my older sons was given a miniature parrot, cage, and everything. We kept that one in the eating area of the kitchen.

That parrot, who wasn't much of a talker, was followed by one my wife, Judy, bought that was a Blue-Fronted Amazon, and Sam talked up a blue streak. An older and religious woman had owned him, and he could sing an entire chorus of "Jesus Loves Me," along with many more phrases. He could cry like a person and picked up phrases quickly, including us calling for our teen at the time, Brent. He'd occasionally holler out the phrase he heard my wife and I say, "Brent! Brent, telephone."

The one feathered bird that's always caused my family to remember over all the years was our son, Bryan Creighton's prize, a male turkey. He got it when the bird was little from a field trip and raised it with TLC and lots of attention. When that bird matured into a giant, like the biggest male you've ever seen on Thanksgiving, he'd spread that tail and strut the

fenced yard among all the chickens. But he would perch on Bryan's arm as a hawk might do. Bryan had to support his left arm with his right hand underneath to sustain the weight of that bird.

I think that was for sure our crowning, or I should say, "crowing," achievement in feathered fowl we had for pets over the years.

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Huntsville's One and Only

by Marjorie Ann Reeves



Loretta Spencer is a Southern lady who became the first and only lady mayor of Huntsville plus the first female mayor in Alabama. Loretta is a people's person and enjoys helping others. Mayor Joe Davis put her on his planning committee providing her start in politics which gave her so many opportunities to learn and experience in helping Huntsville to grow. She worked on the Planning Committee for eight years learning the ins and outs of Huntsville.

Her extensive volunteer work in the Huntsville community taught her three major skills she needed as mayor. She learned how to work as part of a team, how to accomplish the goal on a limited budget, and always remember to thank people who have helped you, no matter how small the task. This is what she brought to the mayor's office in Huntsville.

Her involvement and genuine concern for her fellow Huntsvillians is her personal trademark. Mayor Spencer's love for Huntsville is very evident in the beautification projects that have made the city so welcoming. She took over the mayor's office from Steve Hettinger. She became Huntsville's 66th mayor.

Loretta had earned a reputation as a fund raiser by the time she ran for mayor. One of the ways to gain funds was through food. She had

spent years cooking and entertaining which she brought to the office. And as all Southerners know food is an important part of life. "Food shows you care about them" stated Loretta.

When she needed to raise funds for a project or convince a business to come to Huntsville, the apron came out. Loretta would have a BBQ in her back yard or rent a hall to have a dinner party. She has a natural instinct on how to make people feel at home and open to her projects. To get Korean Gold Star manufacturing here, she had Korean cooks in Korean costumes make native food for the visiting dignitaries. They agreed to build in Huntsville. Her accomplishments of gaining companies to come to Huntsville put Huntsville placed at #8 in the Forbes magazine 2004 list of Best Places for Business while she was mayor.

During Loretta's time in politics, she made many friends that experienced her as reliable, hardworking, forward thinking, and a truly honest mayor putting Huntsville before her needs. She developed a close working relationship with Representative Bud Cramer, Representative Ron Flippo, Senator Richard Shelby and Governor Don Siegelman in getting more industries into Huntsville.

When she looked for a company to come or one that contacted her office to build, she did her research to make sure it was a company that would benefit Huntsville. She called on Bud Cramer to help her find the money to buy a large track of land to get the Target Warehouse to build in Huntsville. Richard Shelby worked with Loretta to have a new Federal Courthouse built in Huntsville.

She feels one the most important businesses to come to

downtown rescue mission
thrift  stores

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Huntsville during her time as mayor was the HudsonAlpha Foundation supporting genomic medicine at the Research Park. Rick Myers, President, and science director of HudsonAlpha Institute for Biotechnology at the time of the move stated, "When she served as mayor, Loretta was really adamant about expanding the types of things going on in Huntsville."

"Loretta wanted to broaden the economic base of Huntsville by making it more diverse."

In 2016, Loretta Spencer denoted \$100,000 to the HudsonAlpha Foundation to support genomic medicine through the clinic. Howard Jacob, executive vice president said, "I want to thank Loretta on behalf of our patients and to thank her for making Huntsville a better place to live."

A supporter of Redstone Arsenal, she wanted Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) to come to Huntsville. In order to get the generals interested, she had houses built on the Arsenal for the Generals during that time. She oversaw the welcoming of DoD employees transferring to Redstone Arsenal during BRAC.

She provided support to Redstone Arsenal and local Army, National Guard and Reserve Soldiers during several deployments following 9/11 during her mayorship. She spearheaded efforts to have land in downtown Huntsville set aside for the site of the Veterans Memorial. Loretta makes a presence at all local military events and activities including numerous deployments and welcome home ceremonies.

In 2009, she was presented with the highest award given by AUSA's Third Region - the prestigious Major General Robert F. Cocklin Award at its annual conference in Huntsville. Spencer is the only mayor and female to receive the award since it was first presented in 1989. As a board member for the past 26 years of conferences, she is still involved with the Space

and Missile Defense Association (ASMDA). Through that association, Mayor Loretta Spencer University Scholarship Fund is available to students in their community. "I have a passion for Redstone Arsenal and its employees, and those who serve in the military," Spencer said. "I am dedicated to supporting Redstone Arsenal and all it stands for. The patriotism and dedication I see in our military touches my heart."

Mayor Spencer's lead in guiding Huntsville's growth has left a lasting mark. She enjoyed working with so many people to get things accomplished. Loretta knew "women are so good about the details of when there is a need for something and how to get something done," so she had a group of Southern ladies that she could call on to help with organizing a party for her projects: Betsy Jones, Jane Walker, Jean McCowan. Her secretary, Janet Fowler, became a close friend during her time in office. Her mother, Sarah Purdy was always her closest friend. Loretta Spencer stated she enjoyed her time in the mayor's office, "It was fun. I always believed in myself. That's the only way - to have the cockiness you need to get things done."

She is still very much involved with volunteer work around Huntsville. She stated, "To leave office and still have the public respect you, it's awesome."

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NEWS FROM THE YEAR 1958

News From Huntsville and Around The World

Submarine Sails Under Pole

The crew of the nuclear submarine Nautilus was honored by a New York ticker-tape parade today for making history's first undersea voyage across the North Pole. The voyage took place last summer, but it was disclosed by the White House only this month.

The Nautilus began its historic trip on July 23 at Pearl Harbor and cruised north through the Bering Strait. It went under the polar ice cap at Point Barrow, Alaska, and remained submerged thereafter, sending its periscope up only once to check its bearings. The Nautilus passed beneath the polar ice pack at the North Pole at 11:45 a.m. August 3. Its trip across the polar region took four days, and the Nautilus ended its voyage at Iceland on August 7. Cmdr. W. R. Anderson, skipper of the Nautilus, was given the Legion of Merit medal, and all 116 crew members and observers were honored with citations.

Experts say the Nautilus' polar voyage, which broke all records for submarine travel, has immense strategic significance, since it could open the Arctic for launching guided missiles from submarines. The trip also has potential commercial implications. It blazed a path that could be followed by cargo-carrying submarines. New Yorkers viewing today's parade cheered not only the submarine's crew but also Rear Admiral Hyman Rickover, the man given most credit for bringing the Navy's nuclear submarine fleet into existence.

Little Richard Enrolls at Oakwood College in Huntsville, Alabama

News of Little Richard giving up Rock and Roll has stunned his thousands of fans. The legendary performer has denounced Rock and Roll, calling it sinful and has announced plans to enroll at Oakwood College in Huntsville, Al., a prominent religious school. *(Ed. Note: He passed away on May 9, 2020 at age 87 and was buried at Oakwood College with many in attendance including his brother, sister and son.)*

W. C. Handy, Father of the Blues Dies at 84

"The blues come from the man furthest down, the blues comes from nothingness, from want, from desire ..." So wrote W.C. Handy, a prolific composer who died today in New York. He was 84. Handy wrote "Memphis Blues," "St. Louis Blues" and many other enduring melodies. Handy was born dirt poor in Alabama to a strict Methodist family that frowned on music. He served briefly as a music director in Huntsville, Alabama at A&M University. At age 31 recalling lean years as a trumpeter in St. Louis, he wrote his immortal song about the city.



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Elvis Drafted

Elvis Presley traded in his rock-and-roll crown for a set of Army fatigues this morning when he reported to Local Draft Board 86 in Memphis, Tennessee.

The 23-year-old singer, who stands at the pinnacle of recording and movie stardom, arrived in the drizzling rain at 6:35, accompanied by his parents and manager, Colonel Tom Parker. He was met by hordes of newsmen, photographers, and teen-aged fans distraught over the prospect of losing the pop idol to the armed services for the next two years.

Presley's monthly earnings will plummet from more than \$100,000 to just \$83.20. But the star, who sold over 40 million records in the past two years and just finished his fourth movie, seemed unperturbed.

"I'm looking forward to serving in the Army," he remarked. "I think it will be a great experience for me."

He will not get any special treatment," said an officer.

Governor Closes Schools in Little Rock, Ark.

For the second year in a row, Little Rock, Arkansas, high schoolers look at the fall term with trepidation and uncertainty.

The Supreme Court unanimously voted today to reject an appeal by the Little Rock school board for a delay in racial integration of Central High School. Governor Orval Faubus, upset with the ruling, ordered four Little Rock high schools closed next Monday when the new term is to commence.

The governor's reply sets in motion a new political battle between the federal and state governments, the outcome of which will determine the future of school integration in the South.

Huntsville Vital Statistics

In the year 1958 Huntsville had:

- * 825 marriages
- * 298 divorces
- * 6,800 people arrested
- * 1,800 car wrecks
- * 34 people killed in wrecks
- * 6 murders
- * 855 calls for firemen
- * 11,279 students enrolled

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VISION

by Gerald Alvis, The Poet of Greenlawn

It's a strategy I've heard many also use; first, buy numerous pairs of reading glasses, then station them throughout the house and in different vehicles. The aforementioned is not intentionally done, but it's a kind of rotation. You put a pair down somewhere then during your search, you find another pair! One form of vision tends to decrease as we age, but another comes into sharp focus.

Along with the years comes experiences, knowledge of what is important. Granted, that time has gone, but the struggles of achieving and sometimes survival are similar. It plays out in each new generation.

If you've returned to a burning building to drag others out of the fire or saved a drowning swimmer, you understand for what you will risk your life. If you

have raised your right hand and taken an oath, and/or you've held a hand and kept a vow, then you realize a greater love for ideas and others. If you've survived illness, you are proof you can come out on the other side. If you've given life or watched silently as others have left this world you begin to comprehend both its beauty and brevity.

There is a certain clarity if you've looked at another soldier and see beyond the different uniform.

If you've ever had someone pray with and over you, as you are being wheeled into surgery, all the hoopla vanishes; you don't care if they have a robe, a doctorate, or if they are barefoot. Suddenly, it's just two people reaching for God together.

It's important to forgive as well as asked to be.

As we begin to see others as human beings beyond labels the latter's importance fades. There is less of a desire to judge others. Other joys fill in like that found in giving, including sharing home grown tomatoes!

And even if you thought no one was looking all the times you got knocked down, they saw you get up! It not that you failed, nor the task, however arduous or complex. They now know firsthand it's possible to recover and move on to where you are now, seasoned and tempered.

It's not so they can follow our path but create their own. Show them, show them the resiliency that got you through, that got you here! It's that resolve that gives them the vision and belief to flourish in a world yet to come.

Show them the best places to cross the river, where the best handholds are on the mountains, teach them to navigate the sea! Let down a rope from the treehouse now that you're up there.

They need this focus, that peace, for we once knew these doubts and fears of the unknown. You are that beacon of light that says this is the way, and yes, you can. These glimpses into your life become tools they will teach their children's children.

This part of us lives on in others.

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Animal Superstitions



* Give a dog a piece of meat that you have had in your shoe for 4 days and the dog will follow you.

* If anyone steps over a dog, he will not grow any more.

* If you are in your teen age and put cream on your face and let a cat lick it off, you will have a heavy beard.

* If a rabbit crosses your path from right to left, be very careful not to walk alone in the dark for three days.

* You will have bad luck if you kill a toad.

* If you do not spit when you see a toad you will be sure to grow a wart on your hand.

* It is said that horses can see ghosts, and if you place your head between his ears you will see them also.

* Your dog will not stray from home if you pull three hairs from his tail and put them under the doorstep.

* It is said that if you wish to see stars, place your head close to the hind feet of a kicking horse.

* When your dog lies down with his tail toward the house, visitors are coming.

* It causes bad luck to move a cat.

* A cat draws lightning.

* If you see a dog chase a cat up a weeping willow, your sorrows will go up in the tree, that is, they are gone.

* Good luck will come to your house the next time a white cat comes to stay.

Lucky dog breeds

- Pugs. These quirky little fellas are a symbol of Chinese mythology....
- Shih Tzu. Meaning "Lion Dog", although Shih Tzus are small, they

are said to be descendants of the Senji, an ancient Chinese wolf....

- Chinese Crested Dog.

White Cats and Children

A superstition in North America believes that white cats and babies should not be together as your feline may feel threatened by the purity and innocence of the child, and may place a curse on your baby.

However, in some Mediterranean countries, when a white cat takes a liking to a child, it is considered to be a sign that the child will grow up to be a good person and achieve great things. .

White Cats and Money

In Russia, white cats are considered to be good for your wallet, and having a white cat in your home is supposed to bring money into your household.

If someone else's white kitty pays you a visit, this is usually seen as a sign that money and prosperity are about to knock on your door!

Meet a stray dog and get good luck

The Scottish believe that if a stray (or a dog that does not belong to you) follows you home, you are granted with good luck - even more if it's a black dog. If the dog then enters your house, it's a sign of new friendship to come, one that will be faithful, sincere and caring.

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OLD STUMP BRINGS MEMORIES

*by Malcolm Miller, interviewed and
written by Tom Carney*

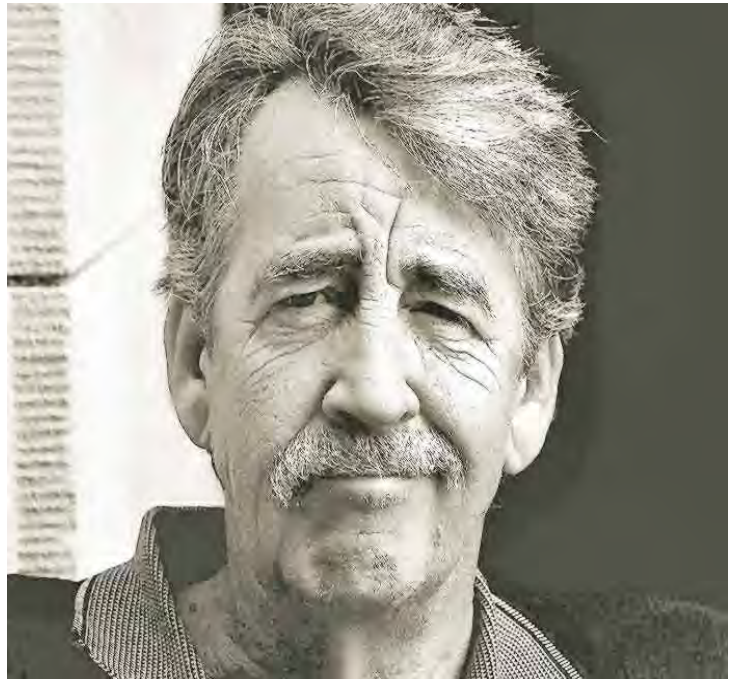
I was walking through the tall grass when I stumbled over it. Just an old rotting, decaying tree stump. It was a huge thing, maybe, three feet across, and as I stood there looking at the old stump my mind started to wander back to my boyhood days and the mighty oak tree that once stood tall from this very stump.

You see, this old stump was all that remained of the place where I spent about seven of the happiest years of my life. Under the outstretched branches of this mighty oak tree stood the farm house that was my favorite of all the tenant houses we lived in when I was growing up. It wasn't particularly a good house, certainly not by the standards of today, but to me, an eight-year-old, it seemed like a mansion. I still recall the shiny white doorknobs on the doors. To me this was really something, because all the houses we had lived in up until that time had either wood buttons or latches to keep them closed.

But this house, like all the others I lived in back then, had a tin roof over it. And the sun beating down on it all day in the summer would drive the whole family out under the branches of the big tree where there seemed to always be a little breeze blowing. It was under this very tree I sat for hours listening to grown folks tell of faraway places they had been.

I recall my Uncle Curt telling of the time he spent in Texas, and how the real cowboys weren't like the ones we had seen at the picture show in town. I heard them talk with worried tones at the beginning of World War II. You see, for a couple with seven sons, two of which were already in the Army, my parents had much to be concerned about.

It was under the branches of this mighty oak that I first learned to play the guitar. One that my brother Frank had ordered from Sears and Roebuck; and when folks, even today, ask me why I play the guitar upside-down left-handed, I remind them that when you are



only one of seven sons in a family, you just don't go stringing up guitars to suit yourself.

That old tree stump, rotting away though it was, seemed to be there as a last reminder to me of another day and time — a time when folks seemed to really care more for one another. Neighbors were neighborly, friends were friendlier, and pot wasn't something you wanted to smoke. No sir, it was most likely something that sat under the foot of the bed to save a trip to the outhouse on those cold winter nights.

My, how times have changed since that old stump was a tall oak tree.

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The Tree House

by Willie Weaver

During my 6th, 7th, and 8th grade school years, my folks ran a general store at a county crossroads.

We lived in an apartment behind the store, so my playground consisted of the area around the store and the store itself. There was a large Hackberry tree in the backyard of the store. It grew right up against the side fence.

One day I looked at it and noticed that if I climbed to the top of the fence, I could reach the lower limbs and climb right up into the tree. So I did. I climbed up about as high as I could, found a comfortable perch, and looked around to see what I could see. Not much other than a better look into the lots behind

and beside the Store. I climbed around a while exploring different areas in the branches.

When my buddy David came over, I told him how easy it was to climb the tree, so we both went up and explored some more. Eventually we decided that we should build a tree house. We salvaged lumber and nails from a scrap pile left over from renovations of the store. Most of the nails were bent so we had to straighten them by hammering them on the concrete floor of the garage. We built a platform that two guys could sit on comfortably, four guys if you did not mind being crowded.

We found a discarded metal sign and used it for a roof. Then we took used burlap feed bags and made side walls. The large weave of the burlap allowed us to see out while feeling like we were concealed. I played there with David and other friends. It became my refuge from the family and the hustle and bustle of the Store. I would take a book and read or just lay back and relax, and sometimes nap.

I never built another tree house for myself, but about 20 years ago I helped grand kids build a tree house in our backyard in Huntsville. Recently, I tore it down because both the tree house and the tree had deteriorated to the point of being dangerous. We now have great-grandkids, however, their granddads will have to help them build their tree houses.

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The Wilbourns of Brownsboro

by James Thomas Vann

The following stories are about my uncles and aunts who farmed land within a half mile of the "old home place" in Brownsboro. Uncle Olan Wilbourn owned about 100 acres on the north side of Wall Road just east of the Wall Road / Highway 72 intersection. In my eyes, he was always a funny character. He was always making jokes and trying to be funny. His wife's name was Gladys. She had been married previously and had a son from that marriage.

Olan and Gladys had a son named M. J.. (Macon Jamison) Wilbourn who graduated from the University of Alabama after serving a term in the U.S. Navy. He ended up being a college professor and taught at Jeff State in Birmingham and later at an extension of Auburn University. M.J. passed away in 2021.

Whoever ended up being the owner of that farm sold the property lately and there is a really nice neighborhood being built on that property. Uncle Olan was a rather small man and I'll never forget the time he borrowed a huge bull to service a cow that he had. This little man fearlessly led that huge bull onto a trailer and returned him to his owner. I'll never forget that scene. M.J. and I shared some times together.

My uncle Otis Wilbourn had his farm a little farther east. The railroad track that crosses Moon Town Road north of Highway 72 was on the south side of his property. Going north on Moon Town Road, just after crossing the railroad track there's a dirt road that turns east and runs along beside the railroad track. After a couple of hundred yards, that road turns left and goes up to the house where Uncle Otis and Aunt Lily lived. It was a stone building that he built himself.

I asked him about building the house one time and he said he had hauled the stones from the Moon Town area. I asked if that was hard work and he replied, "No, it only took about 35 loads in a mule-drawn wagon". I remember many stories about

Otis and Lily.

My wife "Mike" and I would go visit them occasionally, usually on Sunday afternoon. When our daughter Beth was a little girl, she was with us one Sunday. They always had a dog around and Beth had been playing with the dog. Aunt Lily always made me a batch of teacakes that I loved very much. She asked Beth if she would like a teacake and she said yes but she would have to wash her hands because of handling the dog. Beth proceeded into the kitchen and returned shortly saying that she couldn't find the sink. That was because there was no sink.

Aunt Lily went with her into the kitchen and with the dipper, dipped up a dishpan full of well water for her to use. They did not have running water for years.

Uncle Otis was a really good hunter. He had what we called a "brace of Beagle dogs" that he used to hunt rabbits.

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He kept them in the barn. When he was ready to go rabbit hunting, he would blow on a hollowed-out cow horn and those dogs would nearly tear the barn down because they knew they were going hunting. Uncle Otis knew each dog by their bark and I remember while hunting, he could be heard to say, "there's old Dixie, she's got one on the run." Those dogs would run the rabbits around to where Uncle Otis was and we could always have rabbit for a meal. When we were ready to quit hunting and go home, Uncle Otis would blow the cow horn again and within minutes, all the dogs would be back at the truck.

Uncle Otis and Aunt Lily had three sons. The oldest was named E.J., the next was Billy Ray and the third was Dennis Wilbourn. They all had homes there on Moon Town Road. I think Otis's farm was about 100 acres. It was bound on the east side by the Flint River, which is where I learned to swim.

My aunt Maxie was my teacher. Uncle Otis and Aunt Lily were generally considered poor. I remember one of their boys told me that during that year their income was \$600. They earned that by pulling corn off the stalks and throwing it into a mule-drawn wagon.

If you ever wanted a good meal, they could provide one. They grew a large garden and would can or preserve vegetables in two large freezers that were in their kitchen. Uncle Otis could provide the meat for the meal with his hunting skills or from the slaughter of an animal raised on their place. While plowing the area for their garden they would occasionally find a minnie ball which was the slug from a black powder rifle. The minnie balls could have been from a Civil War battle that occurred on that property. At least that's what we kids imagined.

My uncle Horton "Buddy" Wilbourn served in the Army and after being discharged graduated from the University of Alabama,

probably on the GI Bill. He became a school teacher and later served as the principal of several schools. We visited him and his wife Laura May Herford Wilbourn when he was the Principal of the Opp High School.

There was a city swimming pool within walking distance of their home. The kids that worked at the pool were students at Opp High School. I got pretty good treatment when they found out who my uncle was. Uncle Buddy served as the principal at the New Hope High School and the Riverton High School as well. When he retired from teaching school, he became a rural route mail carrier.

Uncle Buddy and his family lived on the Bone plantation on Hurricane Creek Road. The Bone Plantation had been part of an Indian reservation. The artifacts were plentiful and my cousin Jimmy had an incredible collection of Indian artifacts.

My uncle Roy Wall who was my mom's sister Clara's husband was quite a character also. He was the Postmaster at the Brownsboro Post Office for many years. He also ran a little general store that was part of the Post Office. I would usually spend a week with Uncle Roy and Aunt Clara each summer. I had some real experiences with Uncle Roy at the Post Office and store. I learned how to make things by putting materials on the railroad track and when the train ran over them you could have some interesting objects. I remember crossing two nails on the track and after the train ran over them you would have what looked like a perfect pair of scissors.

Coke caps at that time had a piece of cork in the cap. When I put one of those on the track and the train ran over it, there was no sign of the cork. I never figured out what happened to the cork. Many other playthings were made with the help of the train. Uncle Roy had diabetes and it used to amaze me to watch him give himself his insulin shots in his legs. Wall Road was named after Uncle Roy. His brother L.D. Wall was the Sheriff of Madison County from 1955 to 1967.



BRUNO

Hello, my name is Bruno. I'm a 3-year-old white terrier mix. I've been at the Ark Animal Shelter since March 2023.

I don't know why I'm still here because I'm a very good boy. I've been to the vet and been checked out and have had all my shots. I'm very friendly and love to run and play with people and with toys. Sometimes I bark but that is to let you know that strangers are nearby or that I want to play. I had a home and family and lived in an apartment but there was another dog living there and the landlord said I couldn't stay. Won't you please come to see me? I would probably get along best in a home with adults and older children. I also get along well with other dogs. The volunteers here are very kind but I need a home where I can get the personal love and attention of a family.

If you come to the Ark Animal Shelter ask to see Bruno, that's me.

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My Huntsville Memories

by Rufus Leon Crowl



I was born in Huntsville, AL at home on August 30, 1932. The doctor was Dr. H. O. Walker and it only cost \$15 back then. Our home was on what they called Cotton Block, real name Mill Street. I guess because it was close to a Cotton Mill, where my mother and father worked.

My father and a few other people were holding a revival at home when I was born. Not sure if this is true, but my younger sister told me years later that all the babies would be placed on a bed in the home holding the revival, and when it was over your family had the choice to come pick the baby off the bed, or just to leave it for someone else.

In 1932 or 33 there was a really bad storm, I was just a baby so I don't remember it much, but it blew our house away, and the milk cow that my father had was found 2 blocks away. But we survived, so that is what matters. We lived in a cotton mill house, on one side, while another family lived on

the other side. I remember one day me and Alton, the boy on the other side, found some pokeberries outside and they looked really good. We ate so many that we were covered from head to toe in pokeberry juice, and my mother got butter, grease and I don't know what else to get it off. Alton got pretty sick, and I don't think I ever ate another pokeberry after that.

I don't remember the year that the fair caught on fire, but I sure remember how Dad and mom got all of us kids together, and started walking towards Huntsville. We lived on one side of the Sinclair Oil Company, and the fairgrounds were on the other side. I'll never forget that day. The fire didn't get to the oil company, but I'll bet there was a lot of praying going on that day.

My parents told me that one day I went missing. All the people in the neighborhood were out looking for me, people really stuck together in those days and always helped their neighbors. I had gotten really tired and crawled under my bed to go to sleep. Back in those days, beds were high enough so that you

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could get under them.

In the late 30s my father bought a farm on Charity Lane in Hazel Green. We lived about a mile from what is called Lick Skillet.

I started school in the old New Sharon School. In the mid forties Dad sold the farm and bought a place just outside of Huntsville. He went back working at the Dallas Mill. We moved later to a Mill house on Stevens Avenue. Then Dad bought a lot on Rison Avenue and built a house. Back then this house was still in the county and the great expansion of Huntsville was yet to come.

I went to Rison School where Mr. Cecil Fain was principle. Mrs. Fain was my teacher one year and a good one. I didn't finish school at that time but did finish on the GI bill later.

The Korean War was being fought when I registered. I was drafted in 1953. I never went to Korea as the President got the peace agreement signed but I did get to travel some. I went to Paris, France and Orleans the place where Joan of Arc had a big statue. She's the one that was burned at the stake in Orleans, France. I saw Frankfurt, Germany too and drove on the highway that Hitler built.

I saw many famous landmarks, but the greatest experience was coming home to the States.

I landed in Dover, Maine at the Air Force base there and called my mother and dad to let them know I was OK. What I heard on the phone I'll never forget - the old Mill Whistle blowing. That was the greatest sound to me.

I worked at many places and had many bosses, but one stands out in my memory.

In 1970-71, I was working for Mr. W. L. Halsey at Halsey Grocery and had a bad accident at home. We had insurance that covered some of my expenses but Mr. Halsey and my fellow workers pitched in by giving blood and saying lots of prayers for me.

I'll never forget the love they showed me. To me, this is what Huntsville is all about, showing love for each other and no matter what race or religion you are, you get treated the same.

Let's keep that Huntsville spirit alive!

Lost

One Horse and Buggy, last seen on Montgomery Road, being driven by my mother-in-law.

Might be headed for Huntsville, Alabama.

Keep her and return the horse and buggy for reward.

**J.W. Higgins
Birmingham, Alabama**

from 1899 Birmingham newspaper

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from your doctor
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Old Ad run in 1950s women's magazine

McCullough Avenue Playground

by Mason B. Daniel, Sr.



When I was in my preteens, one of my favorite places to hang out during the summer was McCullough Avenue Playground. The playground was located on McCullough Avenue between England and Lacy Streets. The south side of the grounds was an alleyway. Beirne Avenue was the next street.

There was a large mulberry tree near the alleyway and Lacy Street, that kids would climb and carve their initials in the tree wood. Sometimes you would see a + surrounded by a heart with initials on the plus sign. They were sweethearts.

I was told by many people that the playground was once a miniature golf course. I recall seeing a white brick arch that could have been a part of the course.

The playground director was a very nice lady, Mrs. Goodson. Her family owned Zesto and Goodson's Variety Store in Five Points. Zesto offered soft ice cream and corn dogs plus other delicious goodies. Along with these two stores, I recall there were two grocery stores, a drug store, a florist, a dry cleaners, a candy store that made its own candies and a funeral home. There may have been a service station.

The playground had a slide, swings, and a merry-go-round. You could also get up a ballgame, pitch horse shoes (I won the playground horse shoes championship and I went on to win the city playground's

championship for my age group), fly kites etc. You could also play checkers and other board games.

The parks department would occasionally take a team from one playground to another playground for a game. One such game was played at McCullough Avenue. The grounds had no official field. The makeshift field had a short left field with a two foot fence. Behind the fence across the alleyway was an out building with a large glass window. We were playing baseball. I hit a ball over fence into the large window that shattered on impact. Every kid ran away, however Mrs. Goodson knew who hit the ball. When I returned home, my parents never asked about the incident. Several days, then weeks etc. went by and the subject never came up. To this day, I don't know who paid for the window. Maybe Mrs. Goodson never told my parents that I broke the window.

The grounds had a building that was called the Home Demonstration Club. I recall that once a month, my mother would put on her "Sunday Best" to attend a meeting there. Various groups would give cooking and sewing tips plus information for services provided by city, state and federal governments. There would be drawings for door prizes. The club house could be rented for parties and other activities. The playground equipment was stored in the building.

The playground provided no food or drinks, except a water fountain. One of the kid's father worked for Coca-Cola. He would pull in his Radio Flyer red wagon, iced down bottled Cokes to sell for a dime. I think he got the Cokes from his dad for about 50 cents. In those days the returnable bottles were sold in wood crates at 24 bottles per case. The glass bottles contained a little over 6 ounces.

Today the grounds have homes. Gone are the swings, slides, merry-go-rounds, games and children's laughter. The large mulberry tree is gone. Still there are my memories of this special summer place.

"Every once in a while I like to go to the window, look up, and smile for a Google Earth picture."

Linda Drake, Huntsville



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Keep sending in your family memories - we need them! We Appreciate You more than you know.

A Hobbs Island Family

by Brenda Franklin 2012

I was born in October of 1952, as the eighth child of eleven children (6 boys and 5 girls) to Lloyd Elton Eubanks and Inez Bradley Eubanks. My father worked on Redstone Arsenal in civil service as a painter, we lived at the Four Mile Post. My dad held prayer meetings in our home. People would come to listen to him from everywhere. He was never ordained as a Baptist minister but 6 of his brothers were.

Dad was very tall - 6'8" - always had a smile on his face and always had something interesting to say. Raising all those children on \$107 a week must have been difficult but we always had food for everyone! Dad built my mother her first home on Little Mountain Road in Hobbs Island. It had 4 bedrooms, running water and a bathroom. We had the prettiest pigs and chickens, and some cows. Our garden was always full of vegetables and fruit and there was plenty to share with others. People would just drop by to see us and they'd always eat with us of whatever was on the table.

When my Dad got sick with tuberculosis in 1960, Dr. Huber said he would have to be committed to the hospital. I remember all the children had to take shots so as not to catch TB. We only got to see our Dad a couple of times a month, and we missed him. All the children were still at home, and we thought the world had come to an end. Due to the lack of money, we lost our home one year after Dad had built it. We were in debt to the hilt with no money coming from anywhere, and all the electricity and utilities were cut off.

Aunt Clara Pullen & Uncle Elbert helped us when they could, other people started calling welfare agencies for us like Christmas Charities. We were getting some help in 1967 and moved in to Pete Webster's house that was located in front of the Huntsville Speedway, at \$20 a month. We had a garden and raised animals the people gave us. We were getting one pair of shoes apiece, one toy and one dress - Dad said that's all we could take because other people needed things too.

When Dad finally came home from the hospital - with no TB - we were so happy. He had mustard gas in his lungs from the painting he had done on Redstone Arsenal and only had one lung left. He was in and out of the hospital several times a month and in 1974 started drawing \$108 a month as his retirement check from Civil Service. He was in bad shape and could only get out of bed a little at a time.

Soon a man came to our home, this man was an attorney. He told my father that he could take his case to court on my Dad's behalf and get his home back, and get him money to live on for the rest of his life. I was 17 years old at the time, and was working. I fully understood what this attorney was telling my Dad, and he understood it too, but he was a very proud man. He looked up at the attorney and with tears in his eyes said, "Listen to what I say. Daughter, do you want to stay here or leave?" I told him I wanted to stay. He turned back to the attorney and said, "I did a really good job of raising these eleven children. I will not sue someone for money that I didn't earn myself. This is a faith of God. If it's my time to go to my Savior, so be it. He put me here and He'll take me away. I live with no regrets in my life and I'm very proud of my family. No one here is hungry or doing without clothes. So, no thanks."

The attorney left shortly after that. I was still living at home when my Dad died June 25, 1974 at the Medical Center Hospital, at 67 years old. He was buried in Bush Cemetery in Cloud's Cove, Madison and the Reverend Shelby Gurley and Laughlin Funeral home conducted the services. The Funeral home couldn't hold all the people that came to pay their respects, and the procession to the cemetery was 2 miles long. Brother Gurley had to wait 30 minutes for people to get to the grave site.

My mother lived on less than \$200 a month after that until she died in July of 1987. I cherish these memories and have been here for 51 years.

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