



No. 374  
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# Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

## Early Days At the Huntsville Arsenal



*Also in this issue:* Lincoln Village Days; Three Weeks with Cocoa; Remembering Montgomery Ward; New Orleans "Meats" Huntsville; Life; 1860 Law and Order; Don't Follow Charlie Daniels; Sweet Recipes, Cat Potpourri and much much more!



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## Early Days At the Huntsville Arsenal

by John L. McDaniel

I paused on the top of Monte Sano Mountain on the afternoon of February 24, 1942 to look down on the beehive of activity that I was about to enter. There appeared to be a great deal of activity to which there was very little order. I stopped at the Yarbrough Hotel to inquire about a room and found that there were no vacancies. The same situation was found at the Twickenham Hotel and the Russel Erskine Hotel. I was told that the workers could find a bed on Clinton Street.

I found a bed for one dollar a night at a large building that was full of triple decker bunks. I was counseled to watch my wallet when I went to sleep since there were a lot of strangers in town. This was particularly important to me since I had \$21 in my wallet.

Having selected my bunk, I drove down Clinton Street,

past the creamery, to the filling station and barber shop. Here Mr. Malone, the barber, gave me a quick update on Huntsville.

The Central Cafe was a good place to eat, if you could afford the price, and the bootlegger was located at a motel on the Athens Highway. Having this essential information, I inquired as to how I could get to the Arsenal.

At the mention of the Arsenal, Mr. Malone refused to talk since, according to him, it was a great secret as to the location of the Arsenal. I decided that I would follow the traffic; if the place was secret, someone would stop me - and this happened.

On February 26, 1942 I became the 344th person hired at Huntsville Arsenal. My job was to work in a plant that manufactured mustard gas.

To do this work, it would be necessary for me to wear clothes impregnated with a substance to prevent the mustard gas fumes from coming in contact with the skin. The long-Johns underwear were thick with the substance, as were the socks, coveralls, shoes and hat. I have scars today on my wrists where I was careless in joining the underwear sleeves and the gloves.

A gas mask completed the uniform. Sensitive skin was not a particular advantage, since

**"A hospital room is a place where friends of the patient meet to tell him what their latest medical symptoms are."**

**Jill Rogers, Athens**



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the showers used kerosene to remove any mustard gas or vapor contamination from the body.

Six mustard manufacturing plants were constructed at Huntsville Arsenal. Two chlorine plants, each generating 45 tons of liquid chlorine every 24 hours for use in making mustard gas, were located nearby. Each mustard manufacturing plant consisted of a sulfur monochloride building, a building which generated ethylene from pure grain alcohol, and a mustard reactor building.

I received my training in the manufacture and loading of mustard gas at Edgewood Arsenal in Maryland. This training consisted of working with individuals who had kept the plant in standby for many years. I was assigned to the midnight shift and received at least one shift training on each of the major operations. All work was done with a gas mask on; this caused a severe problem around daylight each morning, as the whiskers grew out along the edge of the mask. It became very easy to identify a mustard worker when seen on the street, from the distinct imprint of the gas mask on his face.

I kept telling myself there were worse places to be than on a mustard reactor at Edgewood Arsenal - Hell came to mind.

The per diem during my stay at Edgewood Arsenal was \$6 a day. After paying for room and board, there was very little money left to spend for personal items or at the bootleggers. It is an old story that the one way of keeping people out of trouble is to deny them the means for getting into it. During this period, personnel who could not afford to buy a Freedom Bond could buy Freedom Stamps until the value of the stamps was sufficient to trade for a bond. I was fortunate to have accumulated nine dollars worth of Freedom Stamps prior to my trip to Huntsville. I traded in these stamps for money to use for food and other essentials.

So, after three months of training at Edgewood Arsenal, I was qualified to manufacture mustard gas and to supervise others in the operation. Evidence of my qualifications was obvious; eye irritations that reduced my vision to a fraction of normal, throat irritations that produced dry cough that kept me awake at night, and large blisters or second degree burns on

each wrist. I am at this point doing very little broken field running, since my goal is to get through the line in one piece. I had started my new career very cheerful and confident, but now in only a few months I had become very sober and quiet. Things were not turning out as I had expected.

Upon returning to Huntsville Arsenal, I was made the foreman of an operation using the filling line, that had previously been used for filling 105-MM shells, to fill M47A2 bombs. This setup was very poor. With fatigue and forgetfulness often present, it was not long until some operators tried to drop two charges into one bomb. This dumped several gallons of mustard gas on the floor and thoroughly contaminated the conveyer rolls and adjacent equipment. Since the equipment and concrete floors were very difficult to decontaminate, the situation went from bad to worse despite all the safety devices we installed on the equipment.

Consequently, the entire operation became contaminated to the point that it was always "hot." Many employees suffered from severe cases of eye



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and throat irritations. Due to the three-shift, seven-days-a-week operation, many of the number had to be hospitalized for general debility and eye and respiratory irritation. This operation resulted in the beginning of my contacts with Brigadier General Rollo C. Ditto, the commander of Huntsville Arsenal. I recall him as being easygoing and gregarious with an uncomplicated, pragmatic management style.

He asked me if there was anything right about what I was doing. Before I could answer him, he told me to eliminate all the things that were right about the operation and work on what I had left. He asked me if I had any education and I told him I had a college degree. He peered at me closely through the fogged glasses of his gas mask, turned, and walked briskly away. I decided that his actions gave me the authority to close my line for cleanup and this I did.

Following the experiences in the mustard loading and filling plants, it was discovered that the bottom parts of both my lungs were badly scarred.

I was given a job in charge of the refrigeration for all the chemical operations on the Arsenal. The new job would keep me out in the open more; however, at the same time, it would subject me to different types of chemical poisons.


One of the most interesting operations was the production of colored smoke grenades. The dye used in the grenades colored the workers' clothing and stained the skin. It was not uncommon to see people of rainbow hues walking around Huntsville. Due to the health hazard associated with working in colored smoke, the workers were paid one grade higher. Fires were numerous, as many

as 11 in two hours being recorded when yellow grenades were being made.

During these early days, I had learned some very valuable lessons in broken field running from a culture made up of hard-working, hard-drinking and hard-living people. The Huntsville Arsenal reached its peak of 3,707 employees in May 1944, with 90% civilians and 10% military.

Of the work force, 9% were unskilled, 48% semi-skilled, 18% skilled, and 25% administrative or graded employees. A representative sample recorded in September 1944 showed 26% white female, 11% colored female, 52% white male, and 11% colored male. For a long time, the Arsenal maintained a working ratio of white and colored employees almost equal to the population ratio.


My first experience in recruiting was in hiring a secretary for my operation. Every healthy-looking lady from Union Grove showed up about 9:00 a.m. for the interview. I



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asked one lady why she was late and she told me that when she went out to milk the cows one of them was delivering a calf and she had to help the cow along. Her previous experience consisted of picking cotton, working at a sawmill and doing general housework for her parents.

I inquired about her qualifications to be a secretary, and she told me that she learned how to type in high school and had kept books for a used car dealer in Arab. Arab is a small town around thirty miles south of Huntsville. These qualifications seemed more than adequate for my requirements, so I hired her. The first person I ever hired turned out to be one of the best people I ever hired, and she remained with me until I left for the Navy.

A wide variety of techniques was tried in an effort to improve the morale of the mismanaged personnel. An innovation of the post exchange was the cultivation of a truck garden - the products from which were used in the cafeteria. Another venture was a pig raising project. The post exchange owned ninety hogs, fed mostly by swill from kitchens. The pigs were to provide pork for the cafeterias. A farmer was employed to care for the hogs and tend to the "victory garden."

Operative during 1943 and the spring of 1944, the farm was discontinued in May 1944 as being too costly. The loss on it amounted to \$576.13.

Upon my return from the Navy to Huntsville Arsenal, I sought out the personnel office and found that it was located in the basement of Building 111, the headquarters. I was told that the Arsenal was being closed down, and that I was no longer needed.

However, after some discussion, I was given a job as a supervisor in a demilitarization

operation. The job here was to remove the poison gases and the high explosives from the shells and bombs, and recover whatever materials, such as magnesium, that was available. This operation lasted until March 17, 1949 when the Arsenal was put up for sale.

During 1948, the Office Chief of Ordnance decided to designate an arsenal to research and develop the field of rocketry. On June 1, 1949, the Ordnance Department reactivated Redstone Arsenal to carry out this mission. The Redstone Arsenal also took over the real estate of the deactivated Huntsville Arsenal, giving the new arsenal a total combined area of 40,000 acres. With the arrival of a complement of officers and 120 former German Scientists from Fort Bliss, Texas, in April 1940, to join the approximately 1,200 personnel already on board, Redstone Arsenal entered the missile era.

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# Battling Depression



\* Put your cell phone in a drawer someplace and forget it for a while.

\* Take a shower and just let the water flow over you. Use water as hot or cold as you like. You don't even need to wash. Just get in under the water and let it run over you for a while. Sit on the floor if you gotta.

\* Remember what caused you to be happy last time. Had you called someone? Treated yourself to a trip? Helped someone?

\* Cuddle your pets if you have them and can cuddle them. Take pictures of them. Talk to them. Tell them how you feel, about your favorite movie, a new game coming out, anything. Take long walks with them if you're able.

\* Try to moisturize everything. Use whatever lotion you like. Unscented? Dollar Store lotion? Fancy 48 hour lotion that makes you smell like a field of wildflowers? Use whatever you want, and use it all over your entire dermis.

\* Drink cold water. Use ice. If you want, add some mint or lemon for an extra boost.

\* Clean something. Doesn't have to be anything big. Organize one drawer of a desk. Wash five dirty dishes. Do a load of laundry. Scrub the bathroom sink.

\* Blast music. Listen to some-

thing upbeat and dancey and loud, something that's got lots of energy. Sing to it, dance to it, even if you suck at both.

\* Make food. Don't just grab a granola bar to munch. Take the time and make food. Even if it's ramen. Add something special to it, like a soft boiled egg or some veggies. Prepare food, it tastes way better and you'll feel like you accomplished something.

\* Create something. Write a short story or a poem, draw a picture, color a picture, fold origami, crochet or knit, sculpt something out of clay, anything artistic. Even if you don't think you're good at it - just do it.

\* Help out at a Soup Kitchen. Volunteer your time at a Pet Rescue organization. Donate what you don't use or need.

\* Go outside. Take a walk. Sit in the grass. Stand in the grass barefoot. Look at the clouds. Smell flowers. Really examine the inside of blossoms. Put your hands in the dirt and feel the soil against your skin.

\* Call someone. Call a loved one, a friend, a family member, call a chat service if you have no one else to call.

\* Talk to a stranger on the street. Have a conversation and listen to someone's voice. If you can't bring yourself to call, text or email or whatever, just have some social interaction with another person. Even if you don't say much, listen to them. It helps.

This may seem small or silly to some, but this list of activities keeps people alive.



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## Three Weeks with Cocoa

by Iolanda Hicks

It was springtime and a relative cool night. David and I had been invited to join our next door neighbors to celebrate their youngest daughter's birthday. It was a really nice celebration with family and close friends. Table and chairs had been placed on their back patio and traditional dishes were served, reminiscent of their birth countries of Mexico and Puerto Rico.

The food was wonderful and so were all the people there. Towards the end of the celebration, the oldest daughter came from the back of the yard with a cream and warm-brown cat, wrapped in her arms. Blue eyes and it's coloring portrayed a Siamese breed. The young girl had a grin on her face, asking her Dad if she could keep her find. Dad said no. She then, reluctantly, put the cat down, who in turn, shot off like lightning!

I thought nothing of this encounter until several hours after we had gotten home. We were

getting ready for bed and David had gone to the back porch. He called to me to come out there. Before I got to the back door, David was opening it, with that cream and cocoa cat (from the birthday party) regally walking in, glancing slowly around as if she belonged!

"David," I said. "Just what is this cat doing here?"

"Well, I was out on the porch and heard meowing. So I went to the deck door and opened it. That cat just walked in!"

I looked at David and then the cat and said, "David, she can't stay in the house. We know nothing about her. Besides, we have no litter box or food. She probably has fleas and I see no type of collar."

David looks at me and says "Well, it is such a nice night, I think I will sleep out on the porch. If she wants to stay, she can sleep with me."

That was the beginning and the first night that we became guardians of a very unique cat. When I woke up the next morning, the cat was gone. Earlier, when David woke up, he came into the house with the cat following. She had slept all night on the porch bed with David and had gotten up when he did. David had fixed her a bowl of water and another bowl of Albacore tuna. She drank the water but turned her nose up at the tuna. How strange! A cat that did not like tuna! After she drank the water, she had gone to the front door, sat, started meowing and David let her out. I guess we had served as her Bed and Breakfast for the night. She was gone all day and I thought that was the last that we would see of "Cocoa". Yes, David had already named her. In less than 24 hours, he claimed ownership with this strange cat.

The next night, Cocoa showed up and was meowing at the front door and of course, David welcomed her inside. Seeing this really fast bonding between man and cat within such a short period, I decided to call an acquaintance of mine who was involved with finding the homes of lost animals. I told her about Cocoa and how, in the short time she had visited us, David and I were throwing around thoughts of keeping her. She began telling me the "process" of keeping a stray animal. If you wanted to keep the found animal as your own, you had to do all you could to find its true owner.

First you had to advertise as finding a lost animal for a week, with a description along with contact information. Second, you could take the lost animal to a vet to see if it had a chip implanted. This was normally free and a service most vets provided. I asked her if she would advertise Cocoa in the Lost and Found Pets for us and she did, using her number as a point of contact. One person soon called, an elementary

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teacher from the city. The picture we had posted looked so very much like her Siamese that had bolted out her door at her home a month earlier. We made arrangements for the teacher to come by and check out our house guest. Upon seeing Cocoa, our teacher was saddened that this was not her missing pet. The next day, David and I took her to a local vet to see if Cocoa had been chipped. She had not.

We felt that we were now closer to having a new member in our family! In the beginning, Cocoa would favor David with her attention and suddenly that changed. She started following me, jumping up and sitting by me on the two-seater couch I sat on, reaching towards my face first with her head, then backing away, slowly turning and curling up in the space next to me. She would fall asleep and stay there for hours. Cocoa was not a cat you could just pet. Oh no no. She would choose when you could pet her. Otherwise, she might just nip you AND don't go trying to pick her up. She would have none of that, unless, of course, it was her choice.

David tried a little experiment one night. Before Cocoa made her "bed" next to me on the two-seater, David sat down in her place. Cocoa soon walked in the living room. If only I had taken a picture of her facial expression when she saw David sitting in her place! That look said it all! She actually turned her head towards David's normal sitting place and then back again to where he was occupying her spot.

This must have gone on for fifteen minutes with Cocoa never budging. David just couldn't handle this unusual standoff and finally got up. Soon as he moved away from her spot, Cocoa shot up on that seat, turned a time or two and curled into her normal "Cocoa" position. What a girl!

Usually when it was time for bed, in the beginning of this relationship, we would leave Cocoa asleep on the two-seater. In the morning when we woke up, she would either be between us or at the foot of the bed. Towards the last few days of Cocoa's life with us, she had graduated to waking me up, by comfortably sitting on my chest and gently rubbing her face against my cheeks. It was so strange that I never woke up during her new sleeping position. Both of us were getting so attached to this amazing animal!

After going out and buying some

good cat food, cat litter with litter box, collars, water and food bowls, along with some fun toys, Cocoa felt like a permanent family member. The next step was going to be the final step, a veterinarian checkup and to implant an identifying chip.

Then the inevitable happened. We got THE call. A lady down the street with the kindest voice called and claimed ownership of Cocoa. She said that she and her husband had been gone from their home for a long time, leaving Cocoa by herself with food and a self-watering fountain. Cocoa had the freedom of the inside and outside of the house by way of a "cat" door. She said that Gill, as they had named her, had been theirs for a couple of years and had probably gotten lonely while they were gone. During that first conversation, I felt like maybe we could share Cocoa but that was not to be. After a few calls, from both the sweet sounding lady and then her husband, asking us to send Cocoa back home, I knew that dual ownership would not be practical. They missed her and their grandchildren missed her. They asked us not to let Cocoa in our house and not to feed her.

The last day with Cocoa was the hardest. That morning, we let her out as usual and she was soon back, meowing at the front door. We did not let her in, we did not feed her as asked. I peeked out our windows off and on, all day long, on that last day and saw her on the mat at the front door just sitting. Next she would be underneath one of the cars or trailers, just watching for the front door to open. Then by 9 PM that night, she was sitting on top of the car that was parked closest to the front door.

As if she knew I was watching her at that moment, she paused for a few seconds, so still, in a most queenly poise, then turned, jumped down and slowly walked across the yard in the direction of her home. I watched her, as she slowly made her way down the side of the road, under the soft glow of the street light. Her head and shoulders were lowered, as if she knew she had to go home but really didn't want to. Tears just started rolling down my cheeks. It took all I had not to open that door and call her back!

It was so hard to see her walk away.

It has been a while since Cocoa went home. We have not seen her since. Knowing now where she lives, I never fail to look for her in that front yard when I drive by, but she is never there. Cocoa will always have a part of our hearts and we are so grateful for those three weeks with that sweet cat. She asked only for companionship and love but in return, she gave us so much more.



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# PLAYGROUND IN THE TREES

by Gerald Alvis  
The Poet of Greenlawn



There were numerous trees at my childhood home. In the back of the property stood a pear tree that yielded delicious treats once a year. To the north were four enormous pecan trees where I would recline; the birds and squirrels would join me if I sat still long enough.

I can still hear the careful crunch of their paper shells in my hands, hoping to harvest two perfect halves. There were peaches and a few small apple trees, but these were too small to climb and the mimosas, though beautiful and fragrant, their limbs were much likely to snap in a game of "tree tag."

My favorite was a hickory tree in the front yard that served as a ship and submarine. My older brother had built a small fort in it, just a few planks about ten feet in the air. I would run and jump to grasp the lowest branch and toss my leg over, then pull myself up this new mode of adventure.

From my viewpoint, I saw the world differently, and that's when it began to transform. I would sneak supplies from the kitchen and store them for nourishment on my journey; I could be gone for quite a while.

It was amazing how fast I could travel to different parts of the world that I had heard about in school and on the news.

Then, one day, I thought, why hadn't I climbed higher and ventured further up, searching for adventure in the smaller limbs above? And so I did; the feeling of accomplishment was fantastic. I was the first to venture this far into the unknown, which spawned a new idea!

I took my elevator down (I climbed out on a lower limb till my weight brought me down to the ground). I went to our garage and gathered up a bunch of small boards. I found a hammer and a few nails, but how would I hoist them up?

A long piece of wire was the remedy to my dilemma. I built my new outpost, just an area large enough to sit, but it was mine, a launching pad for the mind.

Oh, the places I went and the things I saw. I returned to the tree years later as a man.

I didn't have to leap, hoping to grasp the bottom branch. I placed my hand on what had seemed so difficult to reach and looked up at the remnants of my time there as a child. From that little place, I solved the world's problems; I was unlimited and carefree. I wished for that time again, or at least the feeling anyway.

It's been over half a century since I climbed to gain a better view of what was out there. On my last visit a few decades ago, the planks and the wire I had nailed to the tree on one end so I wouldn't drop it were still there. All are probably gone now, but the imagination and the beliefs that were launched there, I've carried on my journey and they still live inside me.

We won't grow old until we stop playing, wishing and dreaming. Though we age, we can still go to this playground in our minds, envision the possibilities, and rekindle the joy of how we used to be.

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# Dear Dad

by *Harold Koski*

Dear Dad,  
July 24, 1944

Well I'm here in Huntsville, Alabama. I was supposed to go to Shelbyville, Tenn. but when I got there they told me I was being sent here. They say we are going to guard German POW's but I haven't seen any yet

We are living in a tent until they finish building the barracks. All the officers are living a fine life - no tents and no mud. I will try to tell you what it is like here but you probably won't believe it. The girls are the prettiest I have ever seen but they are all taken up by the officers. Even so, they flirt with us all the time.

They have an ammunition plant here but it is off limits for us. We are not allowed to talk to anyone who works there. I went to the dentist this morning and the-----almost killed me. The other guys told me they won't go to him - they go to one in town and pay for it themselves.

A couple of us went to town but there wasn't much to see. We were going to go to the service club but it was so crowded we couldn't get in so we just walked around. You would not believe how slow the people here move.

I think it is supposed to be illegal here to sell liquor but everyone does it. There are always a couple cars parked outside the gate and you can buy any kind you want.

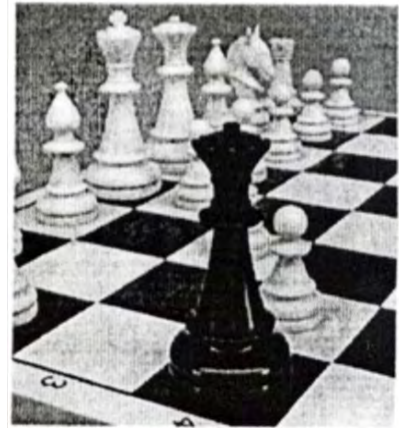
Some of the guys bought some moonshine and I tried it but it made me sick. It reminded me of the stuff you used to strip the varnish off of the table. If I get a chance I

will send some home for you. You should have great fun giving it for Mr. Perkins. I also got some cotton to send you. It grows everywhere down here and is just like you get in the store only it's got seeds in it.

This place is not New York but it's a lot better than going overseas. If I'm lucky I can stay here until this war is over. Tell everyone I said hello and I hope to get a leave before long.

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I would play an April Fool's joke on my friends, but I'm sure they wouldn't appreciate it very much these days. I remember while in grade school how funny we all thought April Fool's jokes were to play on everyone.

"Hey look. Your shoe's untied." And when they looked, "April Fools." Some older kids did, like a bucket of water falling off the top of a door. Not very funny.

April is also our month of greatest tornado activity. Who could ever forget the April 1974 tornadoes that tore up Parkway City, other parts of nearby housing, finally roared up the side of Monte Sano Mountain, knocking off all three TV stations from broadcasting that evening. April showers can sometimes be much more than that. The group of tornadoes that came through April 27, 2011 left the city without power for five days until May 2 because of a TVA Transmission line that was destroyed near Interstate I65 that fed our city.

I have decided to share with my friends some words to inspire each of you this month. Let's choose to live in joy. Life goes by in the blink of an eye. It's too short to live upset, angry, resentful, or ungrateful. If you look for the good, you will find it. Choose to be happy, to be at peace. Decide that each day is going to be a great day and grab each moment and make the best of it.

Refuse to let negative thoughts take root in your mind and refuse to let negative people and situations drag you down.

Trust your journey and know that if you make a mistake, it's OK. See it as a lesson learned and keep moving forward.

Spend less time worrying and more time being grateful for those who love you and all of life's goodness.

Choose to live in joy. I think if we all decide to find more joy in lives what peace we would all have with ourselves.

Grandma is facing a total shoulder replacement on April 16. Please send good thoughts and prayers my way. I will do my best to recover as quickly as possible and wishing each of you a beautiful Spring.



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# HIGH SCHOOL CLASS TRIPS

by Giles Hollingsworth

Back in the 1940s, when I was in high school, class trips were wonderful, enjoyable events to look forward to. Later in life I learned that they were peculiar to certain schools, and probably much more common to Alabama schools than to Georgia schools, for example. So I just didn't know how lucky I was to live in Madison County.

I'm not talking about field trips, which are still in vogue, although our class trips might have been labeled by the school principals as field trips, I don't know. They definitely offered learning opportunities and in 1948, here we went, our Farley ninth grade class, all thirteen of us, along with two teachers and two parent chaperones, up U.S. 72, in our bright yellow, newly washed school bus, all the way to Chattanooga. To Lookout Mountain! Now this was education at its best! This was a class trip!

Readers may wonder a bit about the funding of such trips. Well, I don't have a complete answer to that question, partly because it never crossed my mind back then, and partly because I remember only the fun details, not the financial details. I do remember that for my eleventh grade trip, which I'll tell about later, our class members sold magazine subscriptions to cover most of the cost, but we each had to chip in \$14. For the ninth and tenth grade trips, we probably sold magazine subscriptions or something else. Or maybe the respective PTA's helped out. But I'm guessing the school principals somehow managed to funnel in some educational funds. After all, as I said, the trips offered educational opportunities.

Now, back to the Lookout Mountain trip. At the foot of the mountain we boarded a cable railway passenger car ready to be literally pulled 2000 feet, up a very, very steep incline. It was a lot like a carnival ride, breath-taking! I'm sure I wasn't the only one there who worried at least a little that the cable might break. Then the sights at the mountain top were fantastic, the fairyland, Ruby Falls in the cave, lover's leap, etc. All

were as advertised except one: the claim that you could see seven states from there. No way. You could see Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, and possibly a little of the Smoky Mountains in North Carolina, but certainly no farther. Nevertheless the trip was great.

The next year I was a sophomore at Monrovia High School, and our class trip was to Nashville. We went first to the Hermitage, Andrew Jackson's home, and touring it, knowing that a president had lived there, seeing his actual household furnishings, being in rooms where he had spent so much of his life, etc. truly was a learning experience at a higher level.

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It was the ultimate in making me "feel" history, because I could feel the presence of Jackson, a truly historic figure.

Next we saw a sobering sight, enough of the Tennessee State Prison to instill in us the horror of being locked in. Not my choice of things to see on a class trip, but it was an effective learning experience. Then we walked around and through Nashville's extraordinary replica of the Parthenon, a history and/or art lover's dream. Then on to the attraction we really came for, the Grand Ole Opry.

The Opry was everything we had hoped for. There we witnessed, and were actually part of, history in the making. The Opry began as a WSM radio live music "barn dance" in 1925, got its name, Grand Ole Opry in 1927, and then went on to out-perform and outlast all other similar radio shows. It is now the longest running radio show in U.S. history. We were there in The Opry's sixth year in the now mega-famous Ryman Auditorium.

Teens were at the time idolizing George Morgan, who had a number one hit with "Candy Kisses", and he was there that night, singing that song, just bringing the house down. If ever one person, with one song, made a trip super successful, this was it. Then for icing on the cake, there were performances by: Uncle Dave Macon, Minnie Pearl, Ernest Tubb, Bill Monroe, Roy Acuff, all now legendary.

And now for the trip of all trips! Our 1950 Monrovia junior class of 25 members sold enough magazine subscriptions to set up a fabulous seven day trip to New York City and Washington D.C.

My writing space is limited so I'll just hit the highlights. (That is probably a lame excuse, because if I had the entire magazine I could not describe my fascination, my utter disbelief, at the sights, and these cities' respective auras of excitement and history. Maybe one in every ten million high school country boys, in 1950, would be able to walk down Broadway, or visit Mt. Vernon).

And, in getting there, yes, we used a regular school bus. And yes, traveling 365 miles the first day in a school bus was rather torturous for the teacher chaperones, but not for us students. We had a few girls who found great

pleasure in kicking off the group singing of a few pop songs of the day, so we must have sung some of them at least 50 times on that trip. The singing, the scenery, beautiful late May weather, and the thrill of it all made that day, and the ones to follow, tireless, wonderful days to remember.

We spent our nights in hotels, the first one being in Marion, VA. (Motels were only in the near future in 1950). Then up through the Shenandoah Valley, with stops at Washington and Lee College, and Natural Bridge, to Winchester, VA. (270 miles). Then on to New York City (280 miles), where that night we saw a few million white lights from the top of the Empire State Building. Then a few thousand colored lights as we walked down Broadway through the entertainment district, to Times Square.

Next day we rode the subway, then the ferry, to see and climb the Statue of Liberty. Then at about 4PM, we left for Washington.

We had only one full day to spend in D.C., but we made the most of it. We visited Mt. Vernon, The Smithsonian, The Mint and the Capital Building. It was all fascinating! Then a two day return trip to Huntsville.

What a trip! Class trips were wonderful!

**"I'm feeling pretty proud of myself. The jigsaw puzzle I just bought said 3-5 years, and I finished it in 18 months."**

***Hank Forman, Gurley***

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# AUNT VIRGIE'S BEAUTY SHOP

*by Rob Zimmerman*



During one of my many summer visits to Huntsville, Uncle Jack and I had gone to Aunt Virgie's beauty shop, Virgie & Virginia's (they did all of Huntsville's blue hairs) at the corner of Madison Street & Lowe Avenue (then a dead end), to clean up so Aunt Virgie could come home early. While Uncle Jack and I were inside doing our chores, someone stole his golf clubs from the trunk of Smokey (a Volkswagen in which the trunk was in the front).

Uncle Jack decided we should ride around downtown Huntsville to see if we might spot someone with his clubs.

When we got to the old Dunnnavants Building there was a man on the sidewalk with Uncle Jack's clubs (every golfer knows his own clubs by sight). At the same time, a Huntsville police patrol car pulled up behind us. Uncle Jack and I got out and Uncle Jack explained the situation to the officer. We walked up to the person alongside the officer.

The officer asked this rather seedy looking fellow "Been playing golf long?" The man replied, "Yeah, for some time now." The officer asked him what his handicap was and the man replied, "Oh, my left leg hurts a little sometimes!"

Uncle Jack got his clubs back right there on the spot and the officer let the man go, telling him not to come near the beauty shop ever again.

Uncle Jack must have had some political pull back then. He was friends with the Mayor, the Sheriff and was on Dr. Von Braun's staff at NASA. He even got a small roadway named for me, Robin Lane, just off the corner of Drake Avenue and Whitesburg Drive.

It was common for new roadways to be named after family members of affluent Huntsville people even before then. Some examples are White Street, Monroe Street, Russell Street, Lowry and Beirne Avenues and so on and on. Robin Lane started out in zip code 35801 but is now in 35802. Huntsville, like other towns and cities, at one time had no zip codes. Then one, then two and so on. Now there are countless zip codes with the plus zip four extensions that take you right down to the very house you live in.

My Grandmother used to talk about when she and PaPa lived on Sivley Road. It was way out in the county then. Now it crosses Drake Avenue just below Whitesburg. And, Redstone Arsenal, where my Grandfather was a civilian guard, was a thirty minute ride from the house.

My Grandfather had made a career change from being the operator of Falls Mill in Salem, TN when they moved to Huntsville. She also told me in my youth how no one would drive out to "The Mall" (Then known as "The Fountain") to shop because it was just too far out.

Don't you know that if she was alive now, she would really be flipping out! She saw everything from horse and buggies to men landing on the moon.

Now, I can't tell you about Uncle Jack and not tell you about Aunt Virgie. During one of my summer trips to Huntsville, I wanted her to streak my hair (that was the new "In thing").

After getting Mother's permission, Aunt Virgie set me down in her chair at the shop, put a rubber skull cap on, pulled hair through it with some sort of hook type instrument, bleached it and put me under the drier.

As I had alluded to earlier, Aunt Virgie was a very good-hearted person. She (for years) had let this man who was a deaf/mute come into the shop a time or two a week. He would walk around showing people a little card that read "Please help me with your spare change, I'm a deaf/mute".

The little old blue hairs would dig into their purses and fork over the coins and sometimes even dollars. As the man worked his way around the shop he finally got to me. He flashed his card at me. When I stood up to get him money out of my pocket, he took one look at my hair with a shocked look, jumped back and said "Holy Moses!"

Needless to say, Aunt Virgie never let him back in the shop again.





# The Pooch Stopped a Mooch

*by Elizabeth Wharry*

I grew up as a first generation American. My parents held with certain European traditions. One of them was that a guest was never turned away at meal time.

I had one particular male friend who would show up about an hour before dinner. He would eat, and stay until it was time to clean up the kitchen. Since I was the one putting away leftovers and doing dishes, it got old really fast.

My parents had two small house dogs. Both were well mannered mutts. Usually, I would scrape the plates onto a paper plate, then divided the scraps between them. The dogs weren't allowed at the table or in the kitchen while food was out. My mother also forbade the dogs from licking off any plates or cookware.

Despite the rule about guests and meal time, I could tell my parents were getting fed up with my friend's behavior. One evening, after he left, I had a brilliant idea. I ran it by my parents and they both laughed and agreed to it.

The next evening, as I got the dishes out to set the table, I put two paper plates under the stack. I told my friend that way I knew where to put them when they were clean. I set the table as usual. Mother mentioned dessert, but it would be served after the dishes were done.

After we ate, I gathered the plates and laid them on the floor of the laundry room. The dogs had a field day! Next were the pots and pans...by then, my friend was looking a bit green. I gathered everything up and put it away. I said, "This sure beats washing by hand!" He couldn't leave fast enough!

I took the dishes and cookware from their places, washed them in hot water and brown Lysol, then washed them again in the regular dish detergent. Funny thing, my friend never did come around near dinner time again.

**"It only takes one slow-walking person in the grocery store to destroy the illusion that I'm a nice person."**

***Neil Keith, Huntsville***

## Sweet Spicy Nuts

1 cup sugar

1 1/2 tbl. ground cinnamon

1 tsp. ground cloves

1/2 tsp. salt

1 tsp. ground ginger

1/2 tsp. ground nutmeg

1 egg white

1 tbl. cold water

1 pound pecans or other whole shelled nuts

Preheat oven to 250 degrees, grease a 13"x9" baking pan. Mix together thoroughly all dry ingredients. Beat egg white with cold water until frothy but not stiff. Add spiced sugar mixture and stir well.

Add nuts; stir well to coat.

Spread nuts single level; place in oven. Bake for 1 hour, stirring to separate every 15 to 20 minutes. Remove from oven when dry and toasty. Cool and store in an airtight container.

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# Heard On the Street

by **Cathey Carney**



Our first caller to find the little icycle I hid in March's issue was **Fred Taylor** of Scottsboro. He had to use good reading glasses but found it on page 47 on the "Way It Was" ad - see it now? Between the two images of Tom's book. Congratulations to you Fred!

And the photo of the month was none other than **Lynne Berry Valley** who lives in Old Town and loves it there. Our first correct caller was **Janet Watson** who has known Lynne for many years and loves her. Congratulations to Janet!

We can't let the month go by without wishing **Henry "Hank" Miller** a Happy Happy Birthday on April 9. Hank will be 97 on that date and he is sure missed here in Huntsville. He moved a few years ago to the Knoxville area to be close to his family. Hank was Past President and long time Treasurer of the **Golden K Kiwanis** here and devoted much of his time to helping underserved families. He walks every day and is feeling good! Come visit us Hank, we miss you.

If you ever knew **Joe Lougheed** you never forgot him. You would like him the minute you met him. He became a young soldier in the US Army and served in Viet Nam as a member of the Military Police. He began his firefighting career with Huntsville City Fire Department and bravely served for 33 years,

eventually retiring as Chief of Training. Joe passed away on March 5th, 2024 at the age of 74.

One of his many talents was being an all-around handy man, fixer, and builder. That's a good thing due to all sweet wife **Connie's** projects, honey-do's, and honey-don'ts. Joe will also be remembered for the many gatherings he and Connie hosted over the years. Always the consummate host, he entertained guests at the Tiki, sharing stories, fun and laughter.

Joe is survived by his wife and partner in crime, artist **Connie Broadway Lougheed**; sisters, **Judy Lougheed** and **Cindy Brookhouser (John)**. He also leaves behind his children, **William Broadway, Jr., LeeAnn Broadway Smith (Chris), Vicky Lougheed (Joe Desabla), Lori Lougheed, and Stephanie Wilbanks**. Joe will be especially missed by his 11 grandkids and two great-grand daughters. He left quite a legacy and will never be forgotten.

**Cheryl Tribble** has a birthday coming up on April 27. She is a very talented editor who just happens to do the detail editing for Old Huntsville magazine. She is a daughter, grandma, great grandma and dear friend who is loved by everyone who knows her. Happy Birthday Cheryl!

Everyone gets into spring cleaning this time of year and don't forget your spices, corn starch, baking powder, etc. I did some of that this past weekend and had been using a little can of baking powder that was hard as a rock but I thought it was supposed to be that way. I finally looked at the expiration date and on

the bottom was printed Use Before January 2012!

So as you can imagine, it's gone with several of the other spice bottles. You think they'll last forever but they all have an expiration date!

**Rosemary Leatherwood** of Ole Dad's BBQ in Hazel Green wants to send love and wish her daughter **Jamie** the happiest of birthdays on April 14. Jamie does a lot of volunteering and loves her community, just like her mom does.

**Phyllis Lawrence** would have celebrated 50 years of love with her husband **Billy Lawrence** on April 27th when they married in Chattanooga, TN but sadly he passed away on Aug. 30, 2023 at 79 years old. We're sending love to you, Phyllis.

**The Lowry House** is one of the most unique homes in Alabama. The historic home is located on Kildare Street in Huntsville and was part of the Underground Railroad. Owned by **Jane and Louie Tippet**, it is known for its nineteenth century blend of architectural styles. Behind its walls is a hidden history that played a role in the Civil War and helped enslaved African Americans. Local historian **Bobby Hayden** says the Lowry House has connections to Huntsville's earliest settlers; the Lowry family.

"**John Lowry** came to Alabama from Virginia [in] 1809. He came with one purpose in mind - to help eradicate slavery in America," said Hayden. In 1850, his grandson, **John Tate Lowry**, built the Lowry House utilizing wood from the original cabin. He was a landowner and slaveholder and became an abolitionist during the Civil War. Lowry

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allowed his house to become a part of the Underground Railroad to help enslaved African Americans.

"When slaves ran away, they had to have a place to hide," he said. "There are two sets of staircases in the Lowry House. The back staircase was used to bring slaves upstairs and carry them to the hidden room."

That staircase was purposefully made from chestnut and oak because it did not squeak, said Hayden. It wouldn't give away that people were hiding on the other side. After climbing the stairs, enslaved people would go to a secret 24-by-24 room upstairs off Lowry's bedroom. More than 100 of them were confined, but no one made a sound.

"If you walk up the stairs today, 100 years later, they still don't squeak," said Hayden. "When you stand in the parking lot and look at the building, you can't tell that the room is there."

Hayden and other historians say quilt codes were used by enslaved African Americans to guide and send secret messages to each other. One quilt is on display in the Lowry House. The home is open daily, hosts group tours and is a real treasure.

**Lt. Col. Henry "Roy" Brown** was a beloved husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather. Roy passed away on Jan. 21, 2024 at the age of 98. Roy entered the Navy April 4, 1943, the day before his 18th birthday. He served on the USS YORKTOWN (CV-10) participating in the Philippine operation, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa Campaigns. He joined the U.S. Army Judge Advocate General's Corps (JAGC) in 1955, serving more than 22 years. After retiring from the Army, he and wife **Lucy** moved to Huntsville to make their home, where he practiced law. Over the previous decade, Roy had served as a member of the USS YORKTOWN (CV-10) Association's board of directors, which is now a Medal of Honor Museum located in the Charleston harbor.

When surrounded by family the children clamored to him. He was known in the family as **Grandad**. He was dearly loved and will be greatly missed. He was deeply loyal to those he loved and cared about. He and his wife Lucy made lifelong friends throughout the decades of their life and travels together. His family has been blessed by so many of these friendships.

Lucy and Roy's home in Old Town Historic District was the center of non-stop visits from friends and family. Roy's favorite thing in life was his family. He leaves behind his wife of nearly 67 years, **Lucy Clardy Brown**; his children, **Jessica B. Arenth (Roy)**, **Melissa B. Gilliland**, **Stephanie B. Patton**; six grandchildren, and thirteen great grandchildren. He was predeceased by his son, **Mark Tarlton Brown**. Roy will never be forgotten by the people he loved.

Have a great April and take in this warm sunny weather we're getting! Time to get your hands in the dirt and mid-April, start planting. To pay homage to the millions of plants waking up and starting to bud I have hidden a teeny tiny rosebud somewhere in the pages of this issue - if you find it, and it will be super difficult, be the first to call and you will win a \$50 subscription to the magazine!

Be good to yourself! You're the best friend you have.

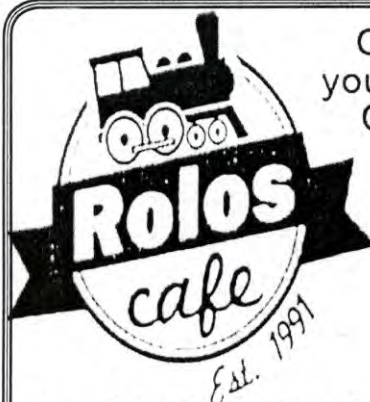


**Maryann Golson**  
**1946-2024**

We were so very sorry to learn that Maryann Golson had passed away Feb. 11. Maryann touched the lives of many with her kindness, grace, and unwavering love for her family, coworkers and friends. She was a pillar of strength, always ready to lend a helping hand and offer a warm smile even as she fought a 6+ year battle with ovarian cancer.

Maryann helped everyone who needed someone to listen, or a hot pie from the oven, or a big bowl of soup. She continued to help people even when she wasn't feeling well.

She leaves her husband of almost 60 years (Apr. 17) Clarence; daughters Dana Lee (Dayna) and Denise Herron (Eric); sisters Nancy Wiley, Cindy McDonald, Susan Wiese; brothers Jerry Huie, Jim Huie and Paul Huie; grandkids Hannah Lee and Jamey Herron and her beloved church friends at Grace United Methodist Church. There is no doubt she's watching over us from above.



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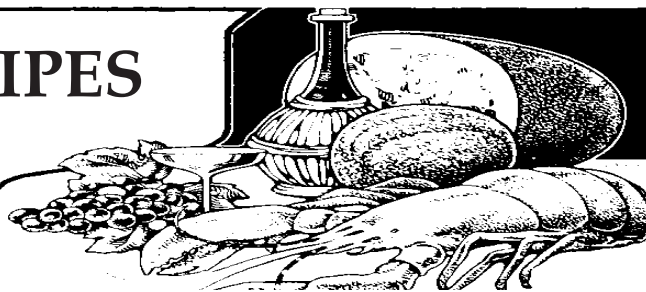
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## RECIPES



### Sweet Treats

#### Mandarin Orange Cake

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1/4 c. Crisco oil  
3 eggs  
1 sm. can Madarin oranges,  
juice and all

Mix in order, cook in 3  
round layer pans per box direc-  
tions. Let cool before icing.

##### Icing:

1 -9 oz. Cool Whip  
1 lg. pkg. instant vanilla  
pudding  
1 lg. can crushed pineapple

Mix in order; whip and  
spread between and over all  
layers.

#### Amaretto Liqueur

2 c. water  
3 c. sugar  
Lemon peel from 1 lemon  
6 T. almond extract  
1 T. chocolate extract  
3 c. good vodka  
1/2 c. good bourbon  
2 T. vanilla extract

In large pot add the sugar,  
water and lemon peel. Bring to  
boil; simmer for 20 minutes. Re-  
move from heat, add almond,  
vanilla and chocolate extracts.  
Remove lemon peel and add  
vodka. Enjoy this in coffee, on  
ice cream, in a cocktail glass  
with sweet cream on top.

For Praline Liqueur: Use the  
same recipe but substitute ma-  
ple flavoring for the almond.

#### Coconut Balls

1 c. sugar  
2 beaten eggs  
4 t. butter  
8 oz. box chopped dates  
1 t. vanilla extract  
2 c. chopped pecans  
2 c. Rice Krispies  
1 sm. can coconut

Mix sugar, butter, eggs and  
dates in a sauce pan and cook  
for 7 minutes. Add vanilla,  
nuts and Rice Krispies. But-  
ter hands, roll into small balls,  
then roll the balls in coconut.

#### Old Fashioned Popcorn Balls

2 c. granulated sugar  
1-1/2 c. water  
1/2 t. salt  
1/2 c. light corn syrup  
1 t. vinegar  
1 t. vanilla extract  
5 qts. popped corn

Butter the sides of a sauce-  
pan. In it, combine sugar, wa-  
ter, salt, syrup and vinegar.  
Cook to hard ball stage (250 de-  
grees). Stir in vanilla.

Slowly pour over popped  
corn, stirring just to mix well.  
Butter hands lightly; shape  
balls. Makes 15-20 balls.

#### Peanut Butter Candy

2 c. sugar  
1 c. milk  
1 stick butter  
1 jar marshmallow creme  
1-12 oz. jar crunchy peanut  
butter  
1 t. vanilla extract

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Simmer sugar, milk and butter for 15 minutes. Add marshmallow creme, peanut butter and vanilla. Mix well and cool it a bit, then pour into buttered dish. Break into pieces.

### New Orleans Pecan Pralines

- 1/2 c. sugar
- 1 c. milk
- 1-1/2 c. sugar
- 2 c. chopped pecans
- 1 T. butter
- 1 t. vanilla extract

Brown and caramelize 1/2 cup of the sugar. Add warm milk. Let this mixture slow boil 3 minutes. Add 1-1/2 cups sugar and 2 cups pecans. Cook 12 minutes or more. Remove from stove. Add 1 tablespoon butter and 1 teaspoon vanilla. Beat well and drop by large tablespoons onto waxed paper.

### Tea Tassies

- 1 stick butter, softened
- 3 oz. cream cheese
- 1 c. plain sugar
- 1 egg
- 2/3 c. light brown sugar
- 1 T. butter
- 1 t. vanilla extract
- 2/3 c. pecans, chopped

Mix stick of butter, cream cheese and cup of flour, then refrigerate for an hour. Make into small balls, approximately 24; press into small muffin tins to form a crust. For filling mix the egg, light brown sugar, butter, vanilla and pecans. Put into pastry lined tins and bake at 325 degrees for 30 minutes.

### Caramel Brownies

- 1-2/3 sticks butter, softened
- 1-1/2 c. brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 c. self-rising flour
- 1 c. chopped pecans
- 1 T. vanilla extract

Mix the butter with the sugar til creamy, then add rest of ingredients. Put all into 9x9 greased pan. Bake at 350 degrees til done. Cut into squares.

### Chewy Pecan Squares

- 1-1/2 sticks butter, softened
- 1 c. sugar
- 1 c. flour
- 1 t. cinnamon
- 1 egg, separated
- 1 t. vanilla extract
- 1 c. pecans, finely chopped

With your electric mixer, cream butter til light. Add egg yolk and vanilla, mix well. Add dry ingredients sifted together.

Spread in a 9x12 dish. Brush top with egg whites, sprinkle liberally with pecans. Bake in 350 degree oven for 20-25 minutes and light brown. Cool, then cut into small squares.

### Vera Tippet's Carrot Cake

- 1-1/2 c. Wesson oil
- 2 c. sugar
- 4 eggs, separated
- 4 t. hot water
- 1-1/2 c. finely grated carrots
- 2-1/2 c. self-rising flour
- 2 t. cinnamon
- 2/3 c. pecans

Crack eggs and separate out the whites, set aside. Mix yolks with other ingredients. Beat 4 egg whites til stiff. Fold in the whites to the carrot batter. Pour into 2 layer pans or 3 small layer pans. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes, cool.

#### Icing:

- 1 pkg. cream cheese
- 3 c. powdered sugar
- 1 stick butter
- 1 t. vanilla extract
- 1 c. pecans, chopped

Mix cream cheese, sugar, butter and extract with mixer at low, then turn on high to blend. Frost when cake has cooled. Sprinkle with pecans.

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# The Killer Wowser Of North Alabama

by Billy Joe Cooley



They are called by a variety of names, depending on what part of the country in which you reside. Some call them wampus cats, she-monsters, mountain hyenas, etc.

They are generally referred to as wowser cats in Cumberland Mountains of the mid-South, the mountains around Huntsville being part of that range.

These strange animals, which possess certain human features, are - like bears and panthers - found almost entirely in mountains. As a teenager I was the Chattanooga News-Free Press's country correspondent for several small towns in North Alabama and my own hometown of South Pittsburgh, TN, a small community sandwiched between the Cumberland Mountain and the Tennessee River.

It fell my duty to report several items concerning the wowser cats. The story related here can be easily verified through the files of the Chattanooga paper, circa 1949-1951.

A family living in Coldwater, along the Tennessee state line just north of Huntsville, was the first to report a wowser cat incident. Such a varmint, which was described by witnesses as "half panther and half woman, with the pitiful moan of a screaming banshee," came down from the mountain during a harsh winter night and killed a cow, on which it and other hungry intruders fed. Families along the Cumberland foothills said such beasts killed and devoured numerous other livestock. Several sightings were reported, with all witnesses giving similar descriptions, although such witnesses lived towns apart in some instances.

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***Man on phone with billing company***

The winter of 1949 was quite severe and laid the mountains somewhat bare of small animals on which the bigger ones feed. This was believed to have been the reason the wowsers - which are very elusive, normally - dared to venture near to civilization in search of easy prey. Domestic livestock, of course, make easy pickings.

Several South Pittsburgh laborers, en route before dawn to their jobs at the local stove foundry and the Lodge skillet works, took to toting heavy sticks - and in some instances, pistols - after seeing the creatures of horrors.

It was at first ascertained that wowsers are not normally aggressive to humans, except when someone comes between them and food, and are quick to run for cover. However, the winters of 1950 and 1951 were even more devastating than the one of 1949, and wowser sightings became more frequent. Several farmers fired shotguns at them, but none were killed.

Two adventurous young men - James "Fig" Newton of Bridgeport, AL and John "Snake" Stewart of Richard City, TN - had been among many who reported taking shots at wowsers in 1949. A Presbyterian Sunday School teacher named Mrs. Friels, whose home abutted the mountains at Richard City, phoned me one morning, exclaiming in hysterics that she had gone into her backyard at 4 a.m. to see why her chickens were in a ruckus, and came face-to-face with the most horrendous creature she had ever seen. Her description would fit, quite accurately, the blood-red-mouthed monsters depicted in some of today's horror films.

I went off to the Korean war in 1952 and never returned to South Pittsburgh except to visit, opting instead for the bright-lights atmosphere of the big city newspapers. I sometimes - during the visits - inquire if wowsers still prowl the mountains and am assured that they do, indeed. Not as openly, however, since severe winters are not so numerous.

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# News from Here and There - 1911

## Mother saves Babe at Risk to her Own Life

Gadsden, AL

Mrs. Charles Marcus, aged 20, was horribly burned at her home in Gadsden as she was dressing her baby in front of an open grate. Her dress became ignited but the mother coolly laid her babe on a bed in the room and then ran into the street, literally swathed in flames. Her death is momentarily expected as it is thought she inhaled the flames.

Luther Smith who came to her rescue was badly burned about the hands and arms and is suffering intensely.

Smith saw her plight and ran to her rescue and succeeded in smothering the flames with his bare hands and tearing away a part of the burning garments. Almost her entire body was burned from her knees to her head, according to the physicians in attendance.

While she seems to be suffering comparatively little the physicians say she will probably live only a few hours and will certainly not recover. She was a widow and care for the baby is being found.

## Of all the Fish Stories, this is the Fishiest

Decatur, AL

A new method of fishing is practiced by James B. Holland, of Limestone County. Neither bait nor tackle of any kind is used in fishing by Mr. Holland, but instead of tackle and bait he takes his dog with him fishing. Also a bucket and a pocket full of small gravel.

The dog sits on the creek bank while Mr. Holland sits up in a tree and drops the gravel one by one into the water. The fish are attracted by the fall of the gravel on the water and come to the top. As the fish come to the top the dog sees them and quickly jumps into the water and catches a fish in his mouth. He swims to the bank and deposits the fish into the bucket. When enough fish are caught this way the dog carries the fish home for Mr. Holland and deposits them in the house.

E. H. Walker, late state immigration commissioner and editor of the Limestone Democrat, vouches for this story and says that Mr. Holland is a man of untarnished veracity, and that he will make a sworn statement to this fact that he caught fish in this manner and will be happy to show any one interested if they go with him fishing.

## Burglar Makes Woman Get Out of Bed

Dothan, AL

Compelled to get out of bed at the point of a pistol and follow the intruder around the house in the light only of a dim lantern, Mrs. W. H. Whisett was then felled by a blow from a burglar's fist.

Her husband, awakened by the sound of a falling body, found the woman unconscious. He, thinking she had fallen against the furniture while walking in her sleep, succeeded in bringing her around after a time, when she told him of a light flashed into her face, the appearance of the burglar and the subsequent happenings up to the time she was struck. The burglar secured \$12 and escaped. No arrests have been made.

## Husband Carved Wife's Outline on her Mattress

Mobile, AL

According to the story of Julia Forst, who is suing for a divorce, her husband John G. Forst used her as a model for his experiments in sculpture, but his methods were very objectionable to her.

"My husband was in the habit of sleeping with a razor under his pillow," she said. "One night he came in late, took the razor and with it cut the outline of my figure out of the mattress and left me lying on an island of excelsior with only a tiny margin about me. I woke up during the procedure and he told me that if I moved he would cut my throat."

Mr. Forst has a history of unscrupulous actions with others and has been arrested several times in the past. Mrs. Forst's two sisters are very concerned about their sister and have told her to leave him at any cost. The wife is terrified of the husband's behavior and it doesn't look good for her future.

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# Lincoln Village Days

by Johnny Johnston

Today I took my grandson, Ryan, who is six years old, out to buy old bread at the bakery for feeding the birds. We bought 25 loaves of bread and 25 hotdog buns for \$2.00. I remember when fresh bread cost ten cents a loaf. A Coke was 5 cents a bottle and who knows what beef cost. I had my first steak when I was 20. My three brothers and my sister and I were raised on sopping gravy, biscuits, beans and potatoes. I'm not complaining, that's still my favorite food.

The thing is, my friends who lived in the Lincoln Cotton Mill Village, just yards away, thought my family was rich, simply because we lived outside the Mill houses. My friend Norman Stevens recently sent me a note of thanks for not making fun of his clothes in school. I returned a note stating how surprised I was that he thought of that. I only had a couple of shirts, maybe one pair of overall pants (now called jeans) and one pair of shoes. I assured him that my shirts either had holes in the elbows or had patches and were handed down from my brothers. Who was I to make fun of him?

I am sure we were all poor, we just didn't know it!

In 1990, I was charter President of Greater Huntsville Rotary Club, which gave me a tremendous amount of pride. During the charter speech, I related a previous pinnacle of pride, which happened, when I was a boy, nine years old.

I was on the school patrol with Charlie Grayson and some other boys at Lincoln School. Our job was to safely guide the other children across Meridian Street, (also Highway 231-431 which was the only highway from the north into Huntsville by stopping traffic, placing something across the flooded curbs in wet weather to keep them from getting their feet wet, etc. It was fun and I thought an honor. We got to attend a movie at the Lyric once a week as reward.

That was something else, wearing that wide white belt to and from town and being allowed into the movie free. Wow!

The Kiwanis Club sponsored the school patrol. One year they presented a dinner at the Russel Erskine Hotel in which each member brought a Patrol Boy. My older brother dropped me off to find my sponsor Mr. Milton Peeler. He was Superintendent of the Lincoln Mill. They didn't get any more important in our neighborhood than Mr. Peeler. That was the first time I remember eating outside the home other than a few trips to the TipTop Cafe. After the dinner, Mr. Peeler offered me a ride home; I was scared to death. I had not met anyone as important as him.

He had a nearly new Chevrolet and he was offering me a ride home! I remember little about that ride except that when he turned off Meridian Street to Maple, I was hoping everyone was standing outside to see me in that honored position. I wanted to blow the horn and yell out the window. I wanted everybody to see me in that new car with such an important man. At that moment I was marshall of the grandest parade on earth!

Our house was located at 119 Maple Street. Mom and Dad (Daisy and John F. Johnston) paid \$1,500 for it in 1941. They were only able to pay the interest on the loan for years until Dad started making a little money. The four-room house was on a lot that was about 40' wide and 75' deep. Dad built a pole barn with a coal room. He bought a milk cow and built her a lot and eventually added a couple of rooms to the house. The old house was recently burned by the city. As sentimental as I am, I went by and found a window pulley to hang on to as a memory of our home.

Now someone will call me and ask. "What the devil is a coal room?" Well, as I remember, the barn backed up to the alley, and the coal room had a window which was opened so Mr. Giles could pull his delivery truck down the alley and shovel that \$8 (per ton) of coal into the barn.

Dad gave up the stave mill business just after the war and started working for Montgomery Ward. He was digging the ditches and installing septic tanks. In those days you inherited money, had a good education or you had to make a choice. Work hard or your family goes hungry. Dad didn't inherit any money and he didn't have much education so he had to work hard. He was one of the hardest working people I can remember. Later on my father became one of the best plumbers in town and continued working until he was 73 years old.

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Dad was one of the plumbers who worked on the old Huntsville High School building in 1952-1953.

About the time Dad went into the plumbing business. Mom became a nurse's aid and worked very hard. The doctor she worked for decided he needed to be able to contact her quickly during the war and insisted she get a telephone. Telephones were extremely scarce during that time. I didn't know anyone who even had a telephone. The doctor sent a letter to the officials who controlled such things and bang, we had a telephone. The number was 1230-R. We were to answer a combination of four short rings and four long rings.

The telephone later became a problem because we were traveling for blocks to find neighbors to answer their phone calls. Some of these people we didn't even know. The problem came when some married people accepted calls from their boyfriends or girlfriends and we became privy to private lives. Mother, disapproving, was very quick to cut off their telephone accessibility in the future.

Another problem was the eavesdropping on the party line. I think there were twelve telephones on the line and some of those people listened to all the calls.

Our house on Maple Street was not on any historical registries; it wasn't on the list of neighborhoods to tour. Some considered Lincoln a place to avoid. I think however our house was on one list in particular.

Almost daily someone would show up saying they were hungry and needed something to eat. Mom fed an awful lot of people she never knew. If heaven has a star for people who fed hungry and destitute people, my mom got one in 1993 when she departed this life for eternal life. I hope folks welcomed her by saying thanks for the meal.

I drove my wife, Barbara, by the empty lot a couple of weeks ago, she could not believe it was big enough to have had a house on it, let alone a barn and cow lot.

We were on the next street over from New Village. Employees driving a draft horse pulling an open wagon picked up the Village garbage and trash.

On one occasion a horse bumped his nose on a water trough at the stable. The stable was on Abingdon Street, just around the corner from our house. The horse got excited and ran off, pulling his wagon behind him. By the time he came by my house only pieces of the wagon were still attached and he had work-

ers chasing him up the street on foot. It looked like a Roy Rogers movie which could have been showing at the Elks Theatre.

I mentioned the TipTop Cafe. The back of it was only a few feet from our yard. Yep, I watched it being constructed. I was about seven years old and I'm sure I worried the block layers and carpenters to death with my questions. Those were the first concrete blocks I had ever seen and I was amazed they could go up so fast.

Mr. Dick Church was the owner and lived just two doors down from us on Maple Street. He had twin sons, Brooks and Marshall, but no one could tell them apart so they were both called Bubba. The Tip Top Cafe was the first "eating out" experience I ever had. Mom was working the night shift at Redstone Laundry; Dad was working days so they allowed my brother, Lloyd and I to eat lunch a few times at TipTop.

Mr. Dick Church was an important man to us. He was a neighbor and helped us whenever he could. I remember that he had the only lawn mower around and he was kind enough to allow his neighbors to use it. My first and favorite meal was chili, crackers and a Coke, which all together cost 25 cents.

The TipTop served beer which really was the focus of the business. Mr. Church would serve food at any time but when the school children were present he would take up all the beer bottles and not serve it again until after we left. I can still see the gentlemen sitting on the barstools giving us the evil eye, hoping we would soon leave.

Mr. Church was a good man who monitored his customers well. When they appeared to have too much to drink he stopped serving and asked them to leave. This cost him his life at another restaurant he owned a few years later.

People who knew me - if you're reading this - you knew me at Lincoln as Dalton.

**"I don't know if NextDoor has ever caused the lame to walk but it sure has caused the dumb to speak."**

**Bob Walker, Madison**

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# "Don't Follow Charlie Daniels"

by Tom Carney

In 1983 a well-known Huntsville entertainer by the name of Tony Mason was invited along with his band, the Lynchburg Revue, to play at the Alabama June Jam in Fort Payne.

The June Jam, sponsored by the group "Alabama", had become one of the most famous concerts in the country. Entertainers such as Loretta Lynn, Tanya Tucker and Sawyer Brown performed, with the proceeds going to charity. People from all across the country attended, with many camping out for days ahead of time to make sure they got good seats.

Tony had been performing for many years and was used to all of the "showbiz hype" that is normally associated with concerts, but to receive an invite to perform at "this" particular concert was the ultimate for any performer. Needless to say, they were excited.

The band decided to try something different, in the hopes that the crowd would really pick up on it. Normally, concerts begin with a fast, rousing piece, mellow out toward the middle and then pick up the tempo again at the end. They agreed to start out the performance with a slow, sad tearjerker, build on the emotions and wind up with a fast, footstomping version of Dixie.

This was sure to make an impression on the audience that they would never forget. For almost two months they practiced the song "Desperado" until finally the song was done with so much emotion that Tony felt like crying himself whenever he sang the words.

The day of the concert arrived, and they were escorted through the crowds by a police escort. It was the most awesome concert the band had ever been to - with over two hundred thousand fans spread out over the meadows and foothills of Fort Payne. Tony later said he remembered thinking "in just a few hours they will all be listening to me."

Standing back stage, he was looking in a mirror and lip-syncing the words to "Desperado" when a stage hand ran in to tell him, "Three minutes!" While the band rushed to get ready to go on next, Charlie Daniels, the performer on stage, began his final song.

With two hundred thousand people out there waiting for Tony to give the performance of his life,

Charlie Daniels began to sing. The song he sang was "Desperado".

Tony says he doesn't remember what his band played as an opener that day, but he says it taught him a valuable lesson.

"Don't follow Charlie Daniels."



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## Grandma's Cooking Tips

\* When rolling cookie dough, sprinkle board with powdered sugar instead of flour. Too much flour makes for a heavy dough.

\* Slip your hand inside a waxed sandwich bag and you have a perfect mitt for greasing your baking pans and casserole dishes.

\* You can cut a meringue pie cleanly by coating both sides of the knife lightly with butter.

\* To keep icings moist and prevent cracking, add a pinch of baking soda to the icing.

\* Anything that grows under the ground, start off in cold water - potatoes, beets, carrots, etc. Anything that grows above ground starts off in boiling water - English peas, greens, beans, etc.

\* To clean aluminum pots when they are stained dark, merely boil with a little cream of tartar, vinegar or acid foods.

\* Pour water into your mold and drain before pouring in mixture to be chilled, it will come out of the mold much easier.

\* For extra juicy, nutritious hamburgers & meat loaf, add 1/4 cup evaporated milk per pound of meat before shaping.

\* Baking powder will remove tea or coffee stains from china pots or cups.

\* Washing silverware in which you have boiled potatoes will remove the stains.

\* Lettuce can be made very crisp by placing it in ice water for a short time and covering it with a damp paper towel in the fridge.

\* The best soup bones should be 2/3 meat and 1/3 bone and fat. Simmer for hours, discard bones.

\* A strong thread is good for cutting a cake instead of using a knife.

\* Eggs keep in the fridge for about 5 weeks. Store them in the original carton, points down

\* Take some bacon grease, pour a can of green beans, juice and all in it, cook for about 15 minutes. Just like you cooked it all day from fresh!

\* Finally, and this is NOT a cooking tip but I think it is important - as soon as you feel you are getting that scratchy throat and sniffles from a cold, take an Airborne tablet. They sizzle in water like an Alka Seltzer but are great for stopping colds. You can find them in any drug store like Star Market, Propst Drugs or Walgreen's.

## Egg White Cookies

1 egg white  
1 c. brown sugar  
1 T. flour  
1/8 t. salt  
1 t. vanilla or almond extract  
1 c. pecans, chopped fine

Beat egg white til very stiff. add brown sugar gradually, beating constantly. Fold in flour, salt and vanilla. Drop by teaspoonsful onto cookie sheet, bake at 325 degrees til cookies begin to brown, about 10 minutes.

These will be very light and crunchy. They store well and give you that sweet snack without filling you up!



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**Beth Landry, Arab**

# THIOKOL CHEMICAL CORPORATION, HUNTSVILLE DIVISION - THE PEOPLE

## *The Day That Cigarette Smoking Saved Three Lives*

*by Odysseus*



Herschel C was a slight, wiry, older man, a Foreman, a first-line supervisor in the Thiokol Line 1 Propellant Manufacturing section. It was common knowledge that Herschel had been a Ball Turret Gunner, probably in the Army Air Corps during WWII.

The history books list fearless, in addition to slight and wiry, as the requirements to be a Ball Turret Gunner on a B-17 or B-24. Located below the aircraft belly and aft of the bomb bay doors, the motorized sphere held two 50-caliber machine guns and just enough room for a small gunner crouched in a fetal position. The job was to rotate that ball and return fire at attacking Luftwaffe pilots firing their 7.92mm machine guns and 20mm cannons at you.

If the B-17 was damaged such that the drive system failed, the gunner would be trapped inside the ball, unable to escape or bail out. If the damaged aircraft made it back to base but the landing gear failed to deploy, the

subsequent belly landing would crush the ball and grind it against the runway, with the gunner still inside.

According to Thiokol legend, in a tale retold countless times in the Line 1 Smoker, Herschel and two operators were on Second Shift, on break, in that same Line 1 Smoker. They had charged the Sweco mill at Line 2 with ammonium perchlorate oxidizer and either paused it for the break or allowed the Sweco to run.

A Sweco mill gently agitated small ceramic pellets against the ammonium perchlorate under a freon bath, to slowly grind the oxidizer into very fine particle size. The sensitivity, decomposition rate and explosive power of ammonium perchlorate increased as the particle size became smaller and smaller.

Their break was almost over but Herschel wanted to smoke one more cigarette. Midway thru that smoke the Sweco mill detonated 600 yards away.

Legend has it the force of the blast was so intense that shrapnel from the explosion was embedded in wooden telephone poles, and some debris landed as far away as Haysland Square, but that may have been an exaggeration.

In a direct line, Haysland Square on South Parkway was about two miles northeast of Line 2.

But it was no exaggeration to occasionally find those small ceramic pellets scattered over the ground inside Thiokol, 30 or 40 years afterwards. The white ceramic Sweco pellets in the soil became visible after a rain, much like finding arrowheads on the surface of a plowed field.

Following the explosion, investigators gathered data, ran tests, and performed calculations. Fortunately, there had been no injuries.

Safety engineers compared the time required to smoke half a cigarette with the travel time from the Line 1 Smoker to the former site of the Sweco mill. The times were identical.

Had Herschel not smoked that extra cigarette, the crew would have arrived just as the Sweco mill exploded. Thus, one cigarette had saved the lives of three men.

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# The Worms Crawl

by Bill Alkire



Like most young boys and boys who have yet to grow up - I used to have a passion for fishing. I still like fishing, do not get me wrong. But today I never seem to have enough time and I am retired. Think about it. Anyway, back to the story.

In 1951 the only artificial bait I remember was what we called "crank bait" lures, generally used for bass and larger fish.

I used to catch Sunfish and Bluegills. They were a much smaller fish, plentiful and fun to catch. They felt like a much larger fish when hooked. I threw them back if they were too small. These fish were great eating - just pop out their eyes, gut them, scale them, roll them in cornmeal and egg, and throw them in the iron skillet with a little oil and leave the heads on. That was eating good.

I usually used earthworms or night crawlers to fish with. I had a wonderful place to get earthworms, an open runoff drainage ditch found across the alleyway. As an enabler I would throw coffee grounds (an early compost) in the ditch. One shovel and you could get enough worms to fish all day.

The best bait except for trout was night crawlers. Catching night crawlers was a bit more challenging - they were worth the effort and a money maker. I have sold them for as much as a nickel apiece. I generally caught large "crawlers."

Let me explain how to catch night crawlers. You need a good flashlight, or carbide lamp. At about 9:00 p.m. - just be-

fore dew begins to form, you go out. You use the light to shine on the ground - holding the light in your left hand, unless you are left-handed, then reverse what I am going to tell you.

The crawler will crawl out of his hole and stretch out, sometimes as much as 5-6 inches. When detected by the light, the crawlers will pull back into the hole they came out of. You quickly place your index finger on the worm where he would pull back.

You now have stopped him - gently pick him up. If he is stuck in the hole, just hold him shortly and he will pull out. Remember, do not force him to come out, he will come out of his hole.

It is not easy; one just needs to be patient. Once dew settles in, you have lost your opportunity. I have heard of people having worm farms - I saw one once and it smelled like curing manure.

I could on a cool damp night get a pint jar filled in a brief time. I had a small metal container that I kept them in until I sold them. Again, I could get a nickel a piece. I only sold large ones.

The customer wanted that - and you give the customer what he wants, and he will come back.

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# My Motorcycle Trip Back to California from Huntsville

by Dickie Hale



This is Part 2 of Dickie Hale's adventure, traveling from California to Huntsville on motorcycle (March issue of OHM) where he heads back to California.

Headed south through Alabama towards Mobile. Alabama has beautiful lakes, rivers and mountains. I stayed in a campground just south of Montgomery. There was a large camping club that took up most of the campground. Parked my bike and set up a very small camp. Went to the office because they had a small store so I bought a pre-made sandwich and a bag of chips. Talking to the people next door I found out his pop-out was stuck. With his help we picked it up, re-aligned it and it worked fine. He cancelled the RV repairman and invited me for a steak barbecue supper. People that camp always walk after supper so I answered the same questions over and over. Everyone was nice and friendly.

Going south to the Gulf Coast I passed Mobile and headed west. Stopped in the neatest little town called Grand Bay. I decided to treat myself to a good dinner so I found a restaurant that looked pretty nice and pulled in. The owner (Bob) was at the cash register and saw me and got all excited. Come to find out he used to be a biker. Talked to me all through my entire meal.

He got a call while sitting with me, from the people that were scheduled to help with a wedding reception that he was to have that night. They cancelled due to an emergency. He started getting very frustrated and excited about what to do so I volunteered to help. After calming down he gave me a white shirt and we grabbed the dishwasher guy and started setting up tables, chairs, and

serving tables for food. Put wine on the table and had beer in kegs. Thank God he had all the food ready. Served food and helped where ever I could and cleaned everything up. Had left over chicken from the reception for supper and Bob paid us both \$50.00 and couldn't be more appreciative. If you ask me, it was great. People (after a little beer and wine) were laughing, talking and dancing to a small band that was playing as a wedding gift. Next day Bob took me to Hardees for the largest sausage n biscuit I've ever eaten. I left from there and headed west towards Baton Rouge.

I'm no stranger to Baton Rouge. I work closely with Jacobs Engineering for 5 years designing a co-generation plant that we built for the refinery in Richmond, California. Their main office is in Baton Rouge. Visited old friends I worked with and I stayed in Payten Hutchins guest house that was on the bank of the Mississippi River. Was treated to dinner at my favorite restaurant, Drucilla's and had Cajon food with oysters.

Left Baton Rouge on the Gulf Coast Hwy. heading west. The Gulf Coast Hwy. is very popular highway because it has the coastal ocean with white sand on one side and large plantations homes with weeping willow trees on the other. Just a gorgeous highway to travel. Went by a park that had a lot of antique cars gathering to start a parade on the coastal highway. Parade officials ask me if I would like to join in the parade and since I was the only bike, I could lead. You know I'm not going to pass up a chance like that. Wiped down my bike as best I could and away we went. Life just doesn't get much better than this. Riding the coastal highway on a Harley, with the Gulf Coast ocean with white sand on one side and plantation houses on the other, waving to people that came to watch the parade.

5 miles down the Highway the parade turned around and I continued west toward Lake Charles. This highway goes right through Cajun country. Cajun people either like you or they don't. Either way, you'll know it. Got into southern Texas's and just east of Beaumont, Texas and stopped for a major road construction and communication tower replacement. Riding a bike, you can go around traffic to the front and see what's going on. I was talking to the young Flagman about my trip waiting for our turn to go and the construction

## OUR WRITERS

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superintendent came up and told the young man his wife was at the hospital having their baby. That young man just dropped the pole flag and took off. The superintendent looks at me and said "Want a job"? I thought why not. For \$10.00/hr. I parked my bike in the shade and it wasn't much of a break-in to be a flagman. Told him I would do it until he could find some one else. Two days later, he did. It was fun just talking to people and helping out. They put me up in a local motel with the other transit workers and ate bag lunches for supper.

I rode to Beaumont, Texas and visited Frank Baumert, an old friend who was my boss at Chevron years back. Frank and Gwen lived in a gated community that had a golf course. We played 9 holes and ate at the clubhouse. Talked about experiences and people at Chevron. Stayed the night and left early the next day. Headed for El Paso Texas by the Rio Grande River and into Mexico. Now this is where the gun comes in. Not only did I carry a gun on my trip but I packed it in the top of my bag so it's the first thing you see when you unzip the bag. No problem getting into Mexico - it's getting out that's hard.

I rode into Mexico not going to far stopping at some small street fares and eating a great Mexican lunch. Leaving Mexico is when I remembered the gun and their strict laws about carrying guns in Mexico. Nothing I could do about it now. The line going into Texas was fairly long and when it was my time to go through the check point, they had a big altercation right in front of me so I was waved through. So lucky.

Starting to get tired now so I focus on making good time. Rode straight out of Mexico and into New Mexico. Headed west again toward Arizona. Rode all the way to Lake Havasu in California. Stayed in a state park under a picnic table with my bike cover and sleeping bag. Noticed 4 guys in the park that were camping the same way I was. They stopped by on the way out and we talked about my trip. I could tell they were thinking about doing a trip like I was doing. Made kidding remarks about my age (53) and if I was in good shape. I ignored most of it.

They left going north to Sacramento and I waited a little while because I really didn't want to ride with them. Stopped at a truck

stop on US 395 going north to gas up and ran right into them. They were heading out and said if I could stay up with them, they would wait. Told them to go ahead that I was on the tail end of a 7000 mile trip and was getting tired. After gassing up and as a test to myself I took off after them. They were about 15 to 20 years younger and going home to Sacramento from Lake Havasu. I know Hwy. 395 and it's a great highway for Bikers with rolling hills and long curves. Caught them just as you go into Yosemite Park. When they saw me, they took off not wanting me to catch up. I stayed with them for a while until I realized how foolish it was so I backed off.

Rode north on Hwy 395 through Yosemite State Park and on into Reno. Stayed the night, gambled a little and headed home on 1-80 west the next day. Got home that day and I was tired and glad to be home. Really good to see Danielle. Bought her a very nice piece of jewelry for being so understanding.

I was gone almost 2 months and traveled over 7000 miles. Met a lot of very nice people that cared about people. I often reflect back on the people I met and places I went and realized that if you're nice to people, they'll be nice to you.

**"Los Angeles is home to the 3 little white lies: 'The Ferrari is paid for,' The mortgage is assumable,' and 'It's only a cold sore.'"**

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# REMEMBER MONTGOMERY WARD?

by M.D. Smith, IV



Both its Huntsville history and that of the company is a fascinating story.

Did you know that Aaron Montgomery Ward beat Richard Sears to the mail-order business by thirteen years? Yep. Ward started his mail-order business in Chicago in August 1872 with a large single page of 163 different mail-order items. It would prove a success and became 32 pages long two years later, and by 1874, its 152 pages contained 3,000 items. Wards was the first in the industry to adopt and live up to its slogan, "Satisfaction Guaranteed or your money back."

In 1883, the catalog grew to 240 pages with 10,000 items, and consumers could order just about anything from clothing and farming equipment to entire homes. By the start of the 20th Century, Wards had 3 million subscribers.

The first serious competition for their mail-order business came from Richard Warren Sears in 1896 and their first significant catalog. In just four short years, Sears had record sales of \$10 million, while in that same year of 1900, Wards had \$8.7 million. The race was on.

By 1904, Wards printed three million catalogs weighing 4 pounds each. Wards built an enormous campus on the North branch of the Chicago River with an eight-story building, a storefront and executive offices. A few years later, they added a central "mail-order house" on the complex that cost \$2.5 million, equivalent to about \$75 million today.

People proclaimed it one of the largest man-made structures in the world. It had

miles of chutes, conveyor paths, and hallways. The building used a courier system, which relied on roller-skating routes across the building for interdepartmental packages and communications. It still stands today as a landmark, although redeveloped into a complex with residences, eateries, stores and business corporate offices. By 1939, Ward operated over 500 stores in the United States as the largest retailer, way ahead of Sears. They even printed their own books. For the holiday season of 1939, they published a book by the company's copywriter, Robert L. May. You may recall it. It was "Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer," illustrated by Denver Gillen.

## Montgomery Ward comes to Huntsville

Parkway City opened in 1957. Two years later, in 1959, Montgomery Ward moved from downtown and built their much larger store on the north end of the new shopping center. With the other 25 stores and the giant store that had everything, Parkway City was indeed your one-stop shopping city, with plenty of free parking in front of the stores. The original 25 were: Baxter Clothes, Burgreen's Cafeteria, Diana Shops, G.C. Murphy Co., Harold's, H&H Walgreen Agency Drugs, House of Beauty, Hutchens-McCaleb Co., Jeff's Hobby Shop, Kwik-Chek Supermarket, Marlin's Delicatessen, McLellan Stores Co., Montgomery Barbers, National Food Stores, Noojin and Henson Realtors, Peggy Ann Bakery, Shainberg's, State Farm Mutual Insurance Agency, Stauffer System, South-



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*from Oscar Llerena*



ern Shoes, The Hutchens Co., Thom McAn Shoes, Universal Photo Shop, Valley Cleaners and Washerteria.

The M.D. Smith, III family bought WHBS radio 1550 in 1958, and station call letters changed to WAAY. I worked summers at the station, including the midnight to dawn shift. I didn't have a great voice, but I had an "FCC first-phone engineer's license," allowing me to operate the station during night directional operation, which was required of announcers after sundown.

Wards was a heavy advertiser with the radio station, and listening to one of my old 1959 "air-check" tapes, we ran multiple commercials using Ward's jingle for the opening and close of the 60-second spot, with local specials of the week listed in the center. Many times, I played and sang along with... "Happy Shopping is a family affair at Wards... Montgomery Wards, (copy for special items inserted here) Hurry to Wards, come as you are, where Happy Shopping is a family affair at Wards... Montgomery Wards."

I met my future wife, Judy Chandler, in 1959 and once I mentioned going to Wards for some tools. She said, "Oh, you mean Monkey Wards?" I'd never heard that and assumed some local teenagers invented that slang name. But doing this research, I found out that maybe in the 20s or 30s, Montgomery Ward was called "Monkey Wards" by some people because it reportedly once offered exotic monkey keys in some of its stores and through its mail-order catalog. And now you know another oddity. Seems the name stuck with some people who passed it down.

In 1967, the Madison Theater opened between the north end of Parkway City and Wards. It was luxurious, with 850 rocking chair seats, 70mm, or the regu-

lar 35mm projection and six-track stereo capability. There were five tremendous Altec 84 speakers behind the screen and surround sound speakers recessed into the cinder-block walls behind curtains, making them invisible to the audience. What fantastic stereo it produced. When a jet plane on the screen zoomed from a distance to pass the camera, the sound was so natural (and loud) that you would jump in your seat to get out of the way.

I was sad to see The Madison close in 1986. By then, they'd added an adjacent building and made it into a smaller twin theater in hopes of more revenue, but it was not enough.



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## The 1974 Super Outbreak of Tornadoes

Late that afternoon, one of the many tornadoes that hit the southeast that day came across the old airport and struck the southern end of Parkway City, destroying several businesses and leaving the ones from near the middle to the north alone. The tornado continued up Monte Sano Mountain, hitting the power substation and knocking all the TV stations off the air at 11:05 pm, where I was listening to the TV coverage in an adjacent room. My family was under tables in our rear basement, in the furthest corner.

That was when Parkway City was rebuilt and converted into an enclosed mall. It complemented the other mall on the north side of town, The Mall.

Here's something else I bet you didn't know about the Wards building. On the store's roof was an antenna and unique directional transmitter for the old Huntsville Airport's ILS instrument approach to runway 18.

My father and I had learned to fly light planes in 1965 and I was working on my instrument rating. For practice, I'd fly "under the hood," allowing me to see only the instruments in the cockpit. Most of the time, we'd land heading north on runway 36. But when the wind favored the south, we'd come in lined up for 18 on the ILS landing system and fly at a 500-foot altitude over Wards with the "Middle Marker" sending a highly directional beam straight up, and we'd audibly hear it and see the light blinking on the radio. That was the "decision height", and if you had not come out of the clouds at the point and could see the runway, you had to execute a "missed approach" and fly around to try it again or head somewhere else to land that had better weather.

Every time I'd be at Parkway City in rainy weather and low ceilings, the commercial airliners would rumble out of the clouds and pass over the roof of Wards. Just before the airport moved, some jets were also landing there. I always feared one coming too low trying to break out of the soup and plow into Wards, but it never happened. It was more convenient for me to drive to the old airport, but when the Jetport opened in

1967, with its runway that was twice as long, my instrument training became easier when I'd look up and see all the clear space below me on 18, and not Wards' roof.

In later years, Sears outpaced and outsold Wards, and they fell on hard times. Likely because of a sale of Wards to Mobil in 1974 who then sold Wards to a private company in 1985. Just after 2000, the company closed its stores and the entire business.

In the mid 90s, our local 76,100 sq. ft. store employing 72 associates was identified as one of the 48 under-performing store locations and was closed after the Christmas season on December 31, 1997. In late 2000, the new Parkway Mall demolished the store and adjacent wing to make way for the new Parisian store. It opened a year before the rest of the mall's demolition, to become the two-story structure that stands today between Bob Wallace Avenue and Drake Avenue, to the East side of the Memorial Parkway. The total structure was completed in October 2002.

What I remember most was "Happy Shopping is a family affair at Wards... Montgomery Wards."



**"May the wind at your back not be the result of the corned beef and cabbage you had for lunch."**

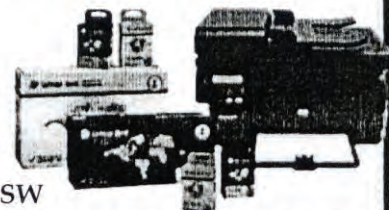
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# The Frugal Reader



- Shop the baby aisle for inexpensive skin care products for yourself. Baby lotion is great for the face and the shampoo is very mild.

- Office paper is expensive. When you use a stack of paper that you would normally throw out, just flip it over and use it again. It will go through your printer and you get twice the use out of it.

- Take cash with you to the grocery store instead of checks or credit card - you'll spend less.

- Have a clothing swap with friends once a season. Everyone brings clothes they no longer wear and make an evening of it - whatever is left goes to charity.

- Host a "plant exchange" where friends bring dug-up perennial plants from their gardens - everyone gets a new plant!

- To save money on magazine subscriptions, exchange magazines you've read with friends. You each get to read the latest and only pay for one.

- If you unwrap your new bars of soap and allow them to sit opened in your linen closet, they will harden and not turn to mush in the soap dish. Also, the linens will smell great!

- For an inexpensive facial exfoliator, sprinkle a little baking soda onto your hand and mix with your normal facial cleanser or soap. The soda will

gently scrub off the dead skin.

- Always buy frozen concentrate juice instead of premixed juice in bottles or cans, otherwise you're paying for water you could provide yourself. When mixing it, add an extra cup or so of water - the juice won't be quite as sweet and you'll have more.

- Buy large packages of meat on sale, and separate them into small portions. Put them into zipper bags with a marinade and freeze. When you thaw - already seasoned and delicious!

- Plant a little garden! You'll be amazed at the number of vegetables you can get in a small space - if you have no space to plant, use containers on your patio.

- Fill up your car with gas in the morning rather than late in the day, and you'll get about 1 free gallon. The reason is, the gas expands in the

tanks at the gas station during the heat of the day, especially in hot months. You get less for your money later in the day. A free gallon adds up at today's prices!

- Save money on groceries by shopping your pantry and freezer first. Make a meal schedule a week ahead and only buy the items you need.

- Use coupons for groceries. Most stores now will double up to \$.50, and that will add up in a hurry. Just don't buy what you normally wouldn't, just because you have a coupon for it.

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# The Legacy of Ruth Moon

by *Tanjie Kling*

Ruth Jenkins Moon was the oldest surviving child of my grandparents' 12 children. She was born in New Hope, Alabama in 1909. Her father was a preacher at Glovers Chapel Church of Christ and a tenant farmer. He sold bibles and Stark Brothers fruit and pecan trees to people in the New Hope area, and in Huntsville on the courthouse Square. His wife and daughters cooked for the entire congregation and invited them to eat with the family after Sunday service. Being tenant farmers, the Jenkins family moved often and wherever they could find work picking cotton in southeast and northeast Madison County.

My mother was the 11th born child, and Ruth was about 20 years older than her. She often told me that my Aunt Ruth, given their age difference, was like a second mother to her. Ruth's siblings eventually moved away from New Hope as they reached adulthood, but Ruth was firmly grounded there. She met and married her husband, David "Dave" Moon, there in 1928 and the couple never left. They set up house in the Cherry Tree Road/Poplar Ridge Road area, where Dave engaged in farming and Ruth was busy keeping house and raising their 3 children. During the early 1960s Dave became a bus driver for New Hope High School until a year before his untimely death.

About the same time, Ruth began working in the school's lunchroom. She became a widow at age 55 and continued working in the lunchroom for about 10 years. Ruth's special gift for cooking was shared with these students, back in the day when lunchroom employees made everything from scratch. She was an amazing cook.

When Ruth left her employment at New Hope School, she realized that growing and selling plants like her father had done was her passion. Ruth operated a little greenhouse behind her Poplar Ridge Road home, where she would grow flowers and vegetables and sell them to her friends and neighbors in New Hope.

My parents and I would visit my Aunt Ruth often, since she lived down the road from my paternal grandmother, who was also one of Ruth's close friends. During one of our visits in 1976, my aunt shared with us a slice of cake and the recipe for that new type of layer cake that was baked in an oven that was not pre-heated. My aunt topped it with a 7-minute frosting and then covered the cake with sweetened coconut flakes.

We were fortunate that my aunt shared the recipe for "Cold Oven Cake" with my mother. It became very popular in my family.

During the 1976-1977 school year, I was a 4th grader and member of the 4-H club at West Huntsville Elementary School. Our school's 4-H club held a bake-off. I won the school wide



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competition, advanced to the regional competition (held at Lovemans Mall), and won again using my Aunt Ruth's recipe. I recently became reacquainted with this cake when I was looking through my mother's handwritten recipes. I have never been able to find another recipe like it, and wanted to share with you this cake that held so many fond memories for my mother and me.

### Cold Oven Layer Cake

1 stick of butter - 1 cup of whole milk  
 1 stick of margarine - 3 cups of all purpose flour  
 1 cup of Crisco pure vegetable oil - 1 teaspoon of vanilla flavoring  
 3 cups of sugar - 1 teaspoon of lemon flavoring  
 5 eggs - 1/2 teaspoon of baking powder  
 Shortening for greasing pans, or nonstick spray

Grease two 8 inch or two 9 inch round cake pans with shortening, or use nonstick spray. Do not heat pans. Soften butter and margarine. With an electric mixer, cream the butter and margarine with Crisco oil and sugar. Mix the rest of the ingredients by hand. Beat in eggs one at a time by hand. Mix in milk and then flour, one cup at a time. Add flavoring, mix well, and then add baking powder. Pour equal amounts of cake batter into each greased pan. Put the pans in a cold oven, then turn oven on to 350 degrees. Bake for 35 minutes to 50 minutes, depending on the size pan used and how fast your oven heats. Cakes are done when a paring knife inserted into the cake comes out clean. Invert cake on a rack and let cool completely. Frost the layers with your favorite frosting. Ruth chose a 7-minute frosting and then covered the top and sides with sweetened coconut flakes. The 7-minute frosting used by my family follows:

### 7-Minute Frosting

This recipe requires a double boiler. A double boiler consists of 2 saucepans that fit into each other. Water is boiled in the bottom saucepan, and creates a gentle cooking method for the saucepan directly above it. After cooking, you will need to immediately use this frosting.

2 egg whites, unbeaten - 1/4 teaspoon of cream of tartar  
 1 and 1/2 cups of sugar - 1 teaspoon of vanilla  
 5 Tablespoons of cold water

Put egg whites, sugar, water, and cream of tartar in upper part of double boiler. Beat with egg beater until thoroughly mixed. Place over rapidly boiling water, beat continually with egg beater. Cook 7 minutes or until frosting will stand in peaks. Remove from fire, add vanilla, and beat until thick enough to spread.

**Tip:** Add 2 inches of water to the bottom saucepan of the double boiler. Bring the water to a boil. Do not allow the bottom of the upper saucepan to be immersed in the water. For optimum results, make when the humidity is low.

*From the Alabama Polytechnic Institute, Extension Service, August 1949:*

*Foods: Planning, Serving, Recipes by Mary Hulsey, Specialist of Foods and Nutrition.*

*This frosting recipe was from my mother's first cookbook, and has been faithfully used in my family since 1949.*

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

**Jerry Seinfeld**



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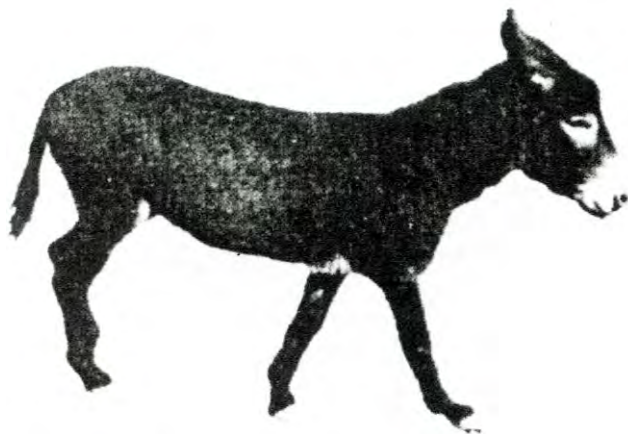
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# THE DONKEY

*From 1899 Newspaper*



One day a farmer heard some crying in the back of his home and upon going outside, found that his donkey had fallen down into the well.

The animal cried piteously for hours as the farmer tried to figure out what to do. The

farmer knew that the donkey had more than likely been in the well all night long.

Finally, he decided the animal was old, and the well needed to be covered up anyway. It was quite deep and just wasn't worth it to retrieve the donkey. He invited all his neighbors to come over and help him. They all grabbed a shovel and began to shovel dirt into the well.

At first, the donkey realized what was happening and cried horribly. Then, to everyone's amazement he quieted down. A few shovel loads later, the farmer finally looked down the well. He was astonished at what he saw. With each shovel of dirt that hit his back, the donkey was doing something amazing.

He would shake it off and take a step up. As the farmer's neighbors continued to shovel dirt on top of the animal, he would just shake it off and take a step up. After several hours, everyone was amazed as the donkey stepped up over the edge of the well and tiredly trotted off!

**MORAL:** Life is going to shovel dirt on you, all kinds of dirt. We have to shake it off and take a step up. Each of our troubles is a stepping stone. It is sometimes hard to do, but we need to pick ourselves up and never ever give up....giving up is not one of our options.

Always keep going and take a step forward.

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# PET TIPS FROM ANGEL

## *Feline Potpourri*

Are these beliefs about cats true?

### **Cats have 9 lives.**

Whether this statement is recognized as a superstition or myth, it's definitely an interesting thought! Unfortunately, once a cat passes, it's definitely not coming back for 8 more lives. But where did this saying originate? Many believe it's due to a cat's uncanny ability to make impossible leaps and jumps, survive long falls, etc. Cats are extremely agile, and can definitely give off the impression of superhero powers.

### **Never look into a Cat's Eyes.**

Once again, this folklore tale dates back to ancient times when cultures around the world associated cats with witches, wizards and more. Many believed that looking into a cat's eyes for too long would bring bad luck. Others believed that a cat's eyes are windows to a mystical world.

Don't believe everything you hear. These stories are just that: folklore. Feel free to lovingly look into the eyes of your feline!

### **Here are a Few Other Interesting Superstitions about Cats:**

- One white hair on a black cat is good luck.
- Kittens born in May have special powers.
- Black cats protect fishermen at sea.
- Put a cat in the empty cradle of newlyweds, and a baby will arrive soon.
- If a cat sneezes three times, someone will catch a cold.
- When a cat washes its ears a lot, it will rain.
- Having a cat in a theater is good luck.

### **Ginger Cats**

Ginger Cats Are Popular In History and Pop Culture. Most all ginger tabbies also have a distinct "M" mark on their



foreheads that is rooted in history and legend. It's said that this blessing comes directly from Mother Mary herself, thanks to one particular orange tabby who comforted baby Jesus until he fell asleep.

\* Ginger cats have been beloved by many famous figures throughout history, including Winston Churchill and Abraham Lincoln. Churchill was known to have two ginger cats named Tango and Jock during his lifetime, while Lincoln famously boasted that his ginger cat Dixie was smarter than his entire cabinet.

\* In addition to their popularity among notable historical figures, ginger tabbies also hold a special place in pop culture. From the lazy yet lovable Garfield of the 90's and 2000's to Crookshanks from Harry Potter and even Puss from Shrek - perhaps the most iconic of all - these feline companions capture our hearts on screen time after time.

### **\* Ginger Cats Have Longer Lifespans**

On average, cats tend to live for 12-18 years. However, ginger cats are known to have longer lifespans and can live up to 20 years. The longevity of a cat's life depends on various factors such as its diet, lifestyle and the level of care they receive from its owners. The amiability and nurturing disposition of ginger cats may make them live even longer than other colors and types.

### **\* They Bring Good Luck**

Various superstitions are associated with different colors, particularly when it comes to cats. Meanwhile, some believe tri-colored felines to be lucky charms for those on ships. Ginger cats are believed to understand their human families like no other and many have warned owners prior to medical events and home emergencies such as fires and bad storms.

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# HISTORIC MOORESVILLE

by Tom Carney

*This article was originally published in  
OHM in March of 1991*

There is a living museum of our past, lying just a few miles west of Huntsville. The first settlers of Mooresville arrived there as early as 1805, taking over land that had previously belonged to the Chickasaw Indians. When you visit Mooresville today, it is as if you are in a time capsule of the early days of our state's history.

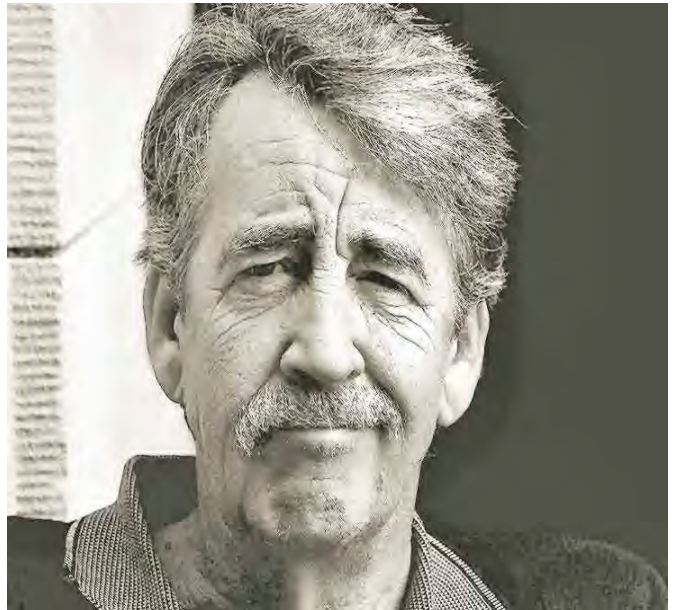
Included in Mooreville's colorful history are tales of President Andrew Johnson, who worked as an apprentice-tailor in that town, and President Garfield who supposedly left his Bible during a visit to a local church.

Mooresville measures one square mile wide in area and extends across Highway 20, on the way to Decatur. It is bordered on one side by the Wheeler Wildlife refuge. The town was laid out with the same city plan that is in existence today. Some of the streets have disappeared or were never more than just lines on the plat. Water Street ran north and south on the west side of town, and at least one more street was anticipated on the east side. A street below Piney Street was also laid out in 1818, but never developed.

Even though the town appears untouched by time, many details have been altered over the years. Several residences and outbuildings have been lost due to natural causes and neglect. The business community has all but disappeared.

On March 3, 1818, by an act of Congress, Mooresville was linked to Huntsville by a road authorizing mail delivery to and from Huntsville and authorizing the establishment of a Post Office. Mail was carried by horse and rider.

The Stagecoach Inn and Tavern that housed the first Post Office was built by Griffin Lampkin and has had several owners, including David Putney who bought it in 1825 for \$1500.00. The building was listed on Tanner's Post Map of 1825, with supper costing two bits.




When town residents and mail carriers went to the Post Office to get their mail, they received it through a small slot on the right side of the building, where the original Post Office was located. Now the slot is a small window.

The tavern has been a tenant house as well as an antique and glass and china repair shop.

There will be craft sales, musicians, a Civil War re-enactment, as well as food available. What we now take for granted, our grandchildren may never experience. Please help to preserve our past for future generations, and also look for some unusual and unique crafts for yourselves.

*Apr. 2024 Editor's Note: Check Mooresville online to see what events they will be holding this year - if you are a newcomer to Huntsville or Madison you need to pay this little town a visit!*



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



# 1860 Law and Order in Huntsville



work upon the streets.

- The community bell, a vital factor in the life of the community back in those days, was rung by the police every two hours.

This was one

of their standing duties and could not be overlooked under penalty.

- Water rates were based on the assessed valuation of property. The owner of a dwelling house valued at \$1,500 or under, \$5 per year; \$2,000 and over, \$10; more than \$8,000, \$15.

- No fireworks were allowed in the city in 1860 without the consent of the Mayor, who specified when and where they were to be exhibited.

- A person was permitted to burn a stove pipe or chimney fire only when the roof was wet from rain or covered with snow.

- A fine of from \$5 to \$10 was assessed upon any individual who carried an unguarded candle or lamp into a stable, or who kept ashes in barrels, boxes or wooden vessel of any kind. The punishment in case of such violation was "any number of stripes, not exceeding 39, at the discretion of the Mayor."

- If an individual failed to obey an order of the Mayor, as head of the fire department, the fine was \$20.

- All persons attending a fire and not a member of any company, were required to assist the firemen, if called upon, or pay a fine of \$10,

- Whenever a fire was discovered by a policeman, or he heard an alarm, it was his duty to cry "Fire", to ring the city bell and to make known the place of the fire. He then proceeded to the blaze to help extinguish it, or to keep order.

- Officers and members of the fire companies were exempt from paying the city poll tax for

## Brown Bread Pudding

1 c. brown bread pieces  
2 c. milk  
1 T. maple sugar  
2 eggs, separated  
1 T. sugar  
2 T. whipping cream

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

Pour it hot over the bread. Beat the 2 egg whites with a tablespoon of the sugar and the cream. Fold into the custard, bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes.

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# NEW ORLEANS "MEATS" HUNTSVILLE

*by Tanjie Kling*

My father-in-law, Bill Kling, Sr., was a fourth generation New Orleanian. His great grandfather owned a wholesale grocery store on Canal Street, from where he supplied foodstuffs and specialty ingredients to local grocers, hotels and restaurants in the New Orleans area - some of which are still in existence today.

Bill, Sr. met my mother-in-law, Peggy, in New Orleans while she was a college student there. They married and later moved to Huntsville in 1950 to form Valley Pride Packing Company, a meat processing and distribution corporation. Valley Pride supplied meat products within a 50-mile radius of Huntsville to grocers and to Huntsville's legendary restaurants such as Mullin's, Eunice's, Bon Air, Steadman's, The Dwarf, Sno White and Gibson's BBQ.

Bill, Sr. was active in the community. He served as a member of the Huntsville-Madison County Airport Authority that managed the design, construction and the upgraded operations of a new airport at its current location. He also was a 2-term president of the Huntsville Symphony Board, a member of the Rotary Club, Farm Bureau and Cattlemen's Association, past president of the Alabama Meatpackers Association, a member of the boards of directors of the Associates Industries of Alabama and the American Meat Institute.

As a native New Orleanian, my father-in-law enjoyed the classic New Orleans cuisine, such as grillade, red beans and rice, Po'Boy sandwiches, boiled artichokes with lemon butter sauce and gumbo. During the years of Bill and Peggy's marriage, she added quite a few Cajun dishes to her repertoire.

She perfected a dish called grillade; a New Orleans creation usually served over grits and for breakfast or brunch. She

served this to her family for dinner and over rice. Many Creole and Cajun grillade recipes include tomatoes and Cajun spices. Her version does not. This is her recipe for grillade:

## Peggy Kling's Grillade

1 and a half pounds of round steak, sliced very thin  
Seasoned flour: Salt, pepper, and garlic powder if desired or use minced garlic  
1 or 2 onions, sliced  
Canola oil or olive oil - enough to coat frying pan less than 1/4 inch  
Dried or fresh thyme  
Hot water  
White Vinegar - about 1 tablespoon or more (this tenderizes the meat)  
Worcestershire sauce  
Garlic salt to taste

Use a very large, heavy frying pan that has a lid. This is made on the stovetop.

Cut round steak into 2 or 3 inch by 2 inch sections. Dredge the round steak pieces (grillades) in seasoned flour. Reserve unused flour.

Heat oil in frying pan on medium high heat. Saute onions in oil until partially cooked and push aside. Add grillades (steak pieces) and brown on both sides. You may need to add more oil. Turn heat to low. Add hot water to cover meat. Sprinkle with thyme, add vinegar, and incorporate the sauteed onions that are sitting on the other side of the fry pan.

Stir this mixture with a spatula and loosen bits of seasoned flour that may be stuck to the bottom of the pan. Cover and simmer on very low heat until meat is fork-tender, about 45 minutes to an hour or so.

While cooking, add more water if needed to prevent sticking and to give ample gravy. If gravy does not thicken enough in cooking, use reserved flour to thicken. To do this, put some of the reserved flour in a glass and stir in a small amount of cold water. Add a little Worcestershire sauce to this glass for a darker color. Add this slurry into the fry pan.

Adjust seasonings by adding desired salt, Worcestershire sauce, and vinegar. Serve the grillades on top of rice, grits, or mashed potatoes. Serves 4 to 5 people.

**"Mint Condition: Male, 1932 model, high mileage, some hair. Many new parts including hip, knee, cornea and valves. Isn't in running condition, but walks well."**

***Seen on recent single's ad***



# Life

*by Becky Richardson*

Sometimes when life is so complicated you want to run and hide - but you can't. You have to keep putting one foot in front of the other one until you walk out of the mess. That lasts about fifteen seconds and another mess pops up. Just put on higher-topped shoes because messes are what life is about.

Keep smiling and saying, "I'll get through today and maybe tomorrow will be easier." Take pride in solving life's problems.

Mistakes and problems are how we learn and how we grow as individuals our entire life. We will never have easy, uneventful lives as long as we keep living and never give up trying to right wrongs and believe in a better tomorrow. It might happen, however it hasn't happened yet to me in all my eighty-three years. Who knows, I might get a surprise tomorrow.

Not knowing what each day will bring us is what keeps the excitement in living. For example, I have a cottage that I rent out, 2 stories, hasn't been rented out in several years. I took two people to the house to get advice on some furniture to buy and as I was creeping up the stairs, there were three snake skins on the step.

How they got there, where are the snakes, how long have they been here? Can you imagine the chill I get now as I open every storage box, drawer, etc. cleaning out the building to get the property ready to sell? Yikes!

Now think about it: Have you found any snake skins inside your home lately? My heart started to beat like a 20 year old. This is what I'm writing about - we cannot predict the future, we can just wake up each morning and eagerly search for more 20 year old heartbeats.

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## SUSIE

Hello, my name is Susie. I am 17 months old and am a female grey tabby kitty. I don't know where I came from exactly. I had a home at one time because I have a very sweet personality which means people were kind to me and loved on me when I was smaller. I've been spayed and have had all my shots and I have been micro chipped. Here at the Ark Animal Shelter all the animals are micro chipped. I'm in a room with other cats and I get along with everyone. So if you already have a cat I'm sure I would be good company for them. I love to be petted and I like to watch the visitors come into my room. But I wish someone would choose me. If you come to the Ark Animal Shelter, ask to see Susie, that's me.

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# News From The Year 1934

## News From Huntsville and Around The World

### Senator Heflin Announces Candidacy for Congress

Senator Heflin has announced that he will be a candidate for Congress in the next election. His record of accomplishment in the Senate body to date would fill 35 pages. His full platform is to be published in a pamphlet late this week, but he gave our reporter a list of several planks that it would include. Heflin says that he is in favor of federal aid for state-run schools. He also advocates old-age pensions for our elderly citizens in need.

The Senator would urge opening the Coosa River to navigation from Rome, Ga., to Mobile. He will see to it that commercial fertilizer can be made soon at Muscle Shoals for half the price that farmers are paying today. Senator Heflin favors a strong Navy, opposes plans to increase foreign immigration, and says he will fight to correct every injustice done to ex-service men. Regarding the economy of the country, Heflin states that millions of dollars in federal money could be raised by taxing marginal transactions on the stock exchange, and has a plan to prevent panics. He would limit big fortunes by a tax to be agreed upon by President Roosevelt. Favors increasing salaries of postal employees to where they can obtain the necessities of life. The Senator further stated that he is in favor of a survey of soil in every county in the 5th District to find out whether there are oil, metals, and other minerals in the area. He has a plan to destroy the million and a half bales of unspinnable cotton kept and counted in the cotton supply every year.

### Will Rogers Reported Dead

Early wire reports state that Will Rogers was killed this morning in an airplane crash. It happened over Alaska with aviator Wiley Post. Though the news has not been confirmed yet, President Roosevelt has issued a statement calling Rogers one of this century's great Americans.

Rogers was revered as one of this country's greatest humorists. His plain spoken truths enabled him to identify with the common man and his struggles during the Depression.

### Dillinger Shot Dead in Chicago

Chicago: A nationwide manhunt for one of the most infamous criminals of our era ended today with a shoot-out on the sidewalks of Chicago.

John Dillinger, who has made a career out of robbing and terrorizing peaceful citizens, was gunned down by G Men as he exited the Biograph Theater. When ordered to surrender Dillinger reached in his pocket as if for a gun and made an effort to bolt the scene. FBI agents immediately opened fire.

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FBI director Edgar Hoover stated minutes later that the end to the crazed criminal's career was due to intense investigation work, using the most modern crime detection methods. Dillinger was fingered by an ex-girlfriend who was paid \$200. The woman was at the theater along with Dillinger and was seen wearing a red dress as she entered an FBI car minutes after the shooting.

## Huntsville Buys Utility Company

Despite protests from the public, the city of Huntsville has purchased the Alabama Power Company. The move is expected to stabilize the cost for the 5,810 customers now using electricity as well as providing much needed capital to insure future growth. The average electric bill is expected to stay the same at about \$2.64 per month.

## CHICKEN LAYS HUGE EGG

A lunch stand in Albertville has on prominent display a hen's egg there that defies explanation. It measures six inches in circumference the small way and eight inches around the long way.

Mr. Driver avers that it was laid by his Plymouth Rock hen. It weighs slightly under one half of a pound.

## A Premature Death

Mrs. Sally Rhineheart, an aged woman of west Huntsville, has been ill for some time and on Friday apparently died. Her friends sent for neighbors to come and prepare the body for internment and a telegraphic message was sent to her son in a nearby city informing him of the death of his mother.

After a time, however, the old lady revived, and finding her daughter weeping at her bedside, reproved her for it. The astonishment of the family at this sudden recovery was really great.

There are stories throughout the country of people having all the symptoms of death with no breathing and appearing very lifeless but in truth they are still very much alive.

Mrs. Rhineheart is still living.

**"My old aunts used to come up to me at family gatherings and weddings, poke me in the ribs and say 'You're next!' They stopped doing this after I began doing the same thing to them at funerals."**

**Cleo Farber, Scottsboro**

**"The closest I ever got to a 4.0 in college was my blood alcohol level."**

**Stan Kilgore, Athens**

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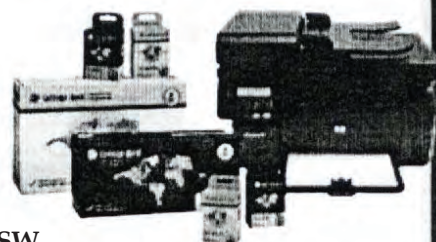
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# MY FRIENDS AT WEST CLINTON SCHOOL

by Anna (Gene) Clift Chesnut



If a person died in the 1960s and came back to life today in 2019 he (she) would not recognize West Clinton Street. Urban Renewal made a big impact! My home, located where Regions Bank is now, was a large brown clapboard house with an enormous front porch. Neighbors gathered there in the summer and fall evenings, while taking strolls to get out of their heat filled homes. No air conditioning in those days.

That block (heading toward the Von Braun Civic Center) was made up of equally large homes, a few having been turned into apartments. At the end of the block was WBHP, the local country music station, owned by the Pollards, the family that built the first cable TV system in Huntsville.

The sidewalk in front of these homes was the perfect place to improve one's skating skills. At about 5:30 on sunny days I would strap on my roller skates and skate up and down that block until it was time to get ready for school.

West Clinton School was an elementary school across the street from my home and next to a dry cleaning facility (now a new modern building which houses Smith Broadcasting). I crossed the street with the help of the school patrol (kids) and there I met my childhood friends; Margaret Anne Goldsmith, Julia Wynn (Jones), Kay (Rodenhauser), and Sara Ann (Smith).

Huntsville in the 1940s and early 1950s was a small town. West Clinton School was a mixed bag of children, rich and poor, inner town kids

(today called inner city) as well as kids from the town's periphery, i.e. quasi-rural. No private schools in those days. My friends lived in the inner town, mostly within a few blocks of each other. There were five of us who, over the next six years starting in 1947, formed our little clique that has lasted until today, although one, Sara Ann, died several years ago.

Margaret Anne's family owned the Russel Erskine Hotel and they resided in part of the top floor. Since the hotel was only a block from my home I would often be invited for spend-the-night parties. Like most children at that age we would think up ways to be naughty, on occasion. Our three best ways were opening the screens and spitting on passing pedestrians, opening our mouths filled with food toward the other diners in the dining room, and donning her parent's heavy boots and tromping up and down the hall trying to scare the guests - silly, childish pranks that were quickly quashed by the adults when they caught us. The activity we loved, however, was being able to skate in the whole hotel garage, as the attendant would move all the cars to the periphery. It was sheer heaven!

Julia Wynn lived a few blocks farther away on Madison Street (totally unrecognizable today) and we would gather at her home and tell ghost stories. I am not sure how that evolved but it seems that that was my strongest memory of our times at her house there. When her family moved to Franklin Street she was the first to have a television. We loved to go to her house even though the TV quality was very poor by today's standards.

Sara Ann's family managed the Yarbrough Hotel (now used for offices) and they resided in a large suite on the second floor. The second floor overlooked the first floor, which made for another big adventure! We children could spy on all the incoming guests as well as the ones lounging in the chairs in the lobby, not that there was much to spy on (my teachers would not approve of this dangling participle) but we each thought ourselves young Sherlock Holmes.

**"Apparently there are only two types of flu. The harmless one that women and children get and the 'Near Death' version that men get."**

**Jeremy Fritz, Huntsville**



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Kay lived a bit farther away as her family had a florist shop, and her family had a monkey, a real live monkey as well as other animals. Now, this monkey could make much mischief when he felt like it, much like us children. In fact, I wonder if this monkey instigated some of our pranks. Maybe young children and monkeys have much in common.

When Kay's family moved into town we were able to see more of her, away from school, and our little clique was complete.

My home had been turned into a pseudo apartment house in 1946 after the death of my father and grandmother (who had been living with us). My mother wanted to have children around her only child so she converted my grandmother's quarters to a small apartment. One room, separate from the other rooms on the apartment side, was rented to my dancing teacher, Miss Hazel Robinson. Music and dancing, with my West Clinton friends in attendance, filled my house for several years.

A few of my schoolteachers lived in the apartment. On one occasion my little friends and I tied the sleeves of a teacher's clothes together. We giggled with glee!

Our childhood pranks and misadventures seem so benign, now, in our "pressure cooker" world with its tendency toward violence and despair. One of our responsibilities at West Clinton School was to bring food and help feed the disabled children who also had special classes there. Maybe that gave us a more realistic perspective of life.

Children helping the less fortunate as well as having silly behavior can be virtues in the long run and turn their lives toward responsible adult relationships as our West Clinton School experiences did.

The four of us continue to keep in touch. Only two of us still live in Huntsville, Julia and Margaret Anne. I live in Seattle, Washington and Kay has recently moved from Florida to Ohio to be near her children and grandchildren.

This story was prompted by my trying to get Kay to write a story about her family's monkey. Maybe one day she will.

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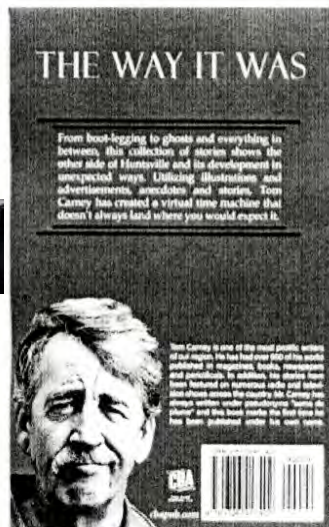
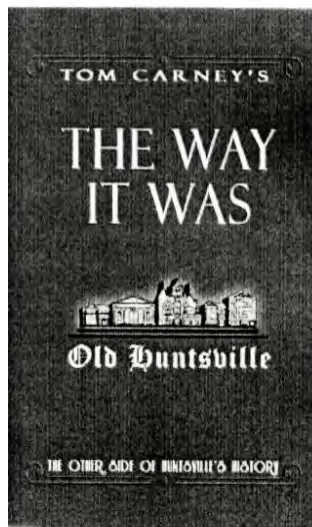
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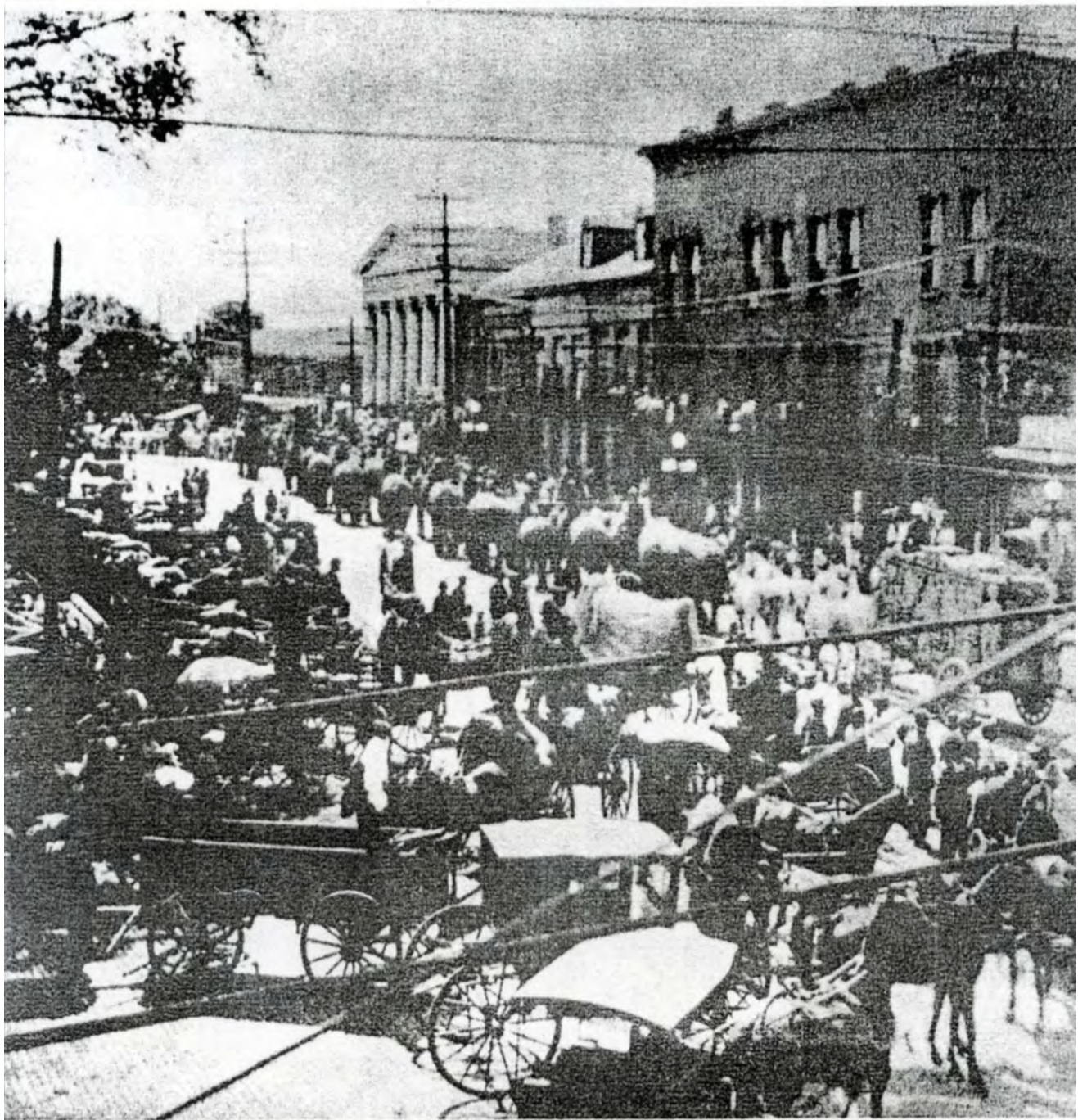
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# HUNTSVILLE HISTORY THROUGHOUT THE YEARS



Facing Southwest towards the First Alabama Bank building. When this picture taken in 1913, of the area known as "Cotton Row", there were more elephants in Huntsville than there were automobiles.