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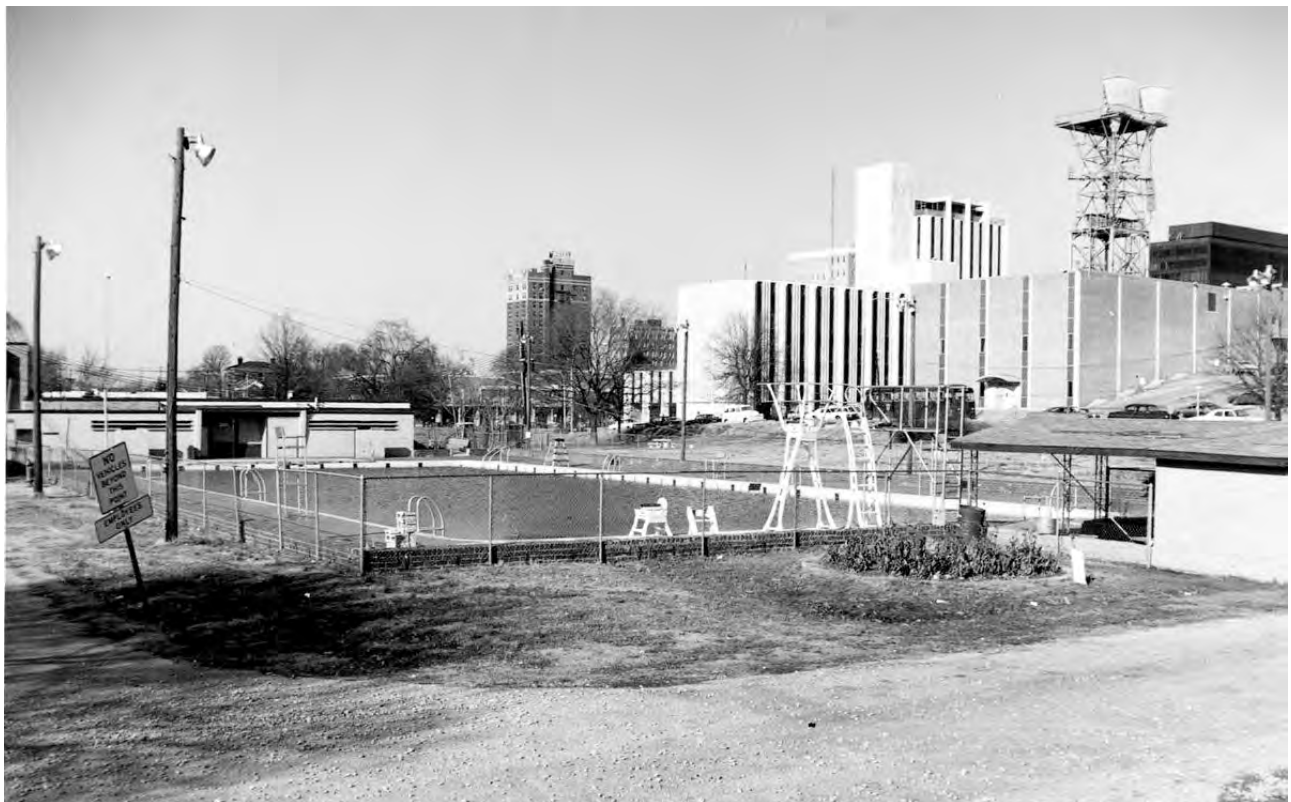
September 2023



Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

GROWING UP IN HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA



Also in this issue: Tennessee River Rail Ferry; The Witchcraft Trial; 92 Years Wasn't Enough; The Foot Soldier; Tom Sawyer, the AI Version; Huntsville Trees; T. T. Terry; Attempt to Burn the Square; Street News in 1880; Recipes, Pet Tips and Much More!

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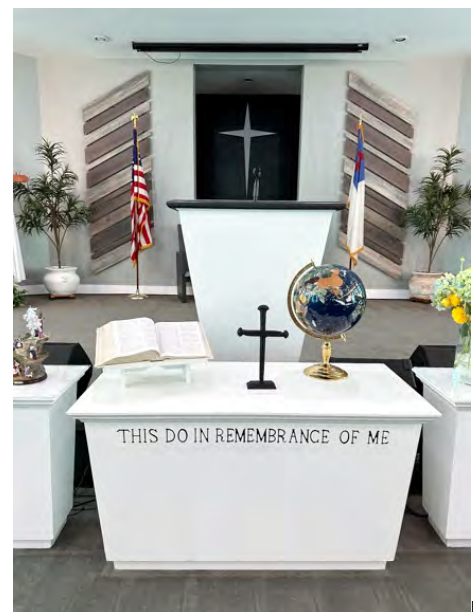
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Growing Up in Huntsville, Alabama

by Jim Vann

We were fairly poor. My mother had no prenatal care so I was born at home on School Street. I weighed 10 pounds at birth. My original birth certificate showed "Baby Boy" since I hadn't been named at the time. Doctor Holliman was in attendance and helped my Mom with my birth.

When I was about 3, dad borrowed \$3000 from the secretary at his place of employment. That was the Stockton Motor Car Company. Mr. Stockton had the GMC and Buick dealership on Greene Street in downtown Huntsville. With that money, dad bought a 3-bedroom, 1 bathroom house on the corner of Beirne Avenue and 9th Street. It was a great neighborhood with lots of kids with whom I could play.

When it was time for me to start school, I was given the option to attend Rison Elementary or East Clinton Elementary.

"I almost had a psychic girlfriend, but she left me before we met."

Billy Burlington, Gurley

My folks opted for East Clinton since it was a city school and Rison was a Mill school, outside the city limits. A good friend, Bart Loftin, lived up the street from us on Beirne Avenue. Bart and I walked to East Clinton School every day that the weather permitted. On the days when the weather was bad, my dad would usually come back home and drive us to school in one of the Stockton's wreckers.

One of the things I remember about first grade was that we were at recess one day and this girl pushed me down. Well having been raised with three older sisters, I often had to defend myself. I pushed the girl back and she tripped on the sidewalk and fell down. Our teacher saw this activity and sent us to the Principal's office. I was scared to death because the girl I had pushed was the Principal's granddaughter. Thank goodness the Principal knew of her granddaughter's being a tomboy. She warned us both to be better on the playground and sent us back outside.

My teachers at East Clinton were great teachers. Mrs. Baxter was my first grade teacher. Mrs. Baker was my second grade teacher and then she moved up to teach the third grade and I had her for a teacher again. One of the things I remember about that year was that we did what she called "Trapping". We were learning all the States and their Capitals. The seats were arranged in rows and the left side



Old Huntsville, Inc. (USPS #8510)

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Sales & Mktg. - Cathey Carney
Editor - Cheryl Tribble
Gen. Manager - Sam Keith
Copy Boy - Tom Carney
(in memory)

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

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

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front row seat was the one to receive the question. If that person answered 3 questions correctly, they received a point and moved to the first seat on the rightmost row. If you missed the answer to the question, you moved to the last seat on that rightmost row.

Another thing I remember was that Mrs. Baxter's classroom was across from the school cafeteria. One form of punishment she used was to tie a ragged, knotted rope around your waist and made you stand outside in the hall. You were called the "cow's tail". I was in the hall several times. My sister Helen was still at East Clinton. Several times when I was the "cow's tail" in the hall, she would come to lunch and see me in the hall.

Of course when we got home, she told on me and I would get a real spanking for misbehaving in class. I learned one of my life's best lessons in first grade. We had a fellow in my class that would be labeled the class bully. I carried my lunch every day in a brown paper sack. One day while waiting in the cafeteria line, he grabbed my brown paper sack out of my hand. Since this was sort of about survival, I made a fist and swung at his nose. He turned his head and I hit him right behind his ear. It sort of addled him. He looked at me, handed my lunch sack back and never bothered me again. That's how I learned to deal with Bullies.

I tend to brag so I must tell you that I won that contest about States and Capitals and my prize was a shiny half dollar. Another thing I will brag about was that year we performed "The Maypole Dance". We had a vertical pole with colorful ribbons tied to the top of the pole. We walked around, weaving in and out with each other and the ribbons were woven into a pretty pattern around the pole. We had a "King and Queen" of the Maypole. Carline Stephens was the Queen and somehow I was elected to be the "King". I may have been the tallest boy in the class.

Back on Beirne Avenue, we had a fairly large back yard. Somewhere, my dad acquired a telephone pole. My grandfather Vann was a carpenter and built a basketball backboard that we attached to the telephone pole. We got a basketball rim and net and attached them at the proper height. Needless to say, our yard was where the neighborhood played basketball. During basketball season there was no grass growing on the court. There's no telling how many hours and how many shots I played on that court. I guess it paid off because I always

played some sort of organized basketball starting with the First Baptist Church's YMCA team. Ken Sanders, David Hatcher and myself were the only freshmen to make the "B" team our freshman year at Huntsville High. I ended up being a co-captain of the HHS varsity team my senior year.

Also in our back yard we had a fairly large chicken house. In addition, we raised rabbits and ducks, all for our own food. My sister Sarah was particular about her food so when we had rabbit we'd give her some piece that didn't look like rabbit and tell her it was chicken.

We sold some chickens to neighbors. My dad got a piece of aluminum rod from somewhere. He fashioned it into something that looked like a shepherd's staff with a crook in the end. I was usually assigned the job of catching a chicken and delivering to the neighbor that purchased it. I would take the staff and slide it around the chicken's leg and pull it to me.

I had one bad experience with the chickens. It seems that occasionally a rooster just goes crazy and attacks anything that comes into the chicken yard. One of my jobs when I was about 6 years old was to feed the chickens. As I opened the gate and entered the chicken



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yard, the old rooster attacked me and flogged me through a pair of corduroy pants, and was just hanging onto my leg. Our kitchen faced that direction and my Mom saw what the rooster was doing to me. She ran out of the house and entered the chicken yard with her broom in hand. Like it was yesterday, I remember her knocking the rooster off of my leg with the broom and saying "ain't no rooster gonna jump on my baby". She backed that rooster up to the fence and she beat him to death with that broom. We had him for lunch the following Sunday.

Here's another story about my Mom. Back then, flour came in cloth sacks. The cloth sack would usually have some sort of design on it. One that my Mom bought was white cloth and it had blue seagulls on it. My mother made me a shirt out of that cloth and I really liked it and wore it until it was worn out. It looked good with the blue jeans I wore daily.

The first "paying" job I had was one summer when I was about 12 years old. I worked at my uncle's Gulf Service Station on Holmes Avenue. Dad would drop me off there on his way to work and pick me up when he got off work, usually about 5 pm. I pumped gas, fixed flat tires and most anything else a boy that age could do. I was paid \$5.00 a week.


One of the scenes I remember from that experience had to do with an old mule. There was a fellow that lived across the street from the service station that had a mule. There was a field behind the station and every morning the man would take the mule to that field and let it graze for the

day. In the evening, he would get the mule and bring it back to the shed on his property where it was kept overnight.

One afternoon the mule got right in the middle of Holmes Avenue and just sat down. He was blocking a long line of traffic. (At that time, Holmes Avenue was one of only a couple of ways to exit Redstone Arsenal). The old man was almost lying down on the street pulling on the rope that was around the mule's neck but the mule wouldn't budge.

My uncle who had been raised on a farm saw the problem and proceeded to fix it. He went out to the mule, took the rope and put it through the mule's mouth and crossed it over the mule's nose. He started twisting the rope tighter and tighter. With each twist, the mule would raise up a little. When he was standing completely upright, my uncle just led him off to the old man's shed.


I made a little money in the neighborhood by cutting yards with an old push lawn mower. That may have been the hardest I ever worked for the little



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amount of money I received.

My next paying job was working at the swimming pool at the Big Spring Park. My first year, I worked in the concession stand and in the men's bath room where the male swimmers clothes were stored while they were in the pool. I made \$.25 per hour at that job. I took advantage of the pool and swam a lot and took the test to qualify as a Lifeguard. I got my certificate for lifeguarding and the next year I served as a lifeguard at that pool.

Most fellows would think that was a great job, getting to watch all the pretty girls in their bathing suits. Actually it was probably the most boring job I ever had. From most of the lifeguard stations, you could observe the big clock faces on top of the downtown Courthouse. I have never known time to pass so slowly. I would tend the pool for what seemed like 30 minutes then look at that clock again and 5 minutes had passed. It was really boring.

In two years of lifeguarding I only had to jump in the pool one time to assist a young boy who was about to drown. As I jumped in, the young boy grabbed the rope that separated the shallow water from the deeper end and rescued himself. I made \$.35 cents an hour those next two summers.

I essentially had no expenses so I saved up \$250.00 that last summer. My uncle that had the service station now had a used car lot. He would go to Chica-

go and haul back a load of cars to sell. On one of his trips, he brought back a 1950 model Ford, 2 door, pea green, straight shift, six-cylinder car that he sold me for the \$250.00. I was really up town now with my own car.

There were 4 girls in my neighborhood area that I gave a ride everyday to school. They were: Patsy Malone, Charlotte Strong, Melba Grubbs and Linda McAnnally. They each paid me \$1.00 per week and with gas costing around 20 cents a gallon I usually had a full tank.

I had no trouble with school but did not make The National Honor Society as all three of my sisters had done. However, they didn't play football, basketball, baseball and tennis like I did.

Coach Clem Gryska was the football head coach, Bob Warden was the head basketball and tennis coach. I think Coach Hopper was the baseball coach.

I spent my Junior High year at the old Huntsville Junior High that was located on Wells Avenue, east of Huntsville High School (the old HHS, the Annie Merts center). We played softball at recess and before school started in the morning at that lo-

cation. We played "first bounce or a fly". If you caught either a first bounce or a fly ball, you got to go to bat. I had a girlfriend named Janice Shelton and half the time when I won the bat, I'd let her take the turn.

That old building was really run down with the plaster on the ceiling falling down.

Coach Ben Berry was the coach for all sports activities there. We used to joke that when the "Jack Salmon" were spawning at Guntersville Dam, we never had sports practice because Coach Berry was gone fishing.

The next year I moved up to the HHS building. I remember that the upperclassmen threatened to paddle us freshmen if we didn't shave before coming to HHS that first day. I shaved a non-existing beard and went to school that day with several "cuts" on my face.

Our Principal there at HHS was Mr. Finley. I have never known a nicer fellow. He was a boxer at some time in his life and he used to get his jump rope and show us what he could do with that rope sometime out in the hall.

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I think I mentioned making the "B" team in basketball. Our coach was named Charles Hopper. I will never forget at one of our games, we were getting beat really bad at halftime. Coach Hopper did not come into the dressing room during halftime. Just before the second half started, he opened the dressing room door and tossed in a pair of girl's panties and said "Come on girls, let's go play."

Needless to say we came back and won that game. He was a pretty smart coach.

There was a fellow named Paul Anderson who worked at the Big Spring recreation center. He picked a few of us that he thought had potential for playing competitive tennis. He gave us lessons in the HHS gym and there's no telling how many tennis balls I hit against that gymnasium wall with a line painted net high. That paid off because I played on the HHS tennis team and later on my college tennis team.

I had one of my most embarrassing moments playing college tennis. The University of Cincinnati (that had some great tennis players that later played professional tennis) came to David Lipscomb College during our spring season. Their number 6 player could have beaten our number 1 player. The people of Nashville turned out to see these great tennis players from Ohio. I was playing in the number 6 position (the worst) on our team. The only thing I had going for my game was a really fast, hard, first serve.

I won the first serve and proceeded to toss the ball up and hit one of the best serves ever in my life. My opponent smashed it back out of my reach and it was downhill from there. I forgot to mention that with a perfect follow through on that great serve I hit, I followed through and whacked myself across my left shin with my racket. Now my

leg is bleeding down into my sock and I'm hobbling around with no chance of getting to my opponent's return. As I said, it was downhill from there.

One of the things I really enjoy nowadays is to play Pickleball with friends at the Jackson Way Baptist Church. That group consists of some of the finest Christian people I have ever known.

One day, my same aged partner and I defeated the Youth Minister and one of his same age friends. My partner and I beat them and when we met at the net, I asked the Youth Minister how it felt to get beat by two 80 year old men. He looked square at me and said, "Jim, you look like a da-- Albatross with a 9 foot wingspan."

I feel very fortunate to have grown up in Huntsville, Alabama and have these experiences that I have tried to describe in this article. I retired with the Army after 30 years working as a civilian in the Missile Defense business. Every job I ever had in those 30 years was the best job I ever had.

My wife and I have made Huntsville our home and have lived in the same house in Blossomwood for 55 years. On August 24th, 2023, we celebrated being married for 60 years.

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Tips from Liz



* If you drink ice tea with a straw, you won't get tea stains on your teeth.

* This is a good time to observe what trees, perennials and flowers do well in the heat, for you to plant next year. This heat will be with us for a long time. A good example - Crepe Myrtles do fine with heat and little water, dogwoods don't.

* When making spaghetti, you could use just half the meat/sausage you currently use and never miss the extra calories.

* Many thieves will check a parking lot for purses/valuables in cars. DON'T leave your purse in your car unless it's hidden or in the trunk - otherwise you're just asking to be robbed.

* If you use spices, you will save time by storing them on a 2-layer turntable in your cabinet - takes up less room and you just twirl it to quickly find the one you're looking for.

* Cinnamon is really good to use if you are diabetic - try putting it in your coffee or on yogurt or fruit - delicious!

* Using a wet wash rag when you are working out in the heat can really refresh you - rub it on your neck and/or pulse spots and it will beat the heat!

* This one from our good friend Lola in Muscle Shoals - if you have frequent leg cramps at night while sleeping, try putting a bar of soap at your feet - it may stop them!

* You've seen those draft dodgers that you can put in

door cracks - they work great for keeping heat out as well as cold in and they're easy to make with cloth and cat litter.

* When you buy a container of cake frosting, whip it up with your mixer and it will double in size, giving you more and cutting back on sugar & calories!

* Put a small safety pin to the seam of your slip and you won't have a clingy skirt or dress.

* Weeds will NOT grow through wet newspapers. Wet the layers of newspaper, put in area where you have weeds, add mulch on top - no Weeds!

* To warm biscuits, bread or muffins that have been refrigerated, place them in a microwave with a cup of water. The water will prevent them from drying out, but the bread will be good and hot!

* Use plain body lotion as a facial cleanser - just rub in a bit and use a warm wash rag to clean it off. While you're at it, get your ears too!

* Give your colicky infant mild ginger tea. It's wonderful for digestion and gas.

* For fever, eat grapes throughout the day. Also dilute pure grape juice and sip during the day.

* When you rub lotion on your face, be sure and get your neck area too as it needs moisturizing as much as your face.

* Having trouble sleeping? An extra pillow might help!

* Dip asparagus into egg batter, roll in fresh bread crumbs or cracker meal and fry to a golden brown in butter. A very select vegetable with a juicy steak.



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The Push Lawnmower

by M. D. Smith, IV



In the early 50's, I would mow our large lawn to earn money to supplement my one-dollar-per-week allowance. I got paid a half dollar for the front yard and another fifty cents for the back. It was a hilly yard and backbreaking work, especially if the blades and cutter bar on the bottom were rusty. My father had to sharpen the blades with a small file and oil and adjust the cutter bar to snip the grass cleanly.

Sometimes if the grass wasn't too tall, I didn't have to use the canvas grass catcher. It made the mower lighter and a faster job since I didn't have to stop and empty the grass in a garbage can and later take it to the street.

When offered the job, I'd ask, "Do I have to use the grass catcher?"

If the answer was "No" I'd always jump at the chance but sometimes would refuse if the latter was the case.

I know some of you have never used a manual push mower, but if you have, you've never forgotten it. The sharper the blades, the easier and cleaner it cuts the

grass. But rotating knives can be dangerous.

My first cousin, George, was the same age as me. He had a younger brother. George had a very steep side yard hill reaching the street. One day, he'd left his mower at the top and sidestepped down the slope to move a stick. His younger brother, who'd been watching, decided to help and started the mower down the incline but then let go. Seeing it coming for him, George reached out with his hand to stop it. In an instant, he lost the ends of his middle and forefinger from those rotating blades. He had half-fingers from that accident for the rest of his life.

I can tell you, I had respect for those blades after that and never complained when my parents required me only to cut grass if I had my leather shoes on where previously I went barefoot. Never again.

"Anything you eat off someone else's plate has no calories since the calories rightfully belong to the other person, and will cling to her plate."

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Growing Up in the Fifties

by Carolyn Gallardo

Mrs. Smith was my first grade teacher. I was thrilled with the idea of attending school. I felt sooo big! I wasn't the least bit frightened. Billy Hall cried everyday for weeks. His mother would come and sneak out during an activity. Billy would just howl! I thought he was crazy. Mrs. Ethel DeArmond, our room mother throughout my Huntsville school career, brought a philodendron in a bamboo bird cage. A custodian hung it from the wall beside our classroom door.

We girls wore dresses everyday, regardless of the weather. Full length coats were worn when it was cold. The idea of wearing pants or a jacket never occurred to any girl.

I was aware that I was not as neatly groomed as the other kids. That was an irritation for me until about the fifth grade, when I learned to wash and iron my own clothes. I was then able to wash and roll my own hair.

I loved the German kids that joined us in first grade. I was immediately attracted to anyone different. Back then, their accents were darling. Their clothes and hair do's were exquisite.

Mother had a difficult time with me in the mornings dressing to go to school. I wanted Beate Zorke's French braids with ribbons braided in with the hair. My mother didn't have a clue! I left the house in a foul humor each morning.

I remember being in reading circles with Dick and Jane. We learned to read by sight in 1950 at Fifth Avenue. Our class was not the best readers. Our teachers decided to use phonetics when our class reached the sixth grade. I remember my third grade teacher, Mrs. Meade, called my mother and told her that Carolyn didn't know the difference between it and is. I saw the letter i, and jumped on it!

I never was a good student. I had a ball being social, but it never occurred to me that I was there to learn. I know teachers regretted having me as a stu-

dent. It was college before learning interested me.

In first grade, besides having reading circles, I remember we planted grass in a table sandbox. We watered the seeds and watched it grow. I guess that was a science lesson.

For Valentine's day we decorated individual shoe boxes to be a mailbox to receive valentine cards. I had measles the day of the party. Mother went to school to collect my cards given to me by my classmates. That was when I discovered that Johnny Thornton loved me.

At six years of age, Johnny and I were dropped off at the Lyric Movie Theater for Saturday morning movie. Before the movie started, we had local entertainment called The Kitty Club. Prizes were awarded to the performer who received the greatest applause. Afterwards, the Tarzan movie began. Johnny and I sat on the very front row. I made him kiss me on the lips. We were lovers!

John is now a professor at The University of Texas. When he attended our 40th high school reunion, I asked him if he remembered our kiss at the lyric. "Of course!" he replied.

One dollar twenty-five was the cost for a week's worth of school lunches. Mrs. Hower was head of the Fifth Avenue lunchroom. Most of us ate the school lunch; it was a good deal. When squash was on the menu, I ate the squash for my whole class. No one liked squash! When I did happen to bring a sandwich from home, I hated the fact that my mother wrapped it in waxed paper and Mary Margaret Neeley came with Saran Wrap. Saran Wrap was sooo cool. My mother refused to buy it, because it was more expensive.

Outside of school, I listened to Amos and Andy on the radio. "Only The Shadow Knows" was my Sunday favorite. The noise affects were thrilling. I can still remember being mesmerized by the lights that shone from the back cover of the radio. I still wonder how that works.

I don't remember how old I was when we got our first air conditioner, but I sure was glad! It did cut down the amount of time

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I spent outside during the warm months. My father caulked all the windows sealed. Cold was sealed in for the summer, and warm was sealed in for winter. Our house never aired out after that.

Before air conditioning we slept with the windows opened. Sometimes I even dampened a sheet or wash cloth to sleep with.

During summer we got unbelievably filthy outside playing. Brandon Street behind my house was not paved. All this dust was plastered to our sweaty bodies by sundown. We had to wash the ring from around our necks ("Grandma's beads"), every night. You would never believe the ring we made around the tub.

I was nine when dad got our first television to watch the World Series. It was a fancy Sylvania with a halo light. Every man on the block was on our rooftop trying to secure the antennae. They had guide lines everywhere. From this point on, television was never turned off. Dad claimed it took more power to turn it off and on, rather than leaving it be. Our living room became a theater for the block. Upon returning from school I was shushed at the door.

It was from the "I Love Lucy Show" that I got the brand of cigarettes to buy. Phillip Morris was the sponsor. I returned glass coke bottles to Tidwells, a small neighborhood store, to enable me to purchase my first pack. I don't know why Mrs. Tidwell didn't question my purchase. My usual picks were Double Bubble and a Sugar Daddy. She probably knew that my mother smoked.

Sandra Samples and I lit up in my garage. It was a difficult experiment. Perhaps mother nature was trying to tell me something, but I was determined. Lighting a match was tricky. The Philip Morris cigarette did not have a filter. You had to lip it just right to avoid getting all those bits of tobacco in your mouth. Those tidbits tasted terrible and you almost needed a mirror to pick them out. Not too sexy! The terrible smell made me dizzy. This experience kept smoking at bay for a little while.

I was either a Brownie or Girl Scout from third through fifth grade. The high points of these for me were the uniform and having cookies and punch once a week at a friend's house. Our chapters were not organized, nor did any of us earn any badges. I did receive a booklet called "Growing Up and Liking It", which was reading material about starting your menstrual cycles. I thought that was interesting.

In fifth grade, the girls and boys were split up for one class, so a nurse could teach the girls all about having periods. I remember the lady was very thorough in her lessons.

One summer I attended a Girl Scout day camp. Every morning for about two weeks we scouts met at the Girl Scout Little House and rode a bus to the Monte Sano State Park. We sang "One Hundred Bottles of Beer On The Wall" and something about

spaghetti balls rolling out the door; it was great!

I have always loved those trails and water falls on Monte Sano. We hiked and left signals, so others could follow. We picnicked and worked on projects. We made a "sit-upon" from weaving folded strips of newspaper to make a mat to sit on.

I attended ballet and tap with Miss Hazel Robinson. For the recital, I performed two dance routines, one tap and one ballet. I wasn't in dancing to learn dance, my interest lay with the beautiful costumes. Both sequined and tulle outfits were professionally made and a dream for my imagination. I wore those costumes until I literally could not get my body to enter them. These costumes I wore while charging neighborhood playmates to attend my circus shows of hanging by my legs off my swing set. My mother got her money's worth.

The sixth grade year was spent dreading middle school. Teachers threatened that the class work and middle school teachers would not coddle us, as we had been in Fifth Avenue.

I fell in love with Bill Johnston. I had played kick-the-can in front of his house forever. I suddenly decided I loved him.

I became a cheerleader. I think the boys on the football team chose the cheerleaders. With Bill on the team, I was a "shoo-in".

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Ask Grandma

by Mimi

I would like to stretch out summer a little longer. September is still a hot month and a good time to get away for a vacation with school back in session. The Gulf water is still very warm, even into October. You can get a reduced rate on some rentals and the beaches are not as crowded with school starting back.

The Jackpot lottery just keeps growing. At times, it is over a billion dollars. People in Alabama drive to neighboring states to buy a ticket or two. Many have dreams of getting rich, but if one researches the past winners in the long run, it has only brought them sadness. But I still do buy a ticket when one of my sons visits Tennessee just to have a stake in the game.

No, I wouldn't refuse the prize, but I sure have heard stories of other winners — not all good.

The states that have lotteries are able to give scholarships for college students to schools in their states, as long as they have a B average. This is a great help to parents as well as students since a college education is of great help in training young people for jobs in the workforce. The money is used for other state purposes and I hate to see

all that money going to bordering states' coffers.

I have a brilliant solution to freshen up your carpet - put 1/4 cup of fabric softener, 1/3 cup of vinegar and 1 cup of water in a spray bottle. Mist the carpet, then vacuum. It will help your vacuum pick up small particles that otherwise would be missed.

September is a good time to check with a doctor or pharmacist for any vaccinations you might need. Better to be safe than sorry. I've already made an appointment to get my fourth Covid injection.

My good friend and husband got Covid from a friend that just came back from Europe. Having been sick with the after effects of Covid, she said she would not wish that on anyone. So, I am going to take her advice and get mine as soon as possible.

Enjoy the fall season, such a nice time to plan a trip up the East coast to enjoy the beautiful Fall changing leaves. The weather isn't too hot to get out and walk some of the trails.

Until Next time!

"Never hold a cat and a Dustbuster at the same time."

Johnny Edwards, age 8

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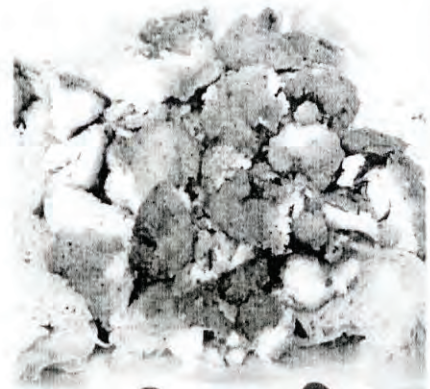
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Another Trip Down Memory Lane

by Jerry Keel

In just a few days I will celebrate (or maybe tolerate) my 86th birthday. I often wonder where all the years have gone. At times it seems only yesterday when I was just a teenager looking for the next adventure to come along. It seemed then that life was just a series of fun things to do, places to go, things to see, bridges to cross, mountains to climb, rivers to cross, and on and on.

Now, looking back on those days I wonder how I survived some of the crazy things I did. I have always heard that hindsight is 20-20 and I guess that is true. Some of the things I did back then I would not dare try to do today. Not just the physical limitations the years have placed on my body, but the sheer craziness of some of those things makes me wonder what I was thinking or if I was thinking at all. A lot of it was peer pressure, but also a lot of it was stupidity.

My memories of 50 to 60 years ago come back at times and seem like they just happened. What I had for breakfast is often a mystery. The years, two serious strokes, heart attacks, major surgeries and so many other things have happened that partially explain the memory loss I have today.

I look around and see a completely different world than the one I grew up in. Progress has changed the whole landscape and so many other things. I sometimes wonder how so many things could change in just the few years I have been around. Back in those days a ride in the country provided a view of fields of corn, cotton, soybeans and other agricultural crops. Now those same fields are filled with more and more big houses, larger and larger apartment buildings.

That is progress I suppose, although I do wish things would slow up just a little bit. So many things have changed, not all for the better in my opinion. My beloved newspaper, The Huntsville Times, has disappeared from the scene. I spent forty-four and a half years working at the paper and had to retire after very serious heart surgery. When I retired I was the oldest employee in time of service. I truly miss the paper as do so many others. Now thanks to the Old Huntsville magazine we can look back to things that happened in the past but the present is gone in the blink of an eye.

People have changed too. In the past when you encountered another person there was always time to say hello and maybe stop for a quick chat (or maybe not so quick). Nowadays everyone is in such a hurry there is no time for a short visit with a potential new friend. We

just tend to ignore other people we meet along the way.

When I was a kid I would walk to the downtown area with my grandfather. He never met a stranger and when we met someone else walking he would have to stop and talk.

Then most all business or shopping was done in a four or five block area around the Courthouse. It would take several hours to make the trip. We walked because my grandpa never owned or drove a car. Can you imagine not having a car today? Most people have two or three cars. Another sign of progress?

Recently I drove through the neighborhood where I grew up. Hardly anything was the same. The old Goldsmith-Schiffman Field looks like it is about to fall into a pile of rubble. What was once a magnificent stadium filled completely with football fans on Friday nights now looks so run down. The walls look like they are about to crumble. I don't know what the inside looks like but I assume it looks like the outside.

The playground that once provided a safe place for all the neighborhood kids to meet and play games under the supervision of a city-paid playground supervisor is no more. The supervisor served as a surrogate mother to all the kids. She would care for our minor injuries, mediate our disagreements and just generally make sure we behaved.

The playground was on the opposite side of Beirne Avenue across from Goldsmith-Schiffman Field. I spent many happy hours there playing Softball and football games. Playing horseshoes, climbing on the monkey bars, swinging on the big swings and other fun things kept us entertained. These activities kept many of us occupied and out of trouble.

Now some kind of construction has taken the place of the happy times so many of us kids enjoyed. The sounds of construction have replaced the joyous laughter of the children who played there. The allure of industry and the high wages people now enjoy continue to eat away at all the simple pleasures we enjoyed back in the good old days. Things definitely moved at a much slower pace then.

No one had much money but we didn't need money to have a great fun time at the playgrounds. Today most kids have a car given to them by their parents. The kids I grew up with had bicycles or just walked wherever we wanted to go.

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Local City News 1880

- A local woman asserted that for months she had been abused and threatened by her husband. Mrs. Ethel Olsen, formerly of England, and later of Huntsville, sent a pistol bullet at her husband in a crowded street near the Courthouse here late Sunday, missed him and powder-burned a passerby.

She declares she fired to protect her face from a dash of muriatic acid which she charges her husband was preparing to cast at her. She was arrested and charged with assault with intent of murder. She tells a story of her husband's alleged cruel treatment of her and their children.

- Last Saturday night some malicious scoundrel killed a horse belonging to Mr. H.W. Helm, the well known blacksmith. The horse, a very fine one, was in the pasture bordering the spring branch, and was killed by being struck just above the eye with a brickbat. We trust the perpetrator may be discovered and appropriately punished.

- Yesterday in the Big Cove a man named Stewart Wishart was shot and mortally wounded by a man named R.S. Buford, who was arrested. The trouble arose about a dispute in regard to crops. Wishart was cropping on Buford's place. It is thought Buford was justifiable.

- We understand it is reported through the country that yellow fever is in Huntsville. This is untrue. There has not been a single case of yellow fever in Huntsville up to this time.

- Appeal to Mothers - Clothing partially worn or outgrown, sheets or bedding of any description, remnants of calico or domestic, such as always accumulate in families - any or all these articles are earnestly solicited for the Orphans of the plague-stricken city of Memphis, and will be thankfully received and immediately forwarded if sent to Mrs. S. R. Cruse, Adams Avenue.

- Miss Kate Erskine will open a School at the residence of Mrs. S. C. Erskine, on Franklin Street, on Monday, the 2nd of September. The patronage of the public is respectfully solicited.

- - Howard Washborne is in jail again. Enough said.

- Janie Carroll has thrown her husband Jacob out of their Oak Avenue home again due to his weakness for the bottle. She says he turns into a monster with just two glasses of the vile poison.



Huntsville High Class of 1959

by Margaret Anne Goldsmith

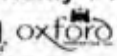
*Time was relative - a rush of memory
Our 25th reunion
Insecurities - fragile egos
Peer hunger vs. parental control
Resurrecting bittersweet pain
That was adolescent identity
Confronting a new relationship
Suspended by the span of years
The reunion hurled aside fears
We were high on magic time
Completing unfinished business
To the tune of laughter, tears
Embracing ourselves and each other
Sharing without the fear of truth
We reclaimed a past holding future loving
Of that which we are together
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Walk the Rails

by Bill Alkire



The weather was near perfect. The temperature for around the 20th of September 1955 was pleasant, nearing 60 degrees at night. Brother, Mom and I had been visiting the Ronald McDonald family in Harding. Twila, the mom, and the children were our first cousins Beverly Jean, Sandy and Ronald McDonald. Their father had been my mom's brother and was tragically killed accidentally by a train.

A lot was going on in the world and I tried to keep up with events happening. The news had been developing with talk of the United States (US) orbiting a satellite (Russia beat us in 1957). President Dwight D. Eisenhower had suffered a heart attack and the ICC ordered all trains and buses to end segregation. In other news Albert Einstein had died and the AFL & CIO had merged to create a massive labor voice.

On a more personal note, minimum wage was now \$1.00, and gasoline was selling at an average \$.23 per gallon. Our visit with the McDonald family had lasted a little longer than intended. We had ridden the Reynolds Bus Line to Harding and had missed the bus ride home. It was decided we should walk the railroad tracks. The railroad would be safer than walking the highway at night.

Home was 5-6 miles away using the railroad tracks. The temperature was nice, and we had a full orange harvest moon to light the way once night fell, and it would be dark! We began our walk. We entered the railway at C.W. White's property. The walk was pleasant to start, as birds began to search for bedding for the night and was quite noisy for an hour or so.

The orange moon began to light our way - it was low and bright. As the environment transitioned from day to night the surrounded area also took on a different atmosphere. The forest surrounding the tracks was no longer layered with bird tweets. We began to experience different, unusual, and frightening sounds. Knowing that there were predator animals roaming the forest at night was not a comforting realization. At one point a thrashing sound appeared in front of us, and my thirteen-year-old imagination just knew it was a Bear (I forgot bears travel mostly by day). The noise turned out to be several deer traveling through in search of food. The deer quietly saw us and hurried on not to be bothered with us humans.

Other night creatures, birds, including bats and owls could be heard. Wildcats and Bobcats were known to frequent these forests, as well as opossums, raccoons, and other nocturnal critters. As the night progressed the air became cooler and more frightening. Movement in the wooded area could be heard and felt.

The lights from the town began to make their glow known in a few hours. Of course, we could see light long before we caught a visual of any houses. We approached from the south end of town. We left the railroad tracks and made our way by Applehole (swimming). We walked the sidewalk to our house through Pannetta's backyard. We were all tired and blessed by God to make it home safely. I never experienced a walk on the rails again.

This solidifies the notion that God is always with us - even when we do dumb things. God loves us and wants us safe.

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DOWN MEMORY LANE WITH ASHBURN AND GRAY

by Kimberly Lang

My name is Kimberly and my dad is Robert. Imagine yourself riding alone with your dad in Huntsville and every road we go on he shares with me how he helped build that road with other workers, with all the hard work and sweat that went into it. My dad had to quit school so he could help his family like so many did back then. He was 15 when he was hired by Cecil Ashburn. My dad didn't know much about the work but would come to learn very quickly.

His first project would be Bankhead Parkway where he would start learning about concrete and asphalt and the hard work involved. The first week was done and he received his first paycheck \$34.00 I couldn't imagine working that hard for that amount but that was the pay back then. It would be the next project that had its challenges - the foundation for what became the SCI building on South Memorial Parkway. At that time it would have been Automatic Electric. My dad says that to get it formed, poured, and finished took the workers and concrete trucks running like clock work.

I have worked at SCI but I never have given any thoughts to the hard work that went into at the time.

The next project would be big for Huntsville and a challenge for my dad. Memorial Parkway overpasses. My dad was working on the Drake Avenue overpass when they were lifting a reinforced concrete pipe and it got to swinging out of control and hitting him and sending him flying. My mom was pregnant with me at the time and was home resting when they came to tell her what had happened and she needed to go to the hospital. It took months for my dad to get able to work again.

Construction work is hard no matter the type - whether it's building a home, roads, buildings, bridges. Also our power line workers, any outdoor work that makes it possible for you and me to have what we have today.

We need to appreciate those workers for the risk and hard work that they do, so the next time you see one tell them thank you...they deserve it!

"If a lawyer and an IRS agent were both drowning and you could save only one of them, would you go to lunch or check Facebook on your phone?"

Jess Isbel, Florence

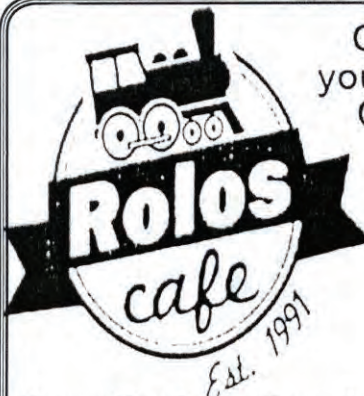
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Heard On the Street

by **Cathey Carney**



Happy Birthday to **Judy Smith** of Huntsville who just celebrated her big day on Aug. 31st. I know wherever she went it was with family and she had lots of cake!

Were you able to find the pair of pliers I hid in last month's issue? They were on page 41 in the Big Ed's Pizza ad - see it now? I had more callers than I thought I'd get. My winner was **Jimmy Musick** of Huntsville, who wins a years subscription to the magazine. Lots of great readers with tons of patience.

Then we had a number of readers who called to ID our photo of the month. The young lady was **Erin Dacy**, anchor of Channel 31 for 24 years. Our first caller was **Laura Rush** who wanted to give the gift to her aunt in Los Cruces, NM. So **Janice Orr** is the lucky recipient and she loves reading about Huntsville history. Congrat-

ulations to both Laura and Jimmy!

Many of us have trouble reading smaller print but did you know your computer can read out loud to you? I tried it on my computer, which uses Outlook for my emails. What I did was click at the top where you see File, Edit, etc. On that line look for "Review" and click it. A Dropdown list will include "Read Aloud". I clicked that and it began reading what was on my screen. To stop it, just do the same thing and click "Read Aloud", it will stop. Pretty neat when you just want something read to you.

If you get the digital version of Old Huntsville magazine, your phone or computer can read the stories to you.

The **Maple Hill Cemetery Stroll** is back on this year, Sunday Oct. 16 from 1:30-4:30pm and it's free (donations happily accepted). If you haven't been, bring your comfortable walking shoes and a light camping chair if you like to sit. The graves come alive with their "occupants" telling you all about their lives and what happened to them. You'll love it and the kids will too! No pets for this one, however.

In honor of Maple Hill Cemetery I have hidden a tiny tiny angel wing (just one) within these pages. If you find it and are the first to call (and haven't won recently) you'll win a years subscription to Old Huntsville magazine, worth \$50.

You know those little binder clips you can buy at office supply stores? They work really well for your bags of chips, crackers etc. and keep everything airtight!

Peg Hall of New Market wants

to wish her sweet sisters happy birthday in September. **Mary Lou Clapperton** and **Betty Jane Goddard** are her sisters and she feels so blessed to have these ladies in her life.

You know we all have uses for those little plastic bags we get at grocery stores. Well I started putting mine in empty Kleenex boxes and here's how. Get one of those square tissue boxes, empty. Take each garbage sack and just wind it around your hand then tuck then end in, so it's a little ball. Just put it into your empty Kleenex box, continue til it's full. You'll be surprised how many bags you can stuff in there, it takes up no room (store under a cabinet) and easy to get to. Recycling at its best!

Bill Wright was a beloved writer and family man. His pride for his family was so obvious anytime he'd talk about them. Bill graduated from Murphy High School in Mobile in 1948, joined the U.S. Army in 1951 as part of the 224th Infantry Regiment where he served in Japan, Korea, and Koje-Do Island. He later served in the Army's 101st Airborne Division in Kentucky before being discharged in 1952.

Photo of The Month

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

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This baby grew up to be a publisher who likes to hide things.



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Bill met his love **Barbara** at a mutual friend's wedding in 1956, and they were married in 1957. He then began pursuing a degree in Accounting at the University of Alabama where he graduated in July 1960, becoming the first from his family to have a college degree. After gaining his degree, he worked in Pensacola, Mobile, Picayune and Huntsville, eventually retiring from his job at the U.S. Army Defense Missile Command in 1989.

Bill and family settled into a home in Huntsville in 1969, where he lived for 50 years. Bill's hobbies when he was younger were playing fast pitch Softball (he was a highly desired pitcher and played on several winning teams) and then later coaching little league baseball and softball when his children became of age. During his time after retirement, he kept busy helping with grandchildren, writing wonderful and interesting stories about his life, (many published in Old Huntsville) going to the gym, golfing and attending his grandchildren's activities and sporting events.

He is survived by his wife of 65 years, **Barbara Daniels Wright** and three children, **Brenda Jones (Greg)** of Huntsville, **Randy Wright (Leslie)** of Birmingham, and **Roger Wright (Belinda)** of Huntsville. He is survived by eight grandchildren, **Brittany, Daniel, Mitchell, Anne Scott, Kyle, Blakely, Trey, and Maggie** and three great grandchildren, **Evelyn, Harrison, and Henry**. Many will miss this gentle man who loved family more than anything.

Happy birthday to that handsome **Sam Keith** who has a Sep. 28 birthday. And **Barb Eyestone** celebrates her day with cake on Sep. 17. Party ON!

Yes we'll have lots more hot humid weather but when you get a taste of just a little cool crisp air you're ready to get out again. There are lots of activities for every age group in Huntsville and here are a few I found for September.

Greene Street Market 4-8 Sep and Oct 304 Eustis St.

Ryland Pike Farmers Market hours 1001 Ryland Pike Suite F, Huntsville, AL 35811 Hours: Thursday. 12 - 6PM; Monday & Tues Closed; Wednesday: 12AM - 6PM; Thursday: 12 - 6PM

Oakwood Farms Market
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performance venues, restaurants, a foundry, a chocolate shop and a community garden. Our open door policy allows the public to visit artists and makers during the different stages of their creative process."

There are way too many events going on at Lowe Mill so just Google Lowe Mill Entertainment and you'll be shocked. Open Wed - Sat. Check their website for hours. Lots of classes in oil painting, kids face painting, dancing, knitting - check it out!

Have a great September and watch out for your older neighbors who may not ask for help.

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Sugar Taffy

- 3 c. granulated sugar
- 1/2 c. vinegar
- 1/2 c. water
- 1 T. butter

Boil sugar, vinegar and water to soft ball stage. Quickly stir in butter and boil til mixture becomes hard and brittle when you put a drop in cold water. Add any flavoring extract desired just before removing from the fire & mix. Pour onto a buttered plate to cool, turning the edges in as fast as they cool. When cool enough to handle, pull until white and brittle.

Chocolate Popcorn

- 1-1/2 c. sugar
- 1 rounded T. butter
- 1 sq. unsweetened chocolate
- 3 qrts. freshly popped corn
- 3 T. water

Boil sugar, butter, chocolate and water til mixture spins a

long thread in cold water. Pour hot over popped corn and stir til all kernels are coated.

Cherry Dessert very old recipe

- 1 c. sugar
- Butter, size of an egg
- 1 c. milk
- 3 t. baking powder
- 2 c. sifted flour

Cream sugar and butter together and add milk, baking powder and flour. Mix well. Put batter in greased pan and pour sauce over it. Bake 30 minutes at 350 degrees. Sauce:

Sauce, mix well, use warm

- 1 c. sugar
- 2 T. butter
- 2 c. cherries
- 2 c. boiling water

Chocolate Truffles

- 2 pkgs. semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 15 oz. can sweetened con-

- densed milk
- 1 t. vanilla
- 1 c. chopped nuts

Melt chocolate chips over hot water in double boiler. When melted remove from heat and add milk or cream, vanilla and nuts.

Chill til firm on a buttered plate or marble slab. Shape into small balls and roll in nuts, cocoa or coconut.

Angel Food Pudding

- 2 eggs
- 1 c. powdered sugar
- 1 T. flour
- 1 t. baking powder
- 1 c. broken walnuts
- 1 c. chopped pitted dates

Beat together the eggs, sugar, flour and baking powder. Stir in the nuts and dates. Pour into buttered baking dish, set in a pan of boiling water and bake for 30 minutes at 325 degrees.

Let chill and serve with whipped cream.

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Maple Pralines

- 1 c. maple syrup
- 2 c. powdered sugar
- 1/2 c. cream or milk
- Butter, walnut size
- 1t. vanilla
- 2 c. chopped nuts

Boil sugar, syrup, cream, and butter to a soft ball stage. Remove from fire, add vanilla and nuts and beat til creamy. Drop by teaspoonfuls onto waxed paper.

Vinegar Pie

- 1-1/2 c. sugar
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 4 T. vinegar
- 2 T. flour
- 1 T. butter
- 1 c. hot water
- Nutmeg to taste

Mix all ingredients together and pour in uncooked pie crust. Bake in moderate oven (325) til the center is done (25 minutes) - a very old recipe.

Black Bottom Pie

- 1 T. cornstarch
- 1 c. sugar
- 4 eggs, separated
- 2 c. milk
- 1 pkg. semi-sweet chocolate

bits

- 1 t. vanilla
- 1 T. gelatin
- 1/4 c. cold water

Combine cornstarch and 1/2 cup of the sugar. Beat the egg yolks and add slowly 2 cups of scalded milk.

Stir in sugar mixture. Cook in a double boiler, stirring til custard coats the back of a spoon, Divide custard evenly.

Add 3/4 package semi-sweet chocolate chips to 1 cup of the custard. Stir til chocolate is melted. Add 1 teaspoon vanilla and pour into the bottom of a baked 10-inch pie shell.

To the remaining custard, add the gelatin which has been softened in 1/4 cup of cold water and cooled.

Beat the egg whites, adding 1/2 cup sugar gradually til the mixture hold it shape.

Fold this into the custard-gelatin mixture and pour over chocolate layer. Chill til set and garnish with remaining 1/4 package chocolate chips.

Lemon Bar

- Crust
- 2 c. flour
- 1/4 c. powdered sugar
- 1 c. butter

Filling

- 2 c. sugar
- 4 T. flour
- 4 T. fresh lemon juice
- 4 eggs, beaten fluffy

For crust, mix like pie crust and press into pan. Bake at 325 degrees for 20 minutes. For filling, mix sugar, flour and lemon juice. Add beaten eggs, mix well. Pour over hot crust. Bake at 325 for 20-25 minutes.

Layered Dessert

Crust:

- 1 c. flour
- 1/2 c. butter, softened
- 1 c. chopped nuts
- 1st Layer:
- 1 c. powdered sugar
- 8 oz. cream cheese
- 1 c. Cool Whip

2nd Layer:

- 1 pkg. vanilla instant pudding
- 2 c. milk

Mix crust and press into 9 x 13" pan. Bake at 350 for 20 minutes. Cool. Mix powdered sugar, cream cheese, and Cool Whip, spread on cooled crust. Mix pudding and milk, spread over first layer and top with more Cool Whip.

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Early Huntsville Businessman - T. T. Terry

by Kate Hopkins

If you type in the name New Market, Alabama into Wikipedia it states that according to the 2020 census the population is 1,543. Then click on "Notable People" and you will find the name T.T. Terry listed as the first mayor of Huntsville from 1916 to 1918.

That's how my search begins but I have learned that there were other men who had served before Mr. Thomas Tyler Terry BUT that the position was originally called President and later the title was changed to Mayor. So, Mr. Terry was the first man to be called the Mayor of Huntsville. He was born in New Market in 1865 to the farming family of George Lee Terry and Mary Darwin Terry. It seems that he did not like the agricultural business and at age 21 he moved to the city of Huntsville. He gained retail experience at several stores before opening his own dry goods store on the south side of Courthouse Square. One of his early ads stated, "Great is the Power of Cash".

A dry goods store was one that mainly carried fabric for home sewing projects and the name meant that the products sold didn't require special handling or temperature controls. Other examples of items that could be found in a dry goods store are rice, flour, nuts, seeds, dried beans, sugar and honey. Mr. Terry married Elladee Rogers in 1893 and his business flourished for over 40 years. He did not like publicity but instead put his efforts into charitable work through the Central Presbyterian Church. Much of Mr. Terry's work also revolved around community improvements. He was a key contributor to the construction of Huntsville Hospital, and he was also a President of both the Huntsville Hotel Company and the Chamber of Commerce.

The Historic Russel Erskine Hotel, located on the corner of Clinton and Spragins, is an example of how the local Huntsville businessmen worked together to improve their city. Seven local men formed the Huntsville Hotel Company, and they undertook the formidable project of building a first-class hotel that would attract and impress travelers from around the nation.

The devastating stock market crash happened in Oct. 1929 but a few months later, in Jan of 1930, the

Russel Erskine Hotel grand opening was called one of the "bigger than life occasions in Huntsville's history." The building was twelve stories tall and had 132 rooms that included running water, electricity and radios. The lower levels had marble floors, a barber shop, a beauty parlor, offices, a coffee shop, a fine dining restaurant and a large ballroom.

With careful management by the investment group the hotel remained solvent and went on to become the social and civic center of the city. The hotel is even credited with impressing the Army Generals so much that it helped in the decision to choose Huntsville as the site for Redstone Arsenal. After the war things began to change and modern motels started to replace the grand hotels. In 1975 the last hotel guest checked out of the Russel Erskine.

The building has been converted to a senior apartment complex and it was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1980.



"The government is never responsive to the needs of the little man. If you're under 5'7" it is impossible to get your Congressman on the phone."

Woody Allen

Specialist Jacob Wharry

by Elizabeth Wharry



When we moved here in 2009, my boys were 5 and 8. Joseph is older by 34 months. Before the field near Bridge Street was turned into various shops and restaurants, Redstone Arsenal and NASA held a meet and greet. There were all kinds of activities for the kids. One was getting one's picture taken in an "astronaut suit".

Eventually, the boys got bored with the activities. We wandered around looking at the various pieces of equipment the Army had brought. All of us had questions about what was on display. Jacob was especially curious about the helicopters.

After a short while, he spied a full bird Colonel. The Colonel had just finished a conversation. Jacob went up and tugged on the man's pant leg. The Colonel looked down, and Jacob said, "Hey mister soldier man, I don't want to be a soldier for the US. I want to be a soldier for the USA, cause I'm an American!".

The Colonel kept a straight face, as he squatted down. The twinkle in his eye made me smile. He said to my son, "You come see me when you're old enough. I'm sure you will make a fine soldier."

My son went through 4 years of JROTC at Sparkman High. A week after graduation, he shipped off to Ft. Benning for 6 months. At that time, he was a PFC (private first class). After being assigned to his permanent duty station for just over a year, he was promoted to Specialist.

As of the writing of this article, he is in line to become a Corporal. This is the same son who got married in May.

Happy Labor Day!

"80% of men kiss their wife good-bye when they leave the house to go to work. The rest kiss their house good-bye when they leave their wife."

Jeremy Roberts, New Market

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Well Done, with Much Gratitude

by Iolanda Hicks

What can anyone say to someone or a group who have done a service that has given you and others more of a chance to continue living? At the Huntsville Veterans Memorial Museum, there are many glass-protected displays filled with memorabilia representing fragments in time of different Americans who participated in wars and their heroes. This article is about one of those displays depicting the Buffalo Soldiers and the Tuskegee Airmen.

Cavalry Hills, in Huntsville, was named after the all African-Americans Buffalo Soldiers. There is a Memorial to those soldiers who were encamped there for a period of time.

It was the 10th Cavalry of the Buffalo Soldiers, that were at Calvary Hills. This was soon after the soldiers saw service in the 1898 Spanish-American War. The 10th had been sent originally to Camp Albert C.

Forse in Huntsville to heal from several ailments and battle wounds. During this convalescent period, there was an incident with other soldiers, causing the Buffalo Soldiers to move to another area in Huntsville to continue their recovery. This area became known as Cavalry Hills. Four all-black regiments had been formally established in 1866 by the Army. Congress had passed legislation establishing 2 mounted Cavalry regiments, the 9th and 10th and 4 infantry regiments. The 4 infantry units were designated the 38th, 39th, 40th and 41st.

It is said that the Buffalo Soldiers got their name from the Plains Indians whom they fought after the Civil War. Those Indians said that the hair of those soldiers was black and curly, just like the fur of a buffalo and they were fierce fighters! Thus originated the name for those fighting men as the Buffalo Soldiers.

Before these men became known as the BUFFALO Soldiers, they were known as the United States Colored Troops (USCT) during the Civil War. They were given their right to combat when the Emancipation Proclamation was issued on January 1, 1863. Approximately 179,000 African-Americans served as soldiers in the U.S. Army by the end of the Civil War with another 19,000 serving in the Navy. Almost 40,000 of these men died during the Civil War. 30,000 of those died due to infection or disease. These men showed the strength, during this time, of the African-American's desire to fight for freedom.

It is not as well known, but during the period of the Civil War, there were over 400 women who served in the Civil War posing as men. Cathay Williams was one such female and the first African-American woman to enlist. She was the only documented woman to serve in the U.S. Army during the Indian Wars, disguised as a man and who served as a Buffalo Soldier. Cathay was 17 years old when she enlisted

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and served under General Philip Sheridan. As a Buffalo Soldier, she witnessed the Red River Campaign and the Battle of Pea Ridge. There are so many stories about so many lives but this is history. A little known fact that during the Civil War, after the Medal of Honor had been established, there were several African-Americans that earned this prestigious Medal because of their heroic actions.

The Buffalo Soldiers, who served their country with honor, had 30 men awarded these medals over a period of their 90 years of service, up until the Korean War in 1951. The last Buffalo Soldier, Mark Matthews, died at 111 years old in 2005. He was born in Greenville, Alabama in 1894 joining the 10th Cavalry when he was only 15. He saw battles during the Poncho Villa Expedition, WWI, WWII and the Battle of Saipan. At the time of his death, he was the oldest living Buffalo Soldier and is buried at the Arlington National Cemetery.

Buffalo Soldiers have served in every war since the Civil War. A little known fact too is that "the U.S. Army and its Buffalo Soldiers were among the first protectors of what would eventually become National Parks, including Sequoia and Yosemite in the late 19th, early 20th centuries." We, as a nation, have many brave souls to thank for our freedoms and in the preservation of our heritage. The Buffalo Soldiers fit very nice in our arms of Gratitude!

In that same display case at the Veterans Memorial Museum the Buffalo Soldiers share heroism with another famous group of soldiers, or rather pilots called the Tuskegee Airmen. These men not only excelled in combat but they were also the first black pilots in U.S. History. Trained at the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, they proved themselves in the cockpit, as the exceptional pilots they were known for during the war.

In the most dangerous bomber escort mission of WWII, the Tuskegee Airmen of the 332nd Fighter Group of the U.S. Fifteenth Air Force left an Italian Airbase on March 24, 1945 to escort B-17 bombers to the German capital, a 1600 mile flight. The target was the Daimler-Benz's tank assembly plant. Those red-tailed angels as they were nicknamed later, protected those B17s on that day and the bombing of that target was successful, helping to clear the way for the "Allied Advance into Germany". The Germans also had a nickname for those flying heroes in "recognition of their skills". They called them "Black Birdmen" or in German, Schwarze Vogelmenschen.

These Tuskegee Airmen flew approximately 1500 combat missions in World War II and more than 15,000 individual sorties. When the

war ended, the group had achieved a record of excellence with awards including 95 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 8 Purple Hearts, 1 Silver Star and 744 Air medals.

The Tuskegee Airmen were active from 1940 until 1948 and in March of 2007, the collective Tuskegee Airmen were awarded the Congressional Gold Medal of Honor. "Since the American Revolution, Congress has commissioned gold medals as its highest expression of national appreciation for Distinguished achievements and contributions by individuals or institutions." One of the last known of these red tail angels died in June 2023 in Dallas, Texas. He was 96 and had served as an airplane and engine mechanic in the 99th Fighter Squadron of the 332nd Fighter Group. His name was Staff Sgt. Homer Hagues.

What a legacy all these men left for a grateful nation! Thank you to the Buffalo Soldiers and our Tuskegee Airmen for a job well done, with much gratitude!

The Huntsville Veterans Memorial Museum is located off of Airport Road in the John Hunt Park location. It is opened from Wednesday through Saturday, 10:00 AM until 4:00 PM. Donations of your Military memorabilia are welcomed!



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TOM SAWYER AND THE TELEVISION

by John Michael Hampton



This story was written not by a writer, but by computer-generated Artificial Intelligence using an app. This was submitted by John Hampton, one of our regular writers, and he says: *"Just for fun, I asked the Artificial Intelligence Interface Chat GPT to create a story about Tom Sawyer seeing a television for the first time, in the style of Tom Sawyer. This is what it gave me for the story."*

In the year 2020, Tom Sawyer found himself in a world vastly different from the one he knew. The quiet town of St. Petersburg had transformed into a bustling city with tall buildings and noisy streets. Tom's sense of adventure was still alive, but he often longed for the simpler days of his youth.

One day, while wandering through the city, Tom stumbled upon a large electronic store. Curiosity piqued, he decided to step inside. The shelves were filled with gadgets he had never seen before: smart phones, tablets and all kinds of strange contraptions. But what caught his eye the most

was a massive flat-screen television displaying vivid images and colors.

Intrigued, Tom inched closer, gazing at the screen with awe. He watched people talking, singing, and dancing, all captured in mesmerizing detail. It was as if the pictures had come to life, and he couldn't believe his eyes.

A store employee noticed Tom's wonder and approached him with a friendly smile. "Hello there! Are you enjoying the show?" he asked,

"I surely am!" replied Tom, his Southern drawl carrying a hint of excitement. "What is this marvel, sir?"

The employee chuckled, delighted by Tom's enthusiasm. "This is a television, a device that brings entertainment and information right into your home. You can watch movies, shows, and even news on it."

"Goodness gracious! Back in my day, we'd have to go to the town hall for such things. Now it's right in front of you!" Tom marveled.

The employee invited Tom to sit on a plush couch and handed him a remote control. "Go ahead, try it out! You can change channels and explore different shows."

Tom hesitated for a moment, then gingerly pressed a button on the remote. The screen changed, revealing a thrilling action scene from a movie. Tom's eyes widened as he watched the heroes fight off villains with incredible stunts.

"Oh, my stars!" Tom exclaimed. "It's like having a play right here in the room!"

As the day passed, Tom became engrossed in the television world, flipping through channels like a child in a candy store. He laughed at comedies, tapped his feet to music shows, and marveled at documentaries. The concept of moving pictures fascinated him, and he couldn't get enough of this new form of storytelling.

Soon, the store employee and Tom struck up a friendship, discussing the wonders of the modern world and the memories of Tom's past. They shared stories over a cup of coffee, bridging the gap between generations.

As the sun set, Tom reluctantly bid his new friend farewell. But he promised to return to the store whenever he could to marvel at the television, which had become a portal to a world of endless possibilities.

Back in his modern-day life, Tom Sawyer found joy in both the simplicity of his childhood and the wonders of the 21st century. The television became a reminder that while times change, the thirst for adventure and fascination with new discoveries never fade away. And so, with the spirit of an adventurer and a heart full of gratitude, Tom embraced both the past and the present, ready to embrace whatever the future may hold.



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Me and My Bike

by Ted Roberts



A famous English poet decrying the brevity of life once stated, "But at my back I always hear time's winged chariot hurrying near" or something like that.

I know exactly what he means: because I'm a bike rider and how often have I mumbled; "But at my back I often hear a two-ton cement truck hurrying near." It's enough to wobble you into the curb and a fog of embarrassment in front of friends and neighbors (I ride in my neighborhood).

I can just imagine my public audience rushing to their doors and windows to see that "wobbly old guy" navigate the streets and sidewalks. There must be a well organized betting pool in place too: even money bets that he falls off. Also of interest to real gamblers - odds lovers - which block?

Real biking - far better and more natural than pedaling away in a gym with your only company your fellow creatures - much duller than the birds, the sun and the occasional squirrel and chipmunk that cross your sidewalk path. Of course, there is occasional danger. Once in a while, here comes the lady walking her two Pomeranian monsters. With teeth like daggers and tempers like tigers: cursory critters that chase

and devour anything that moves - like you.

The only reaction is to veer into a neighboring tree or cut in front of the cement truck. Data gathered by bikers favor an immobile tree - not a truck moving towards you at 60 mph.

Riding around the neighborhood doesn't display many kids with helmets - though it would help when you avoid the Pomeranians and hit that tree. I think the bike riding world has figured out that if Junior needs to wear a helmet riding a bike, he needs full body armor in the back seat of a four wheeled vehicle going 60 mph in a 30 mile zone along with dozens of other maniacs. But I don't think an adventurous world has yet figured that out.

Junior isn't the problem. It's the wobbly old guy (me) whose

balancing capabilities are under challenge: the senior citizen whose wife - upon his return - greets him like a wing-walking acrobat. "Well, did you fall off today?"

Most of the time I smugly reply: "No way" unless crutches, arm in a sling, streaming blood or grass stains give me away.

Another hazard. You're wobbling down a street and you decide on a U-turn, which can be deadly if a garbage truck is behind you. Maybe you ought to take a look before you take a turn. Simple, you'll swivel your head and make sure that the garbage truck is in another state.

But alas, your neck no longer swivels like it did when you were sweet sixteen. So, you do a half-way swivel and listen for the roar of a ten-ton behemoth. This works most of the time.



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

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Jan Otto, mom of teenagers

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TENNESSEE RIVER RAIL FERRY

by Bob Baudendistel

Dating back to the time of Aborigines, the geography in Alabama has fielded numerous attempts at connecting the Tennessee River with the Coosa River in order to reach the Gulf of Mexico. Thanks in large part to a group of investors based out of Huntsville, a vital rail system would eventually succeed in connecting the two rivers across Sand Mountain thereby promoting greater economic trade and commerce throughout much of North Alabama and Southern Middle Tennessee; a trend that continues to this day.

Spanning a distance of over 30 miles across this mountain, the Creek Indians were first at developing a major trail in linking the two rivers. This same trail was later intensified by General Andrew Jackson with his combat army while at war against the Creeks. It was Jackson himself who first sought to build a railroad over the mountain for the shipment of critical supplies. In a detailed letter to congress, Jackson pleaded to have the funds allocated for its construction. Following the war against the Creeks and the infamous Trail of Tears, new development started building some steam over much of Marshall County. In 1848, Mr. Samuel K. Rayburn, a highly industrious entrepreneur, launched another campaign at promoting the railroad. His efforts persuaded the Federal Land Sales Office in allowing the State of Alabama to subscribe the public lands which abutted the proposed right-of-way but with the stipulation that said railroad would be completed within a period not exceeding ten years.

This did not end up happening as the highly anticipated rail corridor fell into receivership at the brink of the Civil War when all efforts were essentially red flagged.

The Tennessee & Coosa (T&C) Railroad, as it was rightfully named, previously hired Mr. Hugh Carlisle out of New Orleans to engineer and oversee the construction. Following the war, Carlisle and his team of Irish immigrant workers quickly resumed grade work over the mountain but were still unable to meet the required timeline. The railroad later got restructured under new corporate ownership after years of impending legal proceedings. By a ruling of the Supreme Court, Carlisle would end up owning much of the line as repayment for his work.

Back in Huntsville, the North Alabama Improvement Company was formed by a group of investors with the intent on luring new cotton mills into this area to help rebuild after the war. In doing so, the group worked contentiously with the Nashville, Chattanooga, and St. Louis (N.C. & St. L.) Railway on getting Huntsville a second railroad, thereby keeping just one from tying a knot on the cost of shipping.

Meanwhile, up in southern middle Tennessee, the Winchester & Alabama (W&A) Railroad launched a separate attempt on connecting that region into northern Alabama back before the war. A charter was issued for this railroad prompting it to be "Constructed over a line deemed most practical in reaching the Tennessee River at or near Gunters Landing while passing through New Hope". Had this railroad been built over said routing, it would have totally by-passed Huntsville while being diverted south of New Market through Deposit, Maysville, Brownsboro, and eventually toward Vienna/New Hope. The N.C. & St. L. Railway purchased the war-ravaged W&A in 1877.

After much persuasion from investors, an extension of that line was constructed in 1887 heading south out of Elora with stations located at Hickory Flat, New Market, Deposit, Bell Factory, Mercury, Fearn's Switch (later known as Chase), Normal, and then on into Huntsville at a junction with the Memphis & Charleston Railroad. With new cotton mills and other related industry soon flourishing across this area, all eyes were looking further into the Deep South.

As corporate leaders with the N.C. & St. L. at its Nashville headquarters watched their company accrue the many benefits on account of extending the former W&A Line into Huntsville, they started to see great potential with the ailing Tennessee and Coosa (T&C) Railroad through Marshall and Etowah County. The T&C became part of a new deal as it was purchased soon thereafter in 1891.

Following its buyout, N.C. & St. L. sent a team of surveyors, led by Chief Engineer Mr. Hunter McDonald, out in search of the best route in which to connect Huntsville with the T&C near Guntersville. Scouting over the mountainous terrain spanning a distance of over 40 miles, McDonald and his team determined that an overland route for construction with the missing rail link was no easy task. In his report sent to Nashville, McDonald described the interim terrain as "Heavily mountainous with 300-400-foot vertical bluffs abutting the 'mighty river' along each of its shores."

After much consideration, both McDonald and the railway's upper management team decided the more cost-effective solution in connecting the two loose ends was by instituting a naval ferry operation to effectively shuttle the railroad

cars out over the river between the two ports.

Beginning in 1892 while working out of Huntsville, McDonald and his team staked out a right-of-way for the proposed railroad extending south toward the river. Its location was further influenced by several railway stockholders, many of whom owned lands along much of the proposed route. The first stop was located five miles south of Huntsville at Lily Flagg, named by owner Samuel H. Moore. Further along were lands of Dr. J.B. Farley where the railroad was built across the Aldridge Creek flood plain before skirting the southwestern edge of Green Mountain. Next, it continued through Campbell Cove shortly before reaching the foot of Wallace Mountain at Taylorsville where another station was located. Out over the Tennessee River floodway, McDonald and his staff carefully studied depths within its main channel in determining the best spot to build an incline. The chosen site was located 1/2 of a mile up from Hobbs Island where the river featured adequate depths allowing for the navigation of larger vessels. Just inland, the roadbed was elevated thereby keeping the tracks well above the maximum flood stages of the river.

A second incline was built near Gunter's Landing and adjacent to Henry Island (now submerged beneath the lake). From here, the rail line went through the heart of Guntersville with a passenger station before turning east heading up Sand Mountain through the depths of Pole Cat Hollow. Over remnants of original T&C corridor, the newly re-constructed rail line passed through Lane, Albertville, Boaz, and Carlisle before dropping off the south end of the mountain near Littleton where it continued through Moragne, Attalla, Alabama City and then into Gadsden at the bank of the Coosa River.

When all was said and done, the Huntsville Branch Line of the N.C. & St. L. Railway surpassed 121 miles, including 21 nautical miles along the river, making it the longest railroad branch system of its time. Its distinctive naval ferry operation was also noted for covering a distance greater than any other throughout the nation.

Two paddle-wheeled steamers, the Huntsville and Guntersville, along with a set of wooden barges were initially used to transfer both passenger and freight cars out over the water. Passengers who de-boarded trains ahead of each incline got to go aboard these steamers enjoying upper-level deck views while cruising up and down the river. Just up from the incline at Hobbs Island were Taylor's Store and Parson's Grocery allowing rail passengers a place to stock up on food and drinks ahead of each voyage, given that the ships' galleys were not always open to the public. The journey upriver from Hobbs Island lasted 4 hours while the return back down from Guntersville took just 3.5.

Out along this stretch of waterway are some of the Tennessee River Valley's more picturesque landscapes as the Cumberland Outlier Mountains and ridgways open into remotely hidden coves with clear running streams, pastured fields, mature growth

forests, wild game, rocky hillsides, caverns and towering bluffs; all right at the waters' edge. Residents who lived and farmed within these same areas nearest the river have often shared stories about witnessing the passage of the early steamers. They described them as a "chanting echo" being carried throughout the mountainous river valley.

Railroad timetables included up to

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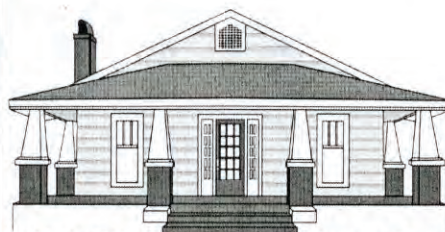
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Joe E. Lewis

four river runs per day with the busiest of all time taking place around World War II per the Huntsville Arsenal. At the peak of this war, many highly secured and "sensitive" shipments were dispatched and delivered while utilizing the given rail ferry system in order to reach either the Gulf Coast or Eastern Seaboard.

Admiration of the railroad river ferry grew significantly both in terms of its revenue freight service and improved public relations as many special voyages were once again being commissioned.

One of the most popular chartered runs took place certain times of the year whenever a full lunar phase occurred. Referred to as the "Midnight Moon", a passenger train special was run south of Huntsville during the afternoon, later being transferred up the river from Hobbs Island right around sunset which in itself was quite a colorful event. Within hours, the ferry would make a brief stop at Gunter's Landing right as the full moon rose out over the eastern sky.

Turning back to Hobbs Island, both passengers and crew members were able to sit back and admire the reflectivity of the moon together with a glittering galaxy of stars sparkling out over the given waters. Elevated tree-tops swayed in the wind as the darker shadows of these same ridges were boldly accented beneath the pale lit sky; all while the Tennessee River and the Mountain Lands joined in together like Mother Nature planned.

While recently helping a friend maintain his vessel, a late evening cruise was soon in the works with at least 10-12 invited guests. Rick and I shared the duty of piloting the Harbor Master Coastal 520 from the upper fly bridge helm while heading up river at a cruising speed of about 8-10 knots. Out over the first 10-12 miles of river while approaching Guntersville Dam, it was the first time for many to ever see the spectacular scenery along this stretch of the waterway.

After passage through the locks at the dam, the party continued while heading up past Honeycomb Creek before reaching the Port of Guntersville and its City Harbor. Here, the boat was docked at a public pier allowing everyone time to visit the many riverside retail stores and restaurants. Later that evening, the full moon was making its debut over to the east just as we were leaving port heading back down the river.

The tour continued as we all got to see the beautiful lighthouse below Georgia Mountain. Making way further down after passage through the locks was perhaps the greatest view of all looking up over the Painted Rock Bluff of Merrill Mountain just as the full moon was shining brightly across its water draped rock formations rising some 300+ feet directly over the river.



Nearing Hobbs Island a little after midnight, another lighthouse came into view from Taylorsville when shortly thereafter, the boat was docked at her covered slip within Ditto Landing.

Thinking back throughout the history with this stretch of water and its unique rail ferrying system, it was easy to fathom how captivating the trips must have been after a day and evening on water and a whole lot of fun, as we got to make a Tennessee River run!

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92 YEARS WASN'T LONG ENOUGH

by Brittany Hanson



We lost my wonderful grandfather yesterday, July 27th. A Mobile native, Korean War Veteran, University of Alabama Alumnus, and a devoted husband and father of three - grandfather to nine (plus three great-grandchildren).

His name was Bill Wright and I am one of his grand kids.

To me he was Pop. Always full of stories, jokes and advice, which usually included some way of telling me to be extra careful. We used to laugh at how overly cautious he was with us but now as a parent myself, I understand. He wanted no harm to ever occur to the people he loved.

There are few men who can compare with just how selfless and completely dedicated to family he was. The entirety of my childhood and adult life thus far, he has supported me in more ways than I can count. This is nothing compared to the continuous support and love he has given to my mother, his daughter, throughout her life. It has been a joy to witness.

I was the first of his grandchildren to become a "traitor" and attend Auburn University. When asked how he felt about it, he responded "I'm not an Auburn fan but I'm a Brittany fan." My duration at Auburn I received countless letters from him which always included words of encouragement and a

little bit of spending money - also reminders to slow down on the trips to Starbucks.

When I became a nurse, he constantly told me he'd never met a nurse like me. When I became a nurse practitioner, he told every healthcare professional he ever came across that his granddaughter was a nurse practitioner...though I don't think he fully understood what I did until more recently. Even still, he said it with so much pride, I couldn't help but be flattered.

I loved him like a father. When my own father passed away while I was in my early 20's, I was shattered. But there he was, giving me even more fatherly advice and support, just like he had always done.

When I got married, he walked me down the aisle. He was so nervous, with his biggest concern was that he was going to trip over the train of my dress and "mess up the wedding." So much so, that he wrote a reminder on the palm of his hand that just said "dress!" He initially seemed mortified when I surprised him by asking him to dance with me for a grandfather/bride dance, but he truly shocked me with how well he could "cut a rug". He even joked that he couldn't believe I couldn't dance as well as him. One of my favorite memories.

I will miss our talks. I will miss his stories. I will miss his kind gestures. I will miss being able to help take care of him these last several years. I will just miss him. It definitely speaks to someone's character when 92 years doesn't seem long enough. The world is definitely a lot more gray without him in it. I love you, Pop. Thank you for everything.



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The Foot Soldier

by Mickey M. Lee

I was sitting at the lunch counter of a drugstore in Laurel when I was attracted by the speech of a somewhat fanatical man two chairs away. He was explaining to a lady and her husband that it does not hurt young men when the Army gives them difficult training for combat. He was shaking his head and pointing at his listeners the way intense men sometimes do. He told of bullet-firing belt buckles and poison dart-throwing rings used by Germans in WWII to prevent capture and search by enemy soldiers.

A short time later I was able to get into a conversation with him by asking about those interesting devices. He was friendly and explained the mechanism of them, although I did not understand it. It seems that a captured soldier would face his enemy, punch himself in the stomach and fire two 25-caliber bullets at him, or he could shake his ring finger and eject a dart covered with cobra venom at the enemy's head.

His soliloquy went from the tricks of killing the enemy to the atrocities of war and eventually to the atrocity of Audie Murphy's book and movie, "To Hell and Back". He was angry because Murphy omitted to say anything about the support given him and his two accomplices by the 55 men in the platoon.

At first I thought this was the embittered plea of an old foot soldier who never got any medals or

glory. He told me about serving in Burma, China and India, building the Burma Road and building airstrips for the Flying Tigers. He talked about escaping from the Japanese on some kind of death march (Bataan?) and having a steel plate put in his forehead because of it. He said he served more than four years in Germany and the Pacific and more than two in Korea. After hearing all this, I asked if he had received any other medals. (Earlier he had made the statement, "I did not get 12 Purple Hearts just looking out that door," pointing to the front door.)

"Yes," he said, "I have 158 decorations. The highest I have is the CMH (Congressional Medal of Honor). I also have five Silver Stars, four Bronze Stars, and the highest decoration that can be given by Belgium, France, Holland, South Korea, Britain and Scotland. This year I get the one



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"After you retire, there's only one big event left - and I ain't ready for that one yet."

Bobby Bowden, Fla. State coach

from Canada." (He said he had the highest decoration offered by eight different countries, but I do not know if he meant to include the U.S. When he first started to read off the names of them I was caught by surprise and possibly missed one.)

He said that once at Fort Hood, a couple of years before his retirement, he was going to stand inspection along with the rest of the troops. It was a general inspection, so everyone had to wear his medals. He asked the first sergeant in his outfit what to do, since he had too many to wear.

The sergeant made some sarcastic, demeaning remark which got him angry. The captain of the company who was there made the same belittling remark as his sergeant, so my story teller said something like the following, very angrily: "Sergeant, do you want to be a private tomorrow? Captain, do you see what this is (pointing to his CMH)? I think you two men had better freeze right there. Neither of you showed me the proper respect when you approached me. I think

that I will go down to Post HQ, and that your captain will not be commander of this company tomorrow."

He went to HQ and told his story to Sgt. Savoin, who accompanied him back to the barracks and ordered the transfer of the two insolent soldiers.

Later, the captain asked Sgt. Savoin if he would not reconsider his transfer but Sgt. Savoin said that he would not, and added, "Maybe at your next assignment you will not try to belittle someone and will treat the persons under you with more respect."

My story teller continued, "The sergeant was not there. I do not know what happened to him. I think he was transferred, too. The orders were cut immediately and those men were out of there the next day. Anyway, the next day at the inspection I was standing out in front of my troops when the General came by. I could not salute because both my hands were full of medals," he laughed at this, "and there were only three (or four) medals in the rest of the company."

The General (quietly) asked if all those were mine, so I gave him a card (an official Army document) which had a list of all my decorations. He told me that after that day I would stand no formations and would be his aide. I served as his Technical Advisor for the next three years.

"Every morning a staff car picked me up (at the barracks) and took me to post HQ," he said. "Sometimes I would get there and ask the General what was on tap for the day. He sometimes (about once a week) would say, 'How about getting a little sun at the beach and investigate the amphibious life?'"

In other words, scars about his eyes, bullet hole in his right arm, large slice across his stomach, plastic nose, something wrong with his legs. He was about 5 feet 8 inches and sort of fat, yet he could walk! What days they were!"

Editors Note: Many thanks to Anna Lee who sent us this story written by her husband Mickey. He was born in 1941 and passed away at 42, in 1983.

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Roy Rogers and Cap Pistols

by M. D. Smith, IV



I loved cap pistols as a boy, for as long as I can remember, right up to the time I got my first .22 rifle. All the boys in the neighborhood played various games, primarily western shootouts, with our cap pistols. A Saturday morning gunfight in someone's yard was the day's highlight. And as we traveled to friends' houses, it felt good to pack a "six-gun" on your side, loaded with 50 shots and ready for action. The only thing better was two guns on either side, just like Roy Rogers used in the movies and later on TV.

Each box had five rolls of 50 caps for 250 shots total. They were three boxes for a dime. Since I liked fireworks and the smell of the empty tubes of aerial salutes, I loved the smell of gunpowder firing from my trusty 45, nickel-plated zinc-alloy beauty with imitation plastic white stag handle grips.

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

Seen on local hospital chart

My friend Mathias Freese described them like this: "...cap gun with slide away cylinder in which red caps with black eyes coiled, a running strip of these blisters through the flanges and dark spaces above which, exploded by a press of the trigger, gave off an acrid, not unpleasant odor, as sweet as punks."

Percussion gunpowder is often used today as the explosive, but previously the tiny powder charge was a simple mixture of potassium perchlorate, sulfur, and antimony sulfide sandwiched between two paper layers that hold in the gases long enough to give a sound report when the cap is struck. I loved the smell after a cap-pistol gunfight.

Some guns had a ring of six shots, the size of a half dollar. But these caps were expensive and went fast, replacing the rings often. Keeping ammo for these guns or getting parents to buy a new stock was difficult.

In my later boyhood, we discovered you could lay an entire roll of caps on concrete and hit it with a hammer for a terrific explosion.

In the late 50's, a TV commercial featuring Roy Rogers himself showed a couple of kids how a "shooter hat" worked, and it was for sale by Ideal Toy company. "The Roy Rogers Quick Shooter Hat, an Eddy Goldfarb invention, allowed any kid to feel like he was in a western movie. It turns from cowboy hat to toy gun in seconds as it is equipped with a hinged flap hiding the secret cap pistol that flipped up and fired when you pressed a button."

If you want to learn, stop talking.
The way you learn is to listen.



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Here's a link where you can see the 60-second commercial:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=hKnCORG54D4.

By then, I was in my teens, and it no longer appealed to me, but it sure was fancy.

Before the TV shows, I watched Hopalong Cassidy, Gene Autry, The Lone Ranger, and Roy Rogers movies in the late 40's for a dime at the local theater. My parents and grandparents spoke highly of Roy and Dale, saying they were good, wholesome Christian folks in the movies and behind the screens.

Up to 1949, I loved all the comic book and movie hero cowboys, like I mentioned. But what changed the tide and made me a devotee of Roy Rogers was in 1949 when Roy and Dale appeared at the Boutwell Auditorium in Birmingham with their Wild West Show. I was spell-bound when my

grandmother took me to see it.

With a wood chip layer covering the arena floor, we saw cowboys on horses galloping, calf roping, and Roy's horse, Trigger, showing off. Dale rode her horse, Buttermilk.

I loved his wild west show, complete with firing blanks at a simulated Indian attack on a covered wagon. They ended the show with several songs, including the tune, "Happy Trails", composed by Dale Evans.

Years later, the couple opened the Roy Rogers Museum in Apple Valley (1976), which had three locations over the years. Two were in California, and the last location moved to Branson, Missouri (2003) before being closed by their son, Dusty Rogers, in December 2009. The contents sold for nearly three million dollars, including the taxidermied horse, Trigger, and dog, Bullet.

But now, seventy-four years later, I remember Roy and Dale as if it were yesterday. I own several Roy Rogers original comic books and a real Roy Rogers Colt 45 commemorative edition working revolver that I keep in a wooden case with a glass top in my office.

He was indeed the "King of the Cowboys."



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Walking the Tightrope

by G. W. Robinson

It was 1951. I was 17 years old and I had a friend in Paint Rock who played guitar with me. We usually got together on weekends to play music. This Saturday night he and I, and 3 or 4 more friends were gathered in Paint Rock to play music. We were at somebody's house; most anybody in Paint Rock would invite us to their house to play for them.

Our music was not that good, but it was about the best thing going on in Paint Rock at that time.

We only had a fiddle and one guitar and we were talking about trying to find someone to play another instrument with us. Someone said: "I know somebody up the valley who plays mandolin. He might play with us." I said: "Do you know how to get to his house?"

He said: "Yes." I said: "Let's go see him." So we all loaded into my car (I was driving my Daddy's car) and headed up Paint Rock Valley.

We drove about 5 or 6 miles up the valley. He said: "Turn right here." I only saw a field road where farmers had traveled getting to their corn fields down by the river, but I turned where he said and made my way down to the river.

I said: "Where is his house?" He said: "On the other side of the river." I said: "Where is the bridge?" "No bridge!" "How do we get across?" "I will show you" he said. "Come on over to the riverbank," he said. We all followed him up close to the river.

Now, it was dark, cloudy,

and a light rain was falling, just a little moonlight filtering through the clouds. He said: "Look right over there and you will see how to cross the river." I looked and all I saw was a 1 inch steel cable stretched across the river. I looked a little closer and there was a second cable about 5 feet above the first one. I had never seen anything like that before. I then figured out that you were to walk on the bottom cable and hold onto the top one.

I said: "Who is going across on that?"

Nobody said a word. I thought, "We have come too far for nobody to go over and see this fellow."

So I said: "I will go." So, here I go. I guess the river was about 75 or a hundred feet wide at that point. I didn't know if it was 2 feet deep or 20 feet deep. There was no way to know.

I thought I was pretty brave when I started across. I had never done anything even remotely like this before. When I got about half-way across and that cable started swinging and swaying, my thoughts turned from bravery to stupidity. I asked myself: "What in the H--- am I doing here?"

I thought: "I am already half-way, I may as well keep going." So I finally reached the other side and stepped off that cable. I looked way up the hill and saw a light in a window. I called out, but nobody answered. Well, I started up the hill toward the house, all the time with a sick feeling in my stomach, because I knew I was going to have to go back across that river. Besides, it was dark, a light rain was falling, and I was all alone in a strange place where I had never been before.

Well, I got about half-way to the house and all of a sudden here comes a whole pack of dogs, yelping, barking, and raising all kinds of H---. I suddenly decided I didn't really want to see that fellow anyway. I turned and headed back toward that river.

I'll bet my feet didn't touch the ground three times till I was back on that cable and on my way back across. Needless to say, my second trip across was much faster than my first!

I sometimes wonder if that cable is still there after 71 years. But you know...I really don't care!



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1951 ADVICE COLUMN FROM DOROTHY DIX

*First Published on July 2, 1951
in the Nashville Banner*

*With permission from the
Nashville Retrospect*

DEAR MISS DIX: What does life hold for women between 50 and 60? Why do our children think that at that age we should be willing to fold our hands and sit in the chimney corner with no interests except in their interests? Why do they think that it would be terrible for mother to go out and get job and earn her own living, or even to marry again? Why can't they realize that we find it hard to live in our children's homes and want our own, and our own independence and maybe somebody to love us. I am in my early fifties, strong and healthy, and I am tired of being ON THE SHELF.

ANSWER: Good for you, sister! Up and at 'em. Now that you have got to the rebellion point, get out and do something about it. Head a revolt of middle-aged women against their dutiful, loving children who are enslaving them in the name of kindness.

Everyone knows that it seldom adds to the serenity of a home to have a mother-in-law in it. Most in-laws resent her presence. It brings about jealousies, interferences, daily conflicts of will, a thousand unpleasantnesses, and no matter how much her children love mother they would be happier without her.

And mother would be happier away from them. All of her life she has been busy. Now she has nothing to do. She has had her place in the sun. Now she is only John's or Mary's mother. And years

of running her own house have totally unfitted her to live in another woman's house and take orders instead of give them.

A dozen times I have said in this column that women quit work too soon. Life may not begin for them at 50, but a new career may if they have the courage to attempt it, and they are wrong and foolish to settle down and be dependent on their children. They should strike out for themselves. Make their own living and be happy and independent.



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From 1891 Huntsville Newspaper

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

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

As soon as it was discovered, the men in the front hollered for the hose, but at that time a member of the department, William Hayden, caught a man's form in a crouching position up in a dark corner of this little space, and immediately laid his iron grasp upon him and drew him from his hiding.

Officers Ward and Fulgham were on hand and the man was turned over to them. They got him into the calaboose, while he was kicking, jerking and making strenuous efforts to free himself. Finding the man created a great deal of excitement, but the small gathering set to work and in a few minutes had the fire put out.

If the fire had gained any headway no telling what damage it would have done, for the entire block would certainly have been in danger. The villainous fellow arrested would not disclose his name, nor residence.

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

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PET TIPS FROM ANGEL

Your Disaster Plan

Disasters happen to everyone. You have got to have a plan just in case it happens to you and your pets. This plan will be for your pets.

Create an Emergency and Disaster Plan

If you need to evacuate your home, where would you go with your dog? Does the Red Cross Shelter accept pets? Who would you leave your dog with if you couldn't find a shelter for you both? Whether it is a hurricane, tornado, earthquake, flood, or fire, you will have little time to act once disaster strikes. Now is the time to start planning how you will take care of your dog during the next natural disaster, not a day or two before the next one is forecast.

Here are some steps you can take to make sure the four-legged members of your family are ready in the event of a natural disaster or other emergency.

Create an Emergency and Disaster Folder for Paperwork

1. Make sure you have proper identification for all your pets, including tags, as well as a microchip. Keep copies of all paperwork in an Emergency and Disaster Kit, along with the phone number of the microchip company.

2. Check that your dog(s) are up to date on their shots/vaccinations. Keep copies of the paperwork in your Emergency and Disaster Kit. Many safe havens for you and your dog will only accept pets if they have been vaccinated, so this proof may be essential to keep your dog with you. Some will accept dogs if they are muzzled, so it may be prudent to invest in this crucial piece of equipment just in case. Be sure to practice using it with your dog before it is needed.

3. Keep current copies of the prescription medications your dog takes on a regular basis.

4. Make a list of your dog's health needs, any behavioral issues, and your veterinarian's phone number. Include a photo of your pet.

Do Your Research and Find a Safe Haven Due to state and local regulations, many Red Cross shelters cannot permit any animals, except for service animals.

1. Find out which animal shelters/kennels provide emergency shelter in the event of a natural disaster.



2. If you don't want to leave your dog in a shelter or kennel, research hotels or motels along your evacuation route that accept pets.

3. Ask a family member or friend in advance if they will be your dog's emergency caregiver in the event of such a situation. It is important to choose someone who likes animals and has some experience taking care of them.

Create Your Emergency and Disaster Kit

1. Choose a bag large enough to accommodate all the food, water, and essentials for your pets, but one that is easy enough to transport while you

are traveling with them. A large backpack would be perfect for a single dog, or a duffel bag on wheels would be good for someone with multiple dogs.

2. Be sure to include at least seven days worth of bottled water and food for EACH pet, along with collapsible food dishes, paper towels, dish soap, and bags for trash. Particularly with a senior dog, it is important to get the same food he usually eats. Dogs are sensitive to food changes unless done very gradually. No need to add more stress to your dog in an already stressful situation. Remember to rotate food every six months so the food in your kit is always fresh.

3. Add a dog first-aid kit and a guide book for basic first-aid procedures.

4. Include two weeks worth of any medication/supplements your dog takes. Be sure to rotate medications every six months to one year to make sure medications don't go bad.

5. Include comfort items for your dog, such as treats, chew toys, a favorite blanket, stuffed animals or toys. If your senior dog has arthritis, etc., be sure to remember to take his bed and/or blankets to make him as comfortable as possible.

6. An extra collar or harness and leash.

7. Add your Emergency and Disaster Folder to the kit.

8. Store your kit in a convenient location that can be easily accessed in the event of an emergency. Show any emergency caregivers where you keep the kit.

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THE WITCHCRAFT TRIAL

by Tom Carney

The courtrooms in early Alabama history normally dealt with horse thieves, murderers and bushwhackers, but in the late fall of 1822 our courts of law were forced to deal with something totally different. The courts had to render a decision about a woman accused of witchcraft.

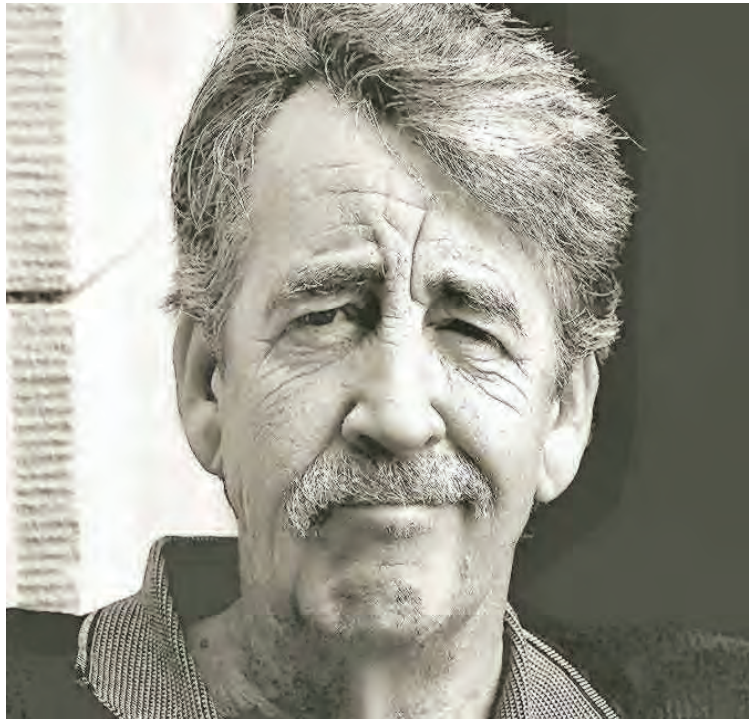
History has forgotten the old woman's name. All we know about her is that she lived on the banks of the Flint River. A friendless old crone who had strange ways and was rather aloof, the woman was the talk of the local area. At first, she was spoken of only in whispers, then more boldly until she was publicly accused of being a witch. It seemed as if the more people were discussing it, first in private then publically, the more it became something that everyone had an opinion on. It culminated in a warrant for her arrest signed by one of the landed gentry of the community.

The day of the trial was fixed. Excitement ran high and people came from far and near to witness the unusual event. The trial proceeded on time and a great number of witnesses were called to testify, but nothing positive resulted from any of their testimony.

Then a young woman was called to the stand. Her testimony went as follows: One day she was washing down at the creek, and became extremely tired. She sat down at the foot of a beech tree to rest. Soon, the old accused woman came down the tree in the form of a squirrel, with its tail curled over its back, snarled at her and put a spell on her.

The sickly girl testified that she had been ill ever since. She couldn't sleep due to pain in her stomach that started the day she saw the old woman in the form of the squirrel.

The presiding judge, who seemed to have been in deep study, now, seemed quite relieved upon hearing the young lady's testimony. He straightened in his chair and announced that the young woman's testimony was proof positive of the old woman's guilt. His opinion was that he should immediately send her to jail and began writing the order to put her behind bars.



Shock and dumb amazement settled on the faces of every sensible person in the room except that of a young Irishman named John Gallagher. Gallagher seemed calm and self-possessed. He rose and modestly asked permission of the court to make a single remark, whereupon he was told by the judge that he could make as many remarks as he wished.

"Then, Sir," began Gallagher, "allow me to remind you that it would be useless to send this woman to jail, for if she really is a witch she could escape through the keyhole; and if she should be innocent, it would be a great pity for her to be sent to prison."

The old judge was now more perplexed than ever for he was in a dilemma as to what to do with the old woman and asked young Gallagher his opinion. At this, the sensible young man suggested that the case rest where it was until the Grand Jury met at which time it could be laid before them.

That course of action was accepted, but for one reason or another the case was never taken before the Grand Jury and was never brought up again. It is assumed that the poor old lady lived out her days in peace, left alone, by the banks of the Flint River. And so ended the only witch trial that was ever held in Alabama's colorful history.

"Congratulations on your promotion. Before you go, can you take this knife out of my back? You'll probably need it again."

What you WON'T see on a Hallmark card

DAYS GONE BY

by Judy C. Smith



If anyone can remember, I'm talking about a time in Huntsville when California Street was still a dirt road. Traveling out to Whitesburg Drive to visit a friend on her farm (before you get to what is now Airport Road) wasn't what my mother thought was a quick trip.

In fact, she would say, "I'm not driving you way out in the country to play with Sally Fleming; just get Martha, her mother, to bring her to play with you."

But I'd rather go to Sally's because Sally would get her father's truck and we would take it across the road where Piedmont subdivision is now, but was a field of sheep then. We would drive the field as long as we liked. Every now and then there would be a sheep lying on its side and I would be told it was dead for some reason and a workman would take care of it soon.

That is how I learned to drive a straight shift truck. What fun I had visiting with a family as large as the Flemings — there were seven children. It was always like going to a party, lots was going on at all times.

The white southern mansion stood in the middle of more farm and pasture land. The farm stretched from The Whitesburg Drive-in Theater to nearly Drake Avenue, in addition to the land across the road. A child could get lost in that mansion, but what a great place to play hide-and-seek with Sally and siblings.

Now that I have a family of my own, consisting of eight children, I know what Sally's mother

Martha had to deal with every day. There is never a dull moment but now that mine are grown and I have grandchildren and great grandchildren, I often wish I could turn the clock back and enjoy the days again driving in the sheep field without a care in the world.



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Back to School

*by Gerald Alvis,
The Poet of Greenlawn*

I found this cube or block of wood on my desk. I don't know where it came from, but it has five words printed on it that tell me someone has me clocked pretty well. I smile when I look at it.

Last night it was bedtime for my Granddaughters, and Grandma began rounding them up amongst complaints of I'm not tired, and Grandpa doesn't have to go to bed. I smile as they walk by and make comments about how right now would be a great time to watch some funny cat videos! Grandma conceded, I was soon piled up; I think she loves hearing the boisterous laughter, even if it keeps her up a little longer.

But even Grandpas have their limits, and after several episodes of "cat fails," I, too, was ready to retire for the evening. Now I recognize bedtime stall techniques, but as we were getting ready, my 8-year-old expressed a real concern. School would be starting back in just two weeks, and she's going into the 4th grade. She wanted to know what grades were difficult for me and other things we don't normally discuss, like what was the name of my favorite pet growing up.

It reminded me of a little boy who, over a half-century ago, made a similar inquiry to his predecessor. Those conversations I, too, have tried to capture in these writings. We talked about everything and nothing, and I could sense her calming down and relaxing. Worries seem to be darker at night when we are tired, and I didn't shrug off these concerns. For someone in single digits, they are just as traumatic as our major events.

I thought about it for a while last night and again this evening. Being there for someone, not necessarily with all the answers or solutions, but our presence when someone has a need is sometimes more important than words. As she left to go upstairs, she applied reciprocity and brought one of her stuffed kitties to my bedside to comfort me.

Kindness can be listening, which in and of itself is an action. It says in this moment of your life, you are not alone!

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Very Old Headache Remedies

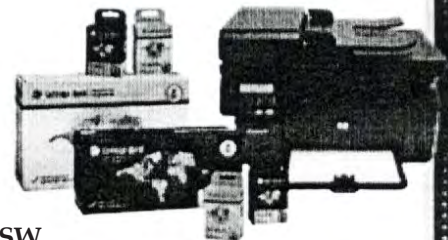
* When our grandmother had a headache, she would dip a large white handkerchief in vinegar, wring it out and tie it tightly around her forehead until the headache disappeared.

A variation of soaking a handkerchief in vinegar is to soak a brown paper bag in vinegar. Shake off the excess liquid and place it on your forehead. Tie it in place for at least half an hour.

* If strawberries are in season, eat a few. They contain organic salicylates, which are like the active ingredients in aspirin.

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Galba Fuqua - Born in Huntsville, Died at the Alamo

by Suzanne Bell Bolton

French immigrant, William Farqua (Fuqua) and his family came to the Virginia Colony in America around 1685 having fled Catholic persecution because they were Protestant Huguenots. William's son, Ralph, and his grandson, Joseph, subsequently served in the American Revolution against the British. Joseph's family included three sons: Silas, Benjamin and Ephraim Fuqua.

In 1810, Silas and the rest of the family migrated to Madison County, Alabama while it was still a territory. Silas married Sally Toney in 1814 and all their children were born in Alabama. Silas was wealthy and well educated and was so interested in history that he named two of his sons, Galba and Fabius, after famous Roman generals. Galba was born in what is now Huntsville, Alabama on March 9, 1819.

According to Madison County records, in January 1820, Silas and Sally sold 456 acres of land in Madison County to John Braham. This land is known today as Braham Springs Park.

Sally died in childbirth in 1825 and is buried in Oakwood Cemetery, Sheffield, Colbert County. Following her death Silas, his five older children (including Galba) and his brother, Benjamin, moved to Texas where Silas received a land grant in Caldwell County on the

Gonzales County line. Unfortunately, Silas died in 1834 shortly after the move. His son, Fabius, returned to Alabama, but the rest of the Fuqua children and their uncle, Benjamin, remained in Texas where Benjamin later became a businessman in Gonzales County.

Political issues soon rose to a fever pitch as Texans and Mexicans argued to determine which side had a right to govern the land and how it would be ruled. With tensions rising, Galba enrolled in the Gonzales Ranging Company of Mounted Volunteers on February 23, 1836. Six days later, he rode to the relief of the Alamo Garrison with that group, arriving on March 1, 1836.

At dawn of that day, 32 men from Gonzales and DeWitt's Colony, passed the lines of Santa Anna and entered the walls of the Alamo. 'These men voluntarily organized and passed through the lines of an enemy four to six thousand strong, to

join 150 of their countrymen and neighbors, in a fortress doomed to destruction. They entered the Alamo, to fight alongside the little band led by William Travis who resolved "never to surrender or retreat." History of Texas, John Henry Brown.

William Travis and the other defenders of the Alamo steadfastly refused to surrender and as a result, they all died. The fight to preserve the Alamo lasted more than two hours until the walls were scaled by the Mexican soldiers under the leadership of the Mexican dictator, Santa Anna.

Susanna Dickinson, a survivor of the battle, later claimed that during the battle Galba Fuqua came to her and tried to tell her something. He was unable to deliver his message because his jaw had been broken in the fight.

He died with the other Alamo defenders on March 6, 1836, three days short of his seventeenth birthday.



DOMINO

Hello, my name is Domino. I am about 3 1/2 years old and am a black and white Pit Bull. I came to the Ark Animal Shelter when a kind man found me wandering around Harvest, AL and brought me here. I don't know what happened to my family but I was glad

to come here and get fed every day and have a safe place to live. I am a good boy and get along with all the volunteers. My favorite activity is to spend time in the play yard and be petted. I need a fenced in back yard to play in but I also like to come inside and sleep in the air conditioning in a comfy bed. Have you thought about adopting a dog like me? I am looking for a forever home where I will be loved and taken care of. When you come, ask to see Domino, that's me.

"My wife was at the beauty salon for 2 hours, and that was just for the estimate."

Jared Ray, Athens

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*Painting by artist Maggie Little, in 2014
Adams Street Tree*

HUNTSVILLE'S TREES

by Jerry Berg, Huntsville

How about a little time traveling exercise, at least in our minds. Back to the Huntsville of say, 75 or 80 years ago. That was way before I came here. But from what I've read it was a typical small southern city in many ways. Definitely HOT in the long, sultry summers, for instance. A/C was unheard of, at least by "regular folks." To try to keep cool one had to stand next to or under a fan. Also keep the windows open. Go out on the porch in the evening. Sit under a shade tree.

So, think about it - trees were vitally important. Trees mattered, especially in the city. I'm sure that's why the Willow Oak tree by my backyard in Five Points was allowed to grow when our 100-year-old house was being built. It was in the perfect spot to shade the backyard, which it still does.

Another example was the large old tree on Adams Street - growing right in the middle of the street - that was spared by the city for a surprisingly long time because of its shade value. (Picture above).

““Have you noticed that when developers cut down all the trees for new homes, the street names are all named after trees?”

Mark Gerald, Madison

But, when air conditioning came along and became affordable things started to change. Trees didn't seem so vital anymore. A/C seemed to be an unqualified blessing and was almost universally accepted as a necessity. But is it an unqualified blessing?

A lot of folks either don't realize or forget that a city like Huntsville, with (I'm guessing) 100,000 or so A/C systems running 24/7, plus all those in vehicles, is a hotter city than the Huntsville our elders grew up in. A/C contributes to the "urban heat island" phenomenon which results in an urban area being significantly warmer than its surrounding land.

Clearly, air conditioning is not going away any time soon. Still though, my reason for bringing up this then-and-now topic is to make the point that trees DO matter! All trees, both urban and beyond. One of their most important benefits is helping keep an urban area cooler than it would be otherwise.

The Land Trust's purchases and other activities over its 35-year history have resulted in preservation of untold numbers of trees, both within and beyond the boundaries of Huntsville and other cities. The result has been huge quality of life benefits for North Alabama residents, most of whom live within the region's urban areas.

Not only for shade, but homes for birds, squirrels, hawks are provided by trees and offer them shelter as well. Can you imagine a city that is completely bare of any trees?

Nevertheless, one has to wonder if the tree canopy of a city like Huntsville for instance, is as extensive and healthy as it could and should be.

Let's continue to work together to protect and nurture our urban forest.

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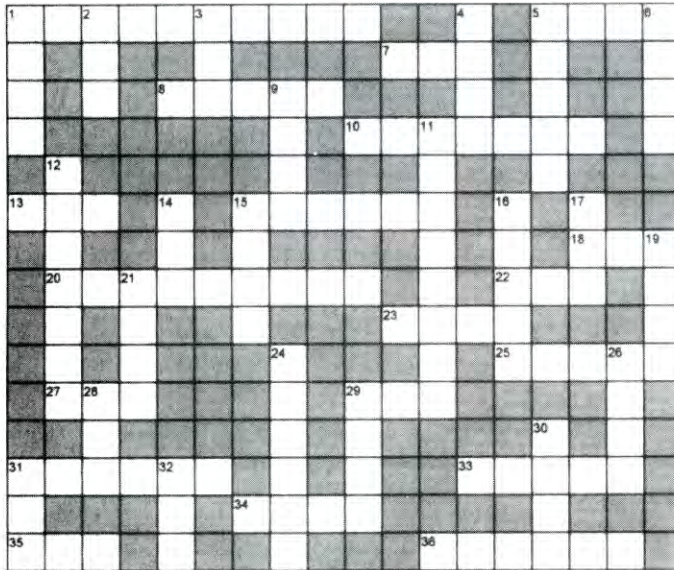
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Old Huntsville Crossword

created by Bob Spencer



answers on page 57

Across

1. Notorious outlaw, tried in Huntsville for robbery in Muscle Shoals, 1884
5. Alabama's _____ written Constitution is on display at Early Works Museum
7. _____ sightings were reported all across Huntsville, 1973
8. Huntsville resident, _____ Willis crowned "Mrs. America", 1999
10. Miss Frances _____ organized The Huntsville Historical Society, 1951
13. The "TOP _____ LOUNGE", favorite gathering place for rocket scientists and engineers closed, 1989
15. Huntsville's early growth was attributed to the _____ Industry
18. "Speaking _____ News", Alternative newspaper available in Huntsville
20. Col. Theodore _____ spoke at the Huntsville Depot, 1910
22. _____ Reynolds, Huntsville Police Chief, 2006
23. _____ Hudson Department Store opened, 1941
25. _____ Side Square, Eustis Ave. extended
27. _____ Mincher, local ball player, started with Washington Senators, 1960
29. Huntsville's "_____ - Light" district was shutdown Jan. 1, 1914
31. Former small town on Monte Sano
33. Huntsville City Council approved a _____ - Board Park, 2000
34. One of three who purchased Hunt's Property
35. 109 German Scientists and their families became U. S. Citizens on "_____ Citizens Day" in Huntsville, 1955
36. Name of automobile manufactured on Redstone Arsenal, 1947



Try Your Luck!
How Much do you
Know About
Huntsville?
Answers in next
month's issue.

Down

1. The Huntsville _____ Department has 17 Stations, 2006
2. The Bon-_____ Motel and Restaurant opened, 1951
3. Construction on the Huntsville/Madison County _____ Port began, 1964
4. First Huntsville Building-_____ established, 1925
5. Miss _____ Private School on Green Street, 1887
6. Monte Sano _____ Ranch opened to public 1940
9. Lake _____ in cavern under downtown Huntsville, 1890
11. 1938 Speaker of U.S. House of Rep.
12. Mark Lee & Jan Davis, First _____ couple to fly in space
14. Several wells drilled in west Huntsville for Natural _____.
15. Shelta _____, "8th Wonder of the World", opened in cavern under Huntsville, 1890
16. The Early _____ Museum opened 1998
17. _____ Hospital on Redstone Arsenal closed 1997
19. Newsweek Magazine named Huntsville as one of the top 10 "_____ Cities" in the U.S., 2001
21. The first _____ Heart surgery performed in Huntsville, 1981
24. The _____ picture "SPACE CAMP" was filmed in Huntsville, 1986
26. The 1955 _____ Capsule was unearthed at the courthouse, 2005
28. _____ Town, One of Huntsville's Historic Districts
29. _____ Rice of Huntsville was crowned Miss Alabama, 1973
30. Jimmy _____, elected to City Council, 1982
31. The _____ Braun Civic Center opened in 1975
32. Gov't Agency bringing sweeping changes to HSV



THE JOURNEY OF THE BRYSON MEMORIAL CHAPEL

by Cory Keller

Merrimack Village, on the western side of Huntsville, in the late 1800's and 1900's was a community that was built early on, to mimic a type of Massachusetts styled housing community. The houses that were built in this style were to give shelter and homes to Mill workers, who worked at the textile Mill (cotton factory) built by the Merrimack Manufacturing Company of Lowell, Massachusetts.

In 1901, a few years before this community came together, a small Chapel was built. It was dedicated on January 13, 1901 and named the Bryson Memorial Chapel after Dr. John H. Bryson. John was a well known and loved Pastor of the Presbyterian Church and had encouraged many to follow the Christian faith during his lifetime which sadly ended with an illness in 1897.

The original Chapel's exact location in the Merrimack community is not known and nothing was found in the church records from which this story has been written that gives us that location. The building of the Chapel was cred-

ited to the efforts of Pastor G. L. Blitzer who at the time was the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Huntsville.

In the beginning years of the Chapel's growth, Miss Mary Virginia McCormick, a very charitable philanthropist, took an interest in the small church and helped with monetary assistance for its upkeep. She had taken on a charitable interest in helping the people in the Mill areas of Huntsville and this Chapel was part of one of those communities.

When a short time passed, the chapel acquired an organ, bell and communion service.

The church records noted that these were donated by the First Presbyterian Church.

By 1902 or 1903, which was only a couple of years after the chapel was built, church notes record that the building and congregation were moved. We can imagine at the time a chapel was built in 1900, as church records note, that a small chapel holding services was sitting on a small plot of land in the middle of that small village, but the Sunday worships may have been in a small house or building, that had been erected. One location in the church records noted that church services had been moved and would be held at the Y.M.C.A. in West Huntsville. This was around the same time frame in the early 1900's.

This Y.M.C.A. had been built with funds provided by Miss McCormick, specifically for the youth in West Huntsville. Nothing was found in those church notes that gave the reasons for this move. For the next several decades, there were 5 pastors that served this small group. From 1932 until 1943 much of the Sunday school work and instructions were taken care of by a few of the church members who most likely wanted to keep the church and memory of Bryson Chapel alive!

When the textile mill industries began shutting down in Huntsville, a large portion of the mill workers moved to other cities looking for

work. Many of these workers were members of this small chapel. Since Miss McCormick, the Chapel's donor, had since moved and then passed away in 1941, funds were no longer available from that source to really help the Chapel grow. At that time, it soon began sharing the community with one other church which was of Baptist denomination.

There was still no specific pastor for Bryson Memorial. In February of 1943, Mrs. J. W. Moore, the president of the Ladies Auxiliary of First Church, formed a circle of five ladies and called them The Circle of 5. These ladies organized another small auxiliary at Bryson Memorial and were able to enroll 52 children to attend a daily summer school at the chapel. By November of this same year, Bryson Chapel finally got a permanent pastor, Reverend L. K. Foster.

Several years passed and around 1960 the name of the Chapel was changed to Trinity Presbyterian Church. A year before, on May 10, 1959, there was an announcement that a new church was to be built at 4315 Holmes Avenue.

On July 10, 1960, Trinity Presbyterian Church with Reverend Bob Grigsby officiating had the newly-named church's first service. This church, once a small chapel in the Merrimack Mill Area of Huntsville, never gave up. Its journey was somewhat similar to a childhood story "The Engine that Could".

For 30 years, the church survived, but on April 30, 2023, because of changing times, the last pastor of that original Merrimack Chapel, Reverend Susan D. Parker, gave the final service to a faithful congregation, closing those doors forever.

"Dear God: Is it true that my dad won't get into heaven if he uses his golf words in the house?"

**Joey Stephens, 7
Madison, Alabama**

News Bits in 1916

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

Success with Skin Grafting in Dallas Village

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

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

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

Very Ill - Mrs. W. J. Humphrey continues to be seriously ill at her home on East Holmes street and little hope is reported as being held out for her recovery as we go to press.

Brothers Collide in Auto Accident

Thos. N. McAllister, manager of the Huntsville Transfer Co. and his brother Alex McAllister, manager for the local plant of Armour and Co., collided with their cars at the Times corner on Holmes and Greene Streets this morning. Neither were badly injured but the cars are very damaged. Thomas' son was slightly injured. Alex's car was turned over and he was pinned underneath it for a period of time.

The elder McAllister was traveling east on Holmes and the brother was driving north on Greene. The accident was quite exciting and those who saw it say it was a miracle that neither of the young men were seriously injured or probably killed, but cool heads averted all danger.

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When life was simple...



When the community of Hurricane Creek acquired its first school bus, in the 1920s, they must have thought they were really entering the modern age. When the bus got stuck in mud holes, as it often did, students would unload and help push the bus out. Any student caught misbehaving would be put off the bus and would have to walk home, often a distance of four or five miles. There were few repeat offenders.

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