



No. 385

March 2025



Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY



Remembering Boots Lounge

Also in this issue: Strange News in 1985; Marshall County Mall; Surviving the Depression; Move to Huntsville in 1948; Setting the Record Straight; Man Hides in Well for Nine Years; A Butterfly Garden; Pet Stories; Mood Recipes and much much more!

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A Hardware Store....

The Way You Remember Them

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Donnie Lewter
Mac Lewter

Boots Lounge

by Tom Carney



Alvie "Boots" Ellett was born in the small rural community of Owens Crossroads in 1934. It was a time when America was recovering from the worst Depression in history, but for the residents of the small town it was as if time had stood still. Men walked behind a mule trying to scratch a living out of a sun-scorched cotton field while praying for rain. Families went to church every time the doors were opened and men gathered at the general store to swap yarns and pocket knives.

"You know you're getting older when everything hurts, and what doesn't hurt, doesn't work."

George Evans, Old

"My father and grandfather ran a small general store," recalled Boots. "They sold everything from horseshoes to medicine. People didn't have much cash money back then so they would buy on credit until the cotton came in. Unfortunately, if the crop failed my grandfather didn't get paid and even if the crop was good, people would sometimes move away or there would be sickness in the family and all the money would go to paying doctor bills."

Boots remembers his grandfather as a kind man. "He was one of the founders of the Owens Crossroads Church of Christ. Many times people who owed large amounts of money at the store, and had no way of paying, would come in and he would let them have more supplies on credit. He just couldn't bring himself to put more hardship on people who were already down and out."

"My grandfather gave me my nickname," said Boots. "One year when I was a small child they gave me a pair of Roy Rogers cowboy boots. I wore them everywhere I went. I think I probably even wore them to bed. It got to every time my grandfather saw me coming he would say, 'Here comes Boots.' Somehow the name just stuck."

With the store slowly losing money, Boots was expected to help out any way he could.

"I was in the tenth grade



Old Huntsville, Inc. (USPS #8510)

P.O. Box 4648

Huntsville, AL 35815

(256) 656-5321

Email - oldhuntsville@gmail.com

(Website) www.oldhuntsville.com

Publisher - Cathey Carney

Advertising - (256) 656-5321
Sales & Mktg. - Cathey Carney
Editor - Cheryl Tribble
Gen. Manager - Sam Keith
Copy Boy - Tom Carney
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L. Thomas Ryan, Jr. Attorney At Law

2319 Market Place, Suite B
Huntsville, Alabama 35801

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when my father announced that I was going to grow a cotton crop. He had the field plowed and the rest was up to me. It was only about five or six acres but after a few hours chopping cotton it seemed more like five hundred acres. The longest thing in the world is a cotton row when the temperature is about a hundred humid degrees."

"I wasn't any better than anyone else but after a few summers chopping and picking cotton, I knew I had to find something else to do. I just couldn't see myself making a career out of pulling a cotton sack."

At that time there was an intense rivalry among the high schools in trying to win football and basketball championships. Recruiting players from other schools was common. Boots had been playing basketball for Owens Crossroads and was already known for his aggressive style on the court when he came to the attention of Coach Buck Hughes of Huntsville High School.

"I was in the 10th grade," remembered Boots, "when Coach Hughes and Deputy Sheriff Carrol pulled up in front of the house one afternoon in a big green car. The coach didn't waste many words; he started off by saying he wanted me to play ball for Huntsville High. I lived in the county but they assured me there would be no problem with me changing schools."

"I was thrilled! Huntsville High had the best basketball team in the county and I was honored to be asked to be a part of it. When I told the Coach I would love to play basketball for him, he gave me a funny look."

"Oh no, son," he said, "you're not going to play basketball. You're going to play football!"

"I've never played football," I protested. "I don't even know how to play!"

"Oh, don't worry," said the coach. "We just want you for your size. We need some big players!"

Coach Hughes was a good man," said Boots. "He would push us until we were about to drop, and then he would push us more. Playing ball under him was some of the best years of my life."

"Tomorrow is for what you didn't get done yesterday. So what you need to do today is due tomorrow which was yesterday, so it can wait til tomorrow."

Advice from an Oldtimer

Despite the fact that Boots didn't know how to play football, Huntsville High went on to win the county championship. He also garnered the attention of the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa who offered him a scholarship.

"No one in my family had ever gone to college before. A fifth or sixth grade education and knowing how to read and write was about all most people knew. Whatever happened, I knew it had to be better than picking cotton and running a general store."

"I was lucky in that I already knew some of the players. There was Buster Hill, who became a good friend of mine and Bobby Luna who was one of the biggest football stars of that time. And of course there was Ty Samples. He was everyone's friend and people everywhere knew him."

Boots quickly made a name for himself on the football field and gained national recognition. In 1955 he signed a contract with the Philadelphia Eagles football team. Unfortunately, at the same time he received another contract in the mail. This one was from Uncle Sam and was called a draft notice.



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Needless to say, the Eagles contract was canceled.

"I am kind of embarrassed," laughs Boots, "when people talk about their time in the Army. I went to Fort Jackson for basic and when they found out I had played football for Alabama, they gave me a different kind of uniform - I spent the rest of my military career playing Army football!"

"When I got out of the Army I signed a contract with the VC Lions, a pro team in Vancouver, Canada. They gave me \$5,000 plus a \$1,000 signing bonus. The first thing I did was buy myself a car and two sport coats. I was really big time!"

"The VC Lions were about the worst team in the division and they didn't improve much after I signed on. That was the longest season of my life. The food was strange, everyone talked with an accent and to be honest about it - I was homesick. I really missed Huntsville."

"I knew that coming back to Huntsville spelled the end of my football career but I didn't care. I was just happy to be back home among my friends."

"Like lots of other folks at that time, I went to work at Thiokol, but after a while I started thinking about opening my own business. I first thought about a clothing store but that required more money than I had (or could borrow). My next choice was a restaurant with a bar. I had spent a lot of time in both and I was just naive enough to think that cooking a cheeseburger or opening a beer would be easy!"

"I rented a building on Governors Drive and started remodeling it. I was so broke that I had to do most of the work myself. Mr. Halsey, of Halsey Grocery Company, was kind enough to sell me supplies on credit and a lot of other people agreed to hold my checks. Even with all my friends helping, I was almost out of business before I ever opened!"

"The first day I opened the place it was packed with my

"You can never be lonely if you like the person you're alone with."

Dr. Wayne Dyer

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friends. The day was a scorcher and everyone wanted a cold beer. Finally the beer truck showed up but the driver refused to unload the hot beer until he was paid."

"Cash on delivery," he said.

"I didn't have enough money in the cash register to buy two beers, much less a truckload. Fortunately, some of my friends saw the situation I was in and took up a collection at the bar to pay the driver. They must have thought the whole thing was funny because there were even complete strangers who chipped in!"

"There weren't many good restaurants in town back then," said Ron Eyestone, "but Boot's Lounge was great. I remember there were pictures of football players on the walls and a huge cheeseburger and fries cost about 75 cents. The best item on his menu, however, was his steak. He never would tell us where he got them but they were some of the best steaks I ever tasted! People used to come from all over the county just to get one of his steaks."

"I remember those steaks well," laughs Boots. "When I first opened I was so broke I couldn't stock much food so every time someone ordered a steak I would run across the street to Piggly Wiggly and buy one. For a while I was one of their biggest customers - a dollar or two at a time!"

Boot's Lounge soon developed a regular following but the business refused to grow. Huntsville's businesses were moving along the newly opened Memorial Parkway and traffic along Governors Drive was decreasing. Many of Boots' regular customers now found it easier to stop at a restaurant near where they shopped.

"I was sitting in the restaurant worrying about paying the bills," said Boots, "when Tom Taylor came in. We got to talk-

ing about traffic and business when he told me he had a place on the Parkway for sale, asked how much and when he told me \$80,000 I almost choked on my beer. I knew it was a good deal but it was also \$80,000 more than I had."

"That weekend I was talking with my father and I happened to mention Tom Taylor's offer. Dad asked me what I was going to do."

"I'm not going to do anything. Buying that place would break me."

"Son," my father said, "What are you worrying about? You're already broke."

"My father helped me borrow the money," Boots recalled, "but I was so scared that I insisted on financing the loan for twenty years so in case something happened I would still be able to afford the payments."

Boot's new location on the Parkway, the old Holiday House Restaurant, was already a Huntsville legend. The second floor had a glass enclosed room where Grady Reeves would sit and watch the traffic while hosting his radio show. His commentary about broadcasting "From the beautiful shores of Pinhook Creek" had

made it one of the best known places in town.

"That room had a special kind of glass about two inches thick," Boots said, "to keep the noise out. I figured it had to be worth a lot and I needed the money. I spent about two weeks taking it out piece by piece, being careful not to scratch or break it. Finally, I got finished, had the glass stacked up in neat stacks and called K&M Glass to see what they would pay for it."

"Nothing," they said, "but if you want to pay us we'll haul it off."

Boots finally got the restaurant opened and it became an immediate success. With no Piggly Wiggly across the street, he started having Omaha steaks shipped in and began serving items that were considered exotic for Huntsville at the time, such as lobster and shrimp.

A real estate broker still tells the story about when he was trying to put together a land deal. The owner of the land was an elderly man who wore overalls all the time and rarely came to town. The broker, hoping to impress the old farmer, carried him to Boots and ordered him a lobster. When the waitress brought it out the old farmer



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sat there for a long time staring at it with an incredulous look on his face. Finally he turned to the broker and said, "That's just about the biggest craw-dad I've ever seen!"

In 1964 Boots met Joyce Willis, who would become his wife, business partner, and construction helper.

Joyce still laughs when she remembers the early years of their marriage. "We didn't have much money so we tried to do everything ourselves. One time Boots and I were up on the roof trying to patch a leak. I was trying to hold on, keep my dress from blowing in the wind and trying to hand Boots a hammer at the same time. At about the same time a man in a Volkswagen pulled up. When he saw me on the roof he started laughing like it was the funniest thing he had ever seen. I was so embarrassed but I have to admit that I felt better a few seconds later when I heard a big crash. He had run into another car while laughing and looking over his shoulder at me."

"Often it seemed like as soon as one thing was fixed something else would go wrong. One time, after working late the night before, we got a phone call from a friend telling us that we had water damage at the restaurant. When I asked how bad it was he paused for a long time before answering, 'Well, I'm in a boat at your front door.' Pinhook Creek had overflowed its banks and flooded many of the businesses along the Parkway."

As the restaurant continued to grow in popularity it began to attract a lot of avid sports fans. It was one of the first places in town to have TVs and every time a football game was on the place would be packed. Apparently some of the customers did more than simply watch.

"One day two men walked

in," Boots said, "and identified themselves as FBI. They said they had information that my phone was being used to place bets in Las Vegas. We got it straightened out but after that I was careful about who I let use my phone."

As the years began to pass many people developed special memories for Boot's Restaurant & Lounge. People got engaged while sitting in the booths, celebrated their anniversaries there and later brought in their children. Customers became close friends and the restaurant became a part of their lives.

Joe Reid remembers going there every week with his wife & friends. "We were having dinner and drinks with another couple one night when someone started talking about going to Hawaii. I wasn't really listening so I just mumbled something like "That would be nice." Apparently my wife misunderstood me because the next day she bought the tickets for all of us, kids & all. That was the most expensive steak dinner I ever had at Boots."

Will Halsey, of Halsey Grocery, remembers, "Lots of friends would meet up at Boots - I met there with Dr. John Evans, Pete Lanier, John Lary, John Scott, Joe Fleming and others. Then on weekends we'd get sitters for the kids and take the wives out - it was a great time. And the best food in town."

"We did a lot of proms and private parties," said Boots. "The Madison County Medical Association met upstairs in the banquet room for years and lots of businesses had their Christmas parties with us. Jerry Damson always rented the place on our off day for



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his company Christmas party as well as Bill Propst. One of our all-time favorites was Leroy Cunningham's annual Christmas party. Most of the people there were good friends of ours and everyone always had a great time. Leroy always hired a band and when the party really got going he would do his famous rendition of 'Elvira'."

"Sometimes I don't know what we would have done without our friends," said Joyce. "Boots was out of town one time and he called one night to see how everything was going. It was one of those days when everything had gone wrong."

"I've got a restaurant full of customers," Joyce told him, "and I'm out of lobster and shrimp and there's no money in the cash register to make change."

"I don't think I even mentioned the toilet that kept stopping up."

Boots finally calmed me down and told me to call Gary D., at the Twickenham Station, and Jess Sanford at Gibsons BarBQ. I made the calls and in a few minutes Gary was unloading boxes of lobster and shrimp at the restaurant's back door. At about the same time Jess showed up with a bag of money for the cash register."

"We had a great time and made some of the best friends in the world," remembered Boots, "but it was wearing us down. We had to be there every morning at about nine to get ready to open up and sometimes we just didn't get done before three or four in the morning. All we did was work and get ready to go back to work. We had gotten to the point in our lives where we just wanted to slow down."

"One day, in 1992, we were both dead tired and had sat down to take a break when I turned to Joyce and asked what she thought about us doing something else. She was so tired she didn't even reply. She just reached over and squeezed my hand."

"When I was in Israel I met a man so old he could remember when the Dead Sea was just sick."

Joe Balch

That same day Boots and his wife hung a small cardboard sign on the front door announcing the restaurant would close the following day.

The next day Boots Lounge was packed with old friends and customers sharing memories and telling tales. Couples stopped by one last time to show their children where they had gotten engaged. Others asked for a menu as a special souvenir. When the last customer left late that night Boots locked the door for the final time. As they got in the car to drive home the radio was playing, "Thanks for the Memories."

Somehow, that seemed to be an appropriate ending for an unforgettable Huntsville landmark.



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HUNTSVILLE NEWS FROM 1875

Our Library - We are pleased to announce that our young friend S. D. Cabaniss, Jr. has just supplied a want that has long been felt in Huntsville - a public Library. It is an elegantly fitted up room in the rear portion of his bookstore, in Col. Hundley's new building, opposite the Huntsville Hotel.

The Library contains many valuable works and a large amount of light and miscellaneous reading, just such as will suit the tastes of all classes. Subscription is only fifty cents per month.

In the Jail - Eight more prisoners were brought in from Etowah yesterday, as follows (charged with illicit distilling): Sam Burns, Henry Upton, Thomas Thrasher, John Smith and J. H. Green. Two others, Josh Noogin and Jack Hendricks, charged with complicity in the killing of Collector Leatherwood.

For Rent - A brick cottage on Holmes Street, opposite Dr. Dement's residence. Occupied at present by V. Decot. Possession given immediately. Apply at City Hotel Restaurant.

For Sale - a most valuable and desirable farm and residence, two miles north of Huntsville, on Meridianville Pike. Large brick home, 12 rooms, kitchen, cribs, smokehouse, coal cellar, stables etc. Well of never failing purest and coldest water, substantial fence, under highest state of cultivation, all in perfect order, containing about 140 acres of the best land in this country. Will

be sold on reasonable terms. Apply to John J. Robinson on the premises.

Frightful Accident - Last Sunday morning Mr. Fearn Penn of this city came very near losing his life by the accidental discharge of his pistol. The pistol was lying on the mantel in his room.

In attempting to take some article that was lying by it, he accidentally knocked it off, which, striking the floor, was discharged, the ball striking Mr. P. almost centrally in the breast.

It ranged upward and to the left, coming out near the left shoulder, making a frightful flesh wound. We are glad to learn that Mr. P. will soon be out and about.

New Billiard Hall - James B. Ford has fitted up in most elegant style a superb Billiard Hall, in connection with his popular saloon on the North side of the Square. The tables are new and of the latest pattern. He will be glad to have his friends and the public come and try them, as well as test the fine quality of his wines and other liquors.

Found - two fine Jersey milk cows who have taken up at my residence on Meridian Street. Owner can have same by paying for this ad and their keep.

Killing Dogs - Thos. Hooper, the surveyor, called at the Daily Times office to explain why he killed the two fine dogs about which the Sunday Morning Times had referenced. Mr. Hooper claims that the dogs had been killing his geese, which he valued at \$5 a piece and had also, he said, bitten a fine bull belonging to him.

He was fined \$15 in the

Mayors Court for shooting fire arms in the city limits and appealed his case to the law and equity court, where he also has a case against him.

One of the dogs belonged to Miss Margarette Wellman, the other to Frank E. Murphy, who was the man who had the warrants sworn out for the arrest of Mr. Hooper. Miss Wellman is heartbroken at the loss.

"When someone is murdered, the police investigate the spouse first. And that tells you everything you need to know about marriage."

Roy Meigs, Athens



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Sassy

(A Love Story, 2020)

by Bill Alkire



My wife of 58 years passed October 1, 2020; I was left with a large void. My son offered a solution that might fill that gap; he felt what I needed was a furry companion, a cat.

As a family, we had raised dogs, cats, kittens, turtles, Guinea pigs and even spiders. To entice me, my son was sending e-mail pictures of cats. I succumbed to his "advertising."

Dr. Karen Shepherd of Animal Services had always told my wife and I to use the shelter when looking for a pet.

I spent the weekend preparing. My son provided a pet-carrier, feeding dishes, food, litter box with litter to get me started. I previewed cats online and found a Maine Coon I liked. I knew personality was most important.

The young woman volunteer at the shelter explained that the Maine Coon was a beautiful cat but was attached to her brother and would need to keep as a pair. That would not work for me.

The young woman encouraged me to look at other cats. I was about to give up when I noticed this small calico in a double cage by herself. She begins flirting with me. She had a "beauty mark" on her nose. The young woman said the cat was eighteen months old and would not get larger. The cat continued flirting with me, so I spoke to her and let her sniff my hand. She made multiple crackling me-wow sounds as if to say "yes" in an emotional cat way, saying she was excited and happy. I was sold.

The adventure began. She was silent all the way home in the car, not even one sound about my driving like any other companion would do. I felt this relationship might work out.

She stayed in her pet-carrier that night. She got out in the night - used her litter box, drank water and ate. Mid-morning, she crept out to complete her on-site evaluation. She needed to see if the rest of the accommodation met her approval. She also needed to see if she really needed a human around. Lucky for us both I passed her test, and she allowed me to live in the apartment. It took about three months under her direction to allow me to pet her.

She developed cat commands to inform her humans what she wanted. On the second day she became bossy and boisterous. I called her Sassy at the suggestion of a cat lover friend of mine. Sassy has trained me well. Sassy has certain sounds she uses as commands to her human to provide for her needs.

Long meows say she wants food; low-pitch meows she needs water (from the bathroom faucet); mid-pitch meows communicate she wants her litter box cleaned; and chirruping is to let you know she wants her toy "skunk" and "Mr. Bill" characters. This is the same sound she would make in season.

Sassy also insists on a window-blind raised to ease her bird watching. If I leave for more than a day, she will begin with hateful meowing sounds and snubbing actions for days on my return.

Sassy is beginning to warm up to visitors, she is very selective about whom she allows to communicate with her; she talks first. She is very snobbish for a Southern Girl. She has licked me on the nose, but is quite reluctant to show any affection except snuggling and purring. She can be quite demanding and vocal like most female companions.

Her latest activity is to fetch a small fuzzy ball. She likes you to throw it and she will retrieve it and bring it back.

We're still in training mode.



A STRANGE REUNION

from 1893 Newspaper

A citizen of Limestone County, who is buying cotton in the city, related to a reporter yesterday an interesting story of the Enoch Ardin variety.

When the flowers were blooming in the spring of 1861, a young farmer named John Holland, who resided near the Mississippi line, married Miss Lucy Brock, the daughter of a well-to-do planter in that neighborhood.

The young lady's parents bitterly opposed the match and the young people were compelled to leave home to marry. Their honeymoon was spent visiting Holland's relatives and waiting for the father of the bride to forget his anger.

In the early autumn a regiment was raised in that neighborhood and Holland was one of the first men to enlist. When it was known that her husband was among the battlefields of Virginia, Mrs. Holland's father relented and invited her to come home. She decided to accept the invitation and remain at her father's house until her husband should return from the war.

For several months the young bride heard from her husband at regular intervals, but when the spring had come again, his letters ceased and by and by news came that he was dead, killed in the battles around Richmond.

Soon after the news of Holland's death, Mr. Brock and his family moved west. They settled first on the Mississippi River, a short distance below

Memphis, but a year later they moved to western Arkansas. They left few relatives or intimate friends in Alabama and in a few years their old neighbors had forgotten them, and no one knew their address.

Holland owned a small farm near the river and when the news of his death was received his relatives took charge of the place.

About two months after the close of the war John Holland came back to his old home, to the great surprise and joy of his relatives and friends who believed him dead. He had only been severely wounded and taken prisoner, when it was reported that he was killed, and was a prisoner on Johnson's Island when the war ended.

Holland was unable to learn the whereabouts of his wife's family, and it was not long before a vague and uncertain rumor informed him that his wife was dead. He made every effort to find her or learn her fate, on receiving no news he at last believed her to be dead.

He took charge of the little farm and in a few years was making a comfortable living. Two years after his return he married the daughter of one of his neighbors and the two lived happily together for twelve years when his wife died, leaving him four children.

When the Brock family went west they left some property in Alabama and about a year ago the surviving members of the family came back to the old homestead. Among those who returned was Mrs. Holland, now Mrs. Lucy Morris, a widow of five years with three small children. She had married in Arkansas fifteen years ago and had been a widow five years. When she heard that her first husband was living she refused to believe it until Holland himself stood before her.

When the two again stood face to face, time had wrought many changes in their appearances, but the old love light beamed in the eyes of each.

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Are you ready for spring?

I heard this many times as a child. "March winds shall blow, and we shall have snow. And what will Robin do then?" Yes, we have had a snow event the first week of March not too many years ago, so better keep the coats ready to use for a few more weeks.

Do you remember the warning Julius Caesar got in 44 BC? "Beware the Ides of March." In Roman times, the full moon near the middle of the month was the Ide. It could be from the 13th to 15th, but in 44 BC, it was the 15th that Caesar was warned about. And we all know what happened that day, don't we? Caesar was murdered by a group of 23 dagger-wielding senators led by his friends Brutus and Cassius. The Roman Empire fell to pieces in the coming years.

I certainly hope your Ide of March on Saturday is a good one.

Daylight Savings time starts Sunday, March 9th, so be ready to spring forward. If you are like me, just as I get used to one time, we must change to another one.

Monday the 10th, all I want to do when it's time to get up is put my paws over my eyes.

Spring begins March 20th—my favorite time of the year when plants start blooming, days are getting longer, and one feels much better after being cooped up all winter. Just getting out for a walk can do wonders for you. Find a walking

buddy to enjoy it with. "Hike Rainbow Mountain" on March 7th.

March 28-30, "Mama Mia" is a great Broadway Theater League play with all the music of ABBA. Junior League of Huntsville's American Girl Fashion Show is March 7-8. Free community Kite Festival March 7th at John Hunt Park from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm.

St. Patrick's Day Parade March 14th 11:30 to 1:00 downtown Huntsville. The Robot Zoo at the U.S. Space and Rocket Center is March 28th.

Bunny Brunch and Egg Hunt presented by Early Works Society on March 28th. Tickets are \$12.00, seatings are 9:30 am and 11:00 am, and only 200 seats are available for each. Easter is April 20th this year.

The Deslondes with Bandios and Alan Little entertain on March 28th. Tickets are \$12.00 at the VBC playhouse.

UCP's Irish Evening is March 6th, the annual event to benefit Cerebral Palsy. Tickets are \$25.00.

These are just a few fun events going on in March, so pick out several and enjoy the time with family and friends. May the Ides favor you.



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"We Saw the Ultrasound"; A Habitat Journey inspired by Jimmy Carter

by John H. Tate



On Thursday, January 9, 2025, the world said its final goodbye to Former President Jimmy Carter. Much was said about his post-presidential life, especially his unwavering dedication to Habitat for Humanity.

Inspired by his legacy, the Irby family from Huntsville, Alabama, would like to share their own Habitat journey and express their appreciation to former President Jimmy, and First Lady Rosalynn Carter, for their lifelong dedication to Habitat for Humanity International.

May of 2016 became a very pivotal time for the Irbys. Mrs. Irby, with a comforting smile, and joy in her voice, states it this way, "We found out I was pregnant. At the time, we were living in a tiny one-bedroom apartment, barely making ends meet."

When asked what motivated them to seek out homeownership, Mrs. Irby put it simply: "We saw the ultrasound."

For the Irbys, the ultrasound was such a simple picture, yet so full of complicated and layered known and unknown challenges. The realization of the addition of a child to the family not only intensified their desire but also magnified their need for a safer, more affordable home.

Mrs. Irby explains how their tiny apartment underscored their need for change: "We dealt with rodent problems occasionally, the rent strained our budget and the neighborhood wasn't safe. Knowing we had

a baby on the way pushed us to find a better environment for our family."

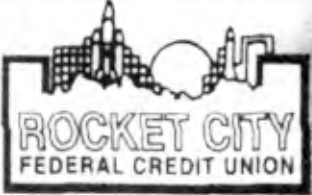
Mrs. Irby started her research, trying to find better housing options. Section-8 housing was the predominant thing that kept popping up, but it had a very long wait list. She continued her research and found the Habitat for Humanity website.

The site stated the following: "... The selection and application process for homebuyers is managed at the local level, through hundreds of locations across the U.S. In addition to meeting certain income requirements, applicants must be in need of affordable housing, willing to partner with Habitat and able to pay an affordable mortgage."

After reaching out to Habitat for Humanity of Madison County (now of the River Valley) in Huntsville, they learned that they qualified for the program. "At first, I didn't think it was something we could do," Mrs. Irby said, " but with hope and determination, we took the leap of faith."

Solomon and Sasha Irby applied to the local Habitat for Humanity chapter in September 2016. However, their application process was interrupted by the birth of their son, James, (the subject of the ultrasound), and the need for Mrs. Irby to complete her Bachelor's degree.

In March of 2018, when James was one year old, the Irbys applied again and were accepted into the program. They started their First-time Homebuyer Classes, a program requirement, around July/August 2018.



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Through the Habitat process, the Irbys found more than just a home; they also discovered the joy of giving back. "Habitat introduced us to volunteering with other community organizations," Sasha states, "It's something we hadn't considered before, but now it's a core part of who we are as a family."

One could imagine the smile on President Carter's face upon hearing how a Habitat homeowner was inspired to be more involved in their community.

After completing the program requirements, the family was allowed to select a lot on which their new home would be built; and in a neighborhood that exceeded their expectations. Solomon recalls, "I was worried it might be in an area we didn't want, but when they showed us the site, we were thrilled."

With an obvious uptick of excitement in her voice, Sasha

continued with her story. "In November 2019, we were able to select our lot and Habitat began building our home in February 2020; right after the start of the pandemic."

The COVID-19 pandemic brought many things in the country to a complete halt. However, the Irbys stated that Jeremy Foulks, the Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity of the River Valley, informed them that they would continue with the program, under certain precautions and safety guidelines.

Sasha reflects on that time: "It was challenging but exciting. We worked hard, with family helping us meet our required volunteer hours. I was still breastfeeding James and had never left him alone before, but we made it work."

By the end of the year, the Irbys moved into their new home, a testament to faith, per-

severance, and the support of countless volunteers.

Solomon and Sasha shared these heartfelt words in memory of Jimmy Carter: "We wouldn't be in our home without the dedication of Habitat for Humanity and its volunteers. President Jimmy Carter and his wife, Rosalynn, lived out the mission of Habitat: putting God's love into action. Their legacy inspires us to serve others with love, just as they did."

To little James Irby, you can take credit for your home, after all your mom said, "We saw the ultrasound!"

It is fitting that we end with one of Jimmy Carter's famous sayings: "My faith demands - this is not optional - my faith demands that I do whatever I can, wherever I can, whenever I can, for as long as I can with whatever I have to try to make a difference."

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Lives of Small Creatures

by Dawn Agnos

A researcher once shared a fascinating story with me. While discussing a project with a colleague, he noticed a trail of giant insects traversing the wall from one side to the other. Intrigued and a little unsettled, he asked, "Don't these insects bother you?"

The scientist glanced at the trail, observing it with calm detachment. "No," he replied, "they're just passing through." He explained that the insects were simply traveling from one side of the house to the other before exiting.

His matter-of-fact response sparked a thought in the researcher about the concept of cohabitation—a way of life deeply understood by those who live in forests and jungles, where humans and nature coexist.

This story resonated with me and inspired me to reconsider my own relationship with the creatures I share my space with. Before hearing it, I had tried various methods to remove sugar ants from my tea cabinet, where the honey is stored. But after reflecting on cohabitation, I decided to let them be.

Now, each day when I open the cabinet, I greet the ants. Sometimes

there are many, sometimes just a few, and occasionally, none at all. Interestingly, they never venture into other food cabinets or even into the honey, even when I leave the lid slightly open. Their behavior has a kind of quiet respectfulness that fascinates me.

Last month, black ants began gathering on our patio, moving from plant to plant, busy with their mysterious work. They never bit anyone, nor did they enter the house. One afternoon, I sat with them, simply observing.

To my astonishment, I noticed something remarkable. Scattered among the ants were the bodies of their fallen companions. The ants were carefully scouting the dead, picking them up, and carrying them to a makeshift memorial—a lined row of their departed, placed off to the side where no one would step on them. It was an astonishing display of respect and community.

That moment deepened my respect for these often-overlooked creatures. Ants, like all living beings, carry out their lives with purpose and grace, even in a world that largely disregards them.

We are all only here for a time, sharing this planet with countless other beings. To understand the creatures around us is to better understand what it means to live harmoniously. Cohabitation challenges the conditioning that teaches us to fear or dominate nature, offering instead a path of reunification with the world we inhabit.

I'm not suggesting we invite vipers into our homes, but perhaps the next time an unexpected visitor enters your space—whether it's an ant, a spider, or a bird—pause for a moment. Remember that your home is situated within a much larger home, one that belongs to all of us. There's almost always a peaceful, nonviolent way to coexist.



Thank You!!

This is just a special **THANK YOU** to our readers, advertisers and writers who are keeping Old Huntsville going strong!

When our readers pay \$2 for an issue, we are able to continue this.

It's been 35 years now, full of great stories and memories.

There are just a few of us who are putting this magazine together and we love doing this.

Keep sending in your family memories - we need them!

We Appreciate You more than you know.



It Happened in Huntsville

by Nell Rutledge Porter
(written in 1994)

I remember April 14, 1945 as if it were yesterday. My husband and I were resting a bit and two men came up the walk to our home. One was our pastor and the other was our district superintendent. Soon we were entertaining them as best we could. We soon found out their business.

The superintendent said, "I hear that you are leaving the Alabama district," and my husband said that yes, we were. "I have been called to preach and we've bought some acreage from my grandfather's place up in Tennessee. We hope to start a church up there." The superintendent said, "Well, you will find it tough, with your family, and you have a limited education, and it's not at all easy to begin a new work."

With tears in his eyes my husband said, "Yes, all you say is true. But God has called me and I'm going." The guests prepared to leave, and the superintendent said, "I will never discourage you again, but we will be praying for you."

About supper time, I began having labor pains. My husband ran to the phone, but it was silent. We had forgotten that the service had been cut off in order to honor President

Roosevelt, whose body was being taken from Warm Springs, Georgia to the capital in Washington, DC.

I said, "You'll have to walk, but please hurry." As he stepped out the door, a crowd of people were running up the street. He yelled at them to find out what was the matter, and they told him that the cotton warehouse was burning down.

I knew it would take him a long time to get to the doctor's office trying to avoid the crowd and the fire. I began to walk and walked for what seemed like forever.

We lived on Miller Street, by Dunnivant's corner. My first cousin Mildred Hickson assisted in the birth of our little daughter whom we named Margaret.

It seemed like so many eventful things happened in just one day. I wonder how many folks remember the time in '45, when the cotton warehouse burned down here in Huntsville?

I can't remember the name of that superintendent but I sure wish he had been more of an encouragement that day.

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"Kids today don't know how easy they have it. When I was young I had to walk nine feet through shag carpet just to change the TV channel."

Diane Owens, Baby Boomer

Heard On the Street

by **Cathey Carney**



I made it a little easier on our readers this time, I hid the little cat face on page 19 in the February issue - it's on the Intersouth ad on the right - see it now? My cat Pumpkin was very happy to be the model. Our very first caller with the correct ID was **Ray Coffey** of Round Rock, TX who has gotten a subscription for years and now adds on a free year. When you subscribe those issues go out about a week earlier than the distributed copies. Ray was born in Cullman and has a sweet sister in Huntsville that he stays in touch with. Congratulations to you Ray!

We wanted to be sure and wish a Happy Happy Birthday to **Joyce Richardson** of Athens. On Feb. 24th Joyce turned 96 and celebrated with a party in her honor with family and friends. She reads OHM each month and from what I hear, she parties like a teenager! Sending love to you.

I am right-handed like many of you, and recently hurt my right thumb to where I couldn't use it and it was bandaged up. This meant I could not use my thumb, at all. Now it doesn't sound bad right? It was a real dilemma. Try this - without using your thumb, try to do anything with your right

hand. Brush teeth, brush hair, hold a coffee cup, turn the key in your car - the list goes on and on. It was a real eye-opener for me so I had to try to do most activities with my left hand. Which led me to this conclusion - we need to train both hands to do everyday tasks! Even typing, like I'm doing now writing this column, requires my right thumb for the space bar. Well I learned how to use the left thumb for the space bar and it was slower but doable.

I read years ago that a research article explained that people who purposely used their non-dominant hand to do everyday tasks actually increased their brain activity - like learning something new. It was fun for them but for me it was a necessity! Something to try for you!

Rosemary Leatherwood of Ole Dad's BBQ in Hazel Green wants to wish her sweet dad a Happy Heavenly Birthday on March 10th. "I miss and love you!" She goes on to say, "I want to let everyone know how blessed we are at Ole Dad's to have a great community family and customers that we call friends that have supported us for almost 30 years."

"We couldn't have done it without my wonderful family so I want to thank **Jamie, Billy, Missy Lynn and Brew** for all your hard work. You guys are my heart and soul. **Bill** I know you are looking down from Heaven saying I knew

my family would keep my dream alive."

Susan Coulter is that beautiful lady you see at Truist Bank on Church Street - she's been working there in Customer Service for years and so many of her customers love her. March is big for her family's birthdays and they are **Ashley Ragsdale Santos** - a March 13th birthday; **Judson T. Clark** with a March 11 birthday; **Jack Santos** (Ashley is his mom) his birthday is March 19; and **David Santos**. Happy March partying to the family!

One of our readers has a question that some of you may know about. **Joe Balch** lives off River-ton Road and Winchester Road. There is a bridge support made of rock on the right side of the new bridge and an old water wheel on the left side of the bridge, made of rock. He wonders what the history of this is, and if anyone knows of this old water wheel. If you do please send an email to us at oldhuntsville@gmail.com and we will let everyone (and Joe) the answer to this!

A special hello to our friend and long time subscriber **Cynthia Brown** of Athens. She wrote us recently that it's hard to believe Old Huntsville magazine is going on 36 years of continuous printing. We don't believe it either - I was a youngster of 41 when Tom and I started this and now I've got white hair. What happened??

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Old Town Historic District lost one of its favorite Master Gardeners on January 20th. **Tom Simpson** would have been 70 in early March. He is survived by a loving partner of 31 years, **Daniel McKitrick**, where together they built a life in Huntsville, AL. Tom is also survived by two sons **Joseph (fiance Esther) Traylor** and **Clayton (Faith) Traylor**.

Tom had many jobs over the course of his life, which somehow always involved building or planting. Tom was the third in line of 6 siblings: **Judith Ann (Ted) Northway** - Florida; **Susan Jean Nolan** and partner **Pama Lyons** - Alabama; **James William (Cindi) Simpson** (Illinois); **Patrick Andrew (Trish) Simpson** (Illinois); **Rosemary Kathryn (Patrick) Fleming** - Illinois. Tom has 3 grandchildren, 12 nieces and nephews, 14 great nieces and nephews and too many friends to count.

His adoptive family from Dan are 3 brothers: **Donald Lee (Erin) McKitrick** - West Virginia, **David Alan McKitrick** - Florida, **Robert Alan (Lisa) McKitrick** - West Virginia. Tom had 8 nieces and nephews and 8 great nieces and nephews, from Dan's family.

Tom had a passion for living, which he shared with everyone he met. He was a wonderful carpenter and a Master Gardener. He belonged to The Old Town Historic District Association and Master Gardeners of Northern Alabama. The gardens he worked on are beautiful, he was a talented and feisty man who loved his family dearly.

This month we have hidden a super tiny **Salt shaker**, to encourage you to starting cooking again. IF you find it, be the first to call me and you win a full year's subscription to OHM!

Special hello to our reader **Carl Keeton, Jr.** of Tullahoma, TN another long time subscriber. So many love the history of this area even if they don't live here!

Huntsville Police Department is made of some of the best officers you'll find anywhere. We are so proud of them and very grateful that they keep us safe. Recently **South Precinct Capt. Chris Riley** was on local TV Channel 19 hosting Coffee with the Captain. Chris is the son of mama **Pat Riley** and dad **Clyde Riley** of south Huntsville. Our police put their lives on the line every day they go to work so we just want to say Thank You.

The **Missile Defense Agency** located at Redstone Arsenal brought its workforce together Jan. 7 to mark its 23rd birthday. The official date is Jan. 2, but the MDA director waited to celebrate it until after the holiday leave period.

"We've got a long heritage, a long history that we have got to be so stinking proud of

dating back to 23 years ago," MDA Director Air Force **Lt. Gen. Heath Collins** said at the birthday celebration. "When you think about it, prior to 2002, missile defense was not focused. We didn't have any ballistic missile defense capability protecting our nation or our troops, and it was really scattered in a lot of different places around the department, around the services."

Although missile defense history goes back some 80 years, a direct line can be traced from the 40th president to MDA.

On March 23, 1983, **President Ronald Reagan** gave a historic speech about a plan he said held "the promise of changing the course of human history." (excerpted from Redstone Rocket, Jan. 15, 2025 edition). Congratulations to all the workforce at Missile Defense Agency and you've had quite a history. There is more information about MDA's history that our readers will find very informative - look for archived issues online of the Redstone Rocket.

Everyone is trying to eat a little better and save money at the same time. If you buy more fresh vegetables and fruit at the grocery store, rather than frozen meals and fast foods, you will find you are spending less money. I know many are looking forward to the farmers markets opening up again and providing good local food. We help our local farmers at the same time.

Finally, a huge Thank You to our postal workers and delivery people - FEDEX, USPS, Amazon - for bringing packages and mail to our front doors. It's not an easy job especially during bad weather and online ordering is increasing. We want you to know that we appreciate you.

I know we're all looking forward to warm spring weather!

Mr. Bill Graviett owner of Harmony Sound

April 1942 - January 2025



There are some people you wish would live forever. Mr. Bill Graviett was one of those. This musician opened his music store, Harmony Sound, 30 years

ago and it was the place to go in and visit. He told the best stories and made you feel good just by talking with him. He did not have a mean bone in his body. He helped so many younger musicians who will never forget him. Many local musicians got together in his store to just play music.

Bill was born in Harvest, AL and was 81 when he passed away. He graduated from Sparkman High School and owned his electronic office equipment shop before opening up Harmony Sound. in Five Points. He loved playing guitar and harmonica and got together with friends to do that.

Bill leaves behind to cherish and celebrate his legacy; son, Billy Wayne Graviett (Heather); four grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

I think he's playing harmonica right now for a very good audience up there.



Foods for Your Moods

Foods can definitely affect your moods. Skip most of the refined sugar and try some of these healthy menu suggestions.

Strawberry Egnog

- 1 c. orange juice
- 1 c. halved strawberries
- 1 T. lemon juice
- 1 egg
- 1 t. honey
- 4 ice cubes

Place all ingredients in a blender, process on medium, then high speed til smooth and frothy. Serve in tall glasses and garnish with whole strawberries.

Cottage Cheese Fruit Salad

- 3 red apples
- 1 small pear
- 1 c. cottage cheese
- 2 T. chopped dates
- 2 T. chopped walnuts
- Lemon juice

Core & chop one of the of the apples and the pear, combine them with the cottage cheese, dates and nuts. Cut remaining apples into eight wedges each, sprinkle with lemon juice. Arrange four apple wedges in a circle on each serving plate, and place a portion of the cottage cheese mixture in the center. Garnish with mint sprigs.

Original Orange Pie

Line a 9" pie plate with pastry; flute edges. Partially bake pie shell in 400 F. oven 5 minutes.

BEAT: 3 egg yolks

ADD: 1/4 c. cream

BLEND: 1 c. sugar

2 t. flour

1 T. butter

ADD: the egg yolk mixture, beat well

MIX IN: 1 T. grated orange rind

1/3 c. fresh orange juice

Pour into partially baked pie shell. Bake in 325 F. oven 40 minutes; or until custard doesn't

wiggle in the middle. Cool. Cover pie with meringue made with whites of the three eggs. Bake in 300 F. oven 15 to 20 minutes or until top is light brown. Cool and serve.

Avocados Eldorado

- 2 large avocados
- 1 lime, squeezed
- 1/2 cantaloupe or melon of your choice
- 3/4 c. seedless green grapes
- Honey

Cut the avocados in half lengthwise and remove pit. Sprinkle cut halves with some lime juice to prevent discoloring. Using a melon bailer, cut out a dozen small balls from the melon half. Place a mixture of melon balls and grapes in the avocado halves. Sprinkle with lime juice and drizzle with a little honey.

Greek Vegetable Salad

- 1 c. sliced green beans
- 4 c. shredded cabbage

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- 1/3 c. crumbled feta cheese
- 3 T. olive oil
- 1 T. vinegar
- 1/2 t. dried thyme

Steam the green beans til crisp-tender, shock in ice water and drain. Combine the cabbage and feta in a serving bowl. For the dressing, mix the oil, vinegar and thyme in a small bowl. Add green beans to the cabbage mixture, toss with the dressing and serve.

Chili Bean Dip

- 1 large ripe tomato, chopped
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 fresh hot pepper, halved
- 2 garlic cloves
- 2 T. tamari sauce
- 4 t. chili powder
- 2 t. ground cumin
- 2 c. cooked kidney beans

Place all ingredients, except for the beans, in a blender and process on medium til smooth. Add 1 cup of the beans and process til blended.

Add remaining beans and repeat. Serve dip with natural corn chips or corn tacos.

Garlic Bean Salad

- 2 c. cooked navy, garbanzo, kidney or pinto beans
- 1 stalk celery, finely chopped
- 3 scallions, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves
- 3 T. minced fresh parsley
- 2 T. lemon juice
- 1 t. dijon-style mustard

Combine beans, celery and scallion in a serving bowl. Put the garlic through a garlic press (or use the prepared minced garlic, 1 teaspoon) and add it to the serving bowl along with the parsley.

In a small jar combine oil, lemon juice and mustard. Shake and pour over the salad. Toss to combine and chill before serving.

For extra spicy, sprinkle on a bit of ground cayenne pepper.

Pineapple Ambrosia

- 1/2 ripe pineapple
- 1/4 c. chopped walnuts
- 1/4 c. sour cream

Peel, core and cube the pineapple half, drain. In a serving dish, toss with the chopped walnuts and sour cream. Add a dash of cardamom, if desired, and serve immediately.

Whipped Dessert Topping

- 1 c. ricotta cheese
- 1 T. honey
- 1/2 t. vanilla extract

Place ricotta in a blender with the honey and vanilla, process on low speed til the mixture is smooth and has the consistency of heavy whipped cream. Chill. If too thick, add a few teaspoons of milk.

Peanut Butter Lover's Nightcap

- 1 T. peanut butter, smooth
- 1-1/2 t. honey
- 1 c. milk
- 1/2 t. vanilla extract

Place peanut butter and honey in small saucepan with a

few spoonfuls of the milk. Stir over low heat til smooth. Add remaining milk and vanilla, stir over low to medium heat til just hot.

Pour through a sieve into a cup and serve immediately. Different and surprisingly comforting before bedtime!

Hot Kettle Popcorn

- 1/4 c. coconut oil
- 1/2 c. popcorn kernels
- 1/8 c. granulated sugar
- 3/4 t. fine-grained sea salt

Add the coconut oil to a 5-quart pot along with 3 popcorn kernels. Cover and heat over medium heat.

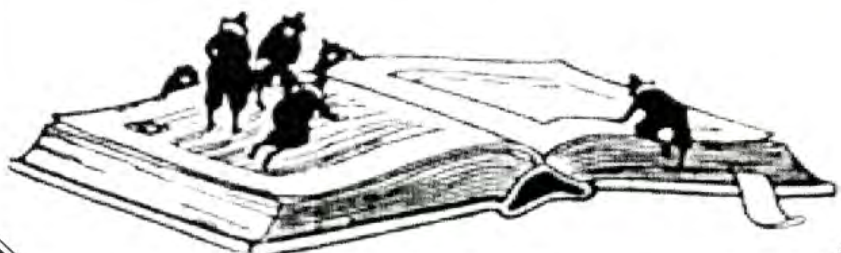
Once the 3 kernels pop, lift the lid and add the rest of the popcorn and evenly spread the sugar around the bottom of the pan. Cover the pan and let the popcorn start to pop.

While the popcorn is popping, carefully shake the pot. This helps distribute the sugar and kernels evenly in the pan.

Pull the pan off the heat when the popping begins to slow down. Don't wait for the popping to stop, or you'll have burnt kettle corn.

OUR ADVERTISERS KEEP "OLD HUNTSVILLE" GOING

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magazine!*



NOSTALGIA (THE OLD) AND SPRING (THE NEW)

*by Iolanda Hicks with
Melissa Green*

An old ad from the January 2025 Old Huntsville issue and a caption prompted this bit of nostalgic memories from the past. This memory goes back at least 50 plus years. I will comment on that ad later. My sister, Melissa, had pointed out the ad to me after reading several of the stories in the January issue. She had called to tell me that she really felt all kinds of emotions from those stories and said that this issue's stories were written with feeling and special meaning. The stories actually moved her to tears, sympathy and laughter. Maybe it's the beginning of a different "flavor" of the year: all these stories are working toward making each of us more empathetic towards others! The February issue has to be just as good!

Melissa had noticed an old ad on page 31 of the January 2025 issue that brought back a few memories for her. There was an advertisement of the Gold Rush Lounge, which at that time was located at The Mall in the 80s, not the Parkway Shopping Center as a caption noted.

According to which generation you belong to, the different shopping areas in Huntsville were referred to by different names over the years. Parkway Shopping Center was called just that, when it was built as a strip mall in the early 60s. Hutchens Hardware Store was on the south end, a very small space was allocated for Redstone Federal Credit Union and Peggy Ann Bakery on the back side. That was the side facing the L & N train tracks.

There was a grocery store, early on and a Murphys 5 & 10 on the North end of the strip. Montgomery Wards was a separate building located on that end too. I remember working in the hat and candy departments. The front parking lot was huge for that entire strip!

Going a little forward in time, another shopping area, The Mall, often referred to as the Loveman's or Blue Mall was a few miles north on Memorial Parkway from the Parkway Shopping Center. J. C. Penney's was an anchor store on the north end with Loveman's Department Store on the south-end. The huge fountain that now stands outside

in the weather between Home Depot and Costco off North Parkway was once a mid-point inside The Mall. That special fountain collected the wishes of passer-bys and those wishes were attached to coins, thrown into the fountain.

I can remember when a troupe of Star Wars folks came to The Mall around the 1980-81 time frame, promoting the Star Wars movies. "The Empire Strikes Back" was coming to theaters around that time. My son Jason applied for a part as a Jawa and got it. He was so excited! The troupe needed a group to pretend to be Jawa (picked from local children) to act along with the troupe's "Darth Vader". The troupe's main job was to travel throughout the U. S. promoting the Star Wars Saga and the upcoming episodes. Jason was an exceptional Jawa and played his part to perfection! Of course, the following Halloween, my son had to be a Jawa and I was charged with making an authentic Jawa costume. It turned out pretty good if I say so myself!

There was one other major shopping area named the Madison Square Mall which had 2 floors. Today Mid-City stands where that fantastic shopping area once

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stood. I remember all the great shops such as Sears, a bigger J. C. Penney's, our local Pizitz Department Store, a Castner-Knott Department Store, an arcade close to the food court upstairs, and of course all the other yummy food places here and there! That Mall has been gone for a good while but the memory remains.

Now back to that mention of an ad for the old Gold Rush Lounge. The lounge eventually relocated, changed its name to Lenae's Place and has a home at 2011 Cox Avenue. It has become a gathering place where folks have hung out over the years, with gold fish races and a chilli cook-off once a year.

Aww... it's Spring Time! Out with the old and in with the new! Myths and beliefs come with the appearance of spring. Greek mythology tells a story of Demeter who was the Greek goddess of agriculture and fertility. Her daughter Persephone was kidnapped by Hades, the god of the underworld. Demeter threatened famine to the earth if her daughter was not returned so an agreement was made with Hades. He agreed that Persephone would return to the above world to her Mother for 6 months out of each year. During those six months, the earth would enjoy spring, with growing plants and an introduction to the summer months. On Persephone's return to the underworld, the cycle of the seasons ended with summer and began with fall, followed by winter.

The ancient Egyptians had beliefs of springtime. The story of Osiris is an Egyptian myth that represents the creation of spring. Osiris was killed by his brother Seth (Set). Seth was motivated by jealousy and the power his brother, Osiris, wielded as king of Egypt. Osiris was respected and loved by the people but Seth wanted to become king. This myth has much more to it, but in short, Osiris's wife Isis, resurrected her husband. This rebirth represented an eternal cycle and became a symbol of the regeneration of the land, springtime.

Our Native Americans also had their own beliefs of the origination of springtime. The tribe of the Lakota Sioux believed in the Great Spirit or the "Wakan Tanka" that was connected to all living

things. All tribal calendars begin in the spring which "symbolizes the start of a new year through the birth of new plant and animal life". The Indian name for Spring is Wetu. Wetu has 3 moons that represent the months of Spring. The translated names of these 3 moons are as follows: Moon When Ducks Come Back, Moon Of Making Fat and Moon When the Leaves are Green. Then we have the Hopi Indian Tribe. They believe in the Katsinam, who are spiritual beings that connect with life-giving rains promising growth and the "interconnectiveness of life".

As we have read, it is a known fact that Native Americans have historically shown their respect and gratitude, through their beliefs, for this land, this earth that so many of us take for granted.

Springtime is the symbol of new beginnings, hope and renewal. There are so many stories and beliefs attached to this season. To write about each belief, myth or story would probably be enough for a small book. Enjoy this spring with the beautiful colors, the return of our birds, butterflies and all the beautiful greenery.

While writing this article for March, I came across something translated to English that was spoken by one of our Native Americans, Sitting Bull. Yes, this is the same warrior, who with Crazy Horse, defeated General Custer at The Battle of the Little Bighorn in 1876. I too was surprised at the thoughtful words from such a fearsome warrior, and have only included the first sentence since the original was rather long: "Behold, the Spring has come; the earth has received the embraces of the sun, and we shall soon see the results of that love!"

Happy Spring!!

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The Toledo Torch

by M. D. Smith IV



You may not remember that name, but I bet you remember the product. When I was growing up, they were ubiquitous around any type of road construction site from the late 30s through the 60s. The burning flames warned motorists at night (and day) of construction on curbs and roads and to avoid the area. Some of the roadside “torches” with a wick and filled with kerosene for fuel were made by other companies, but the lion’s share of the market was owned by The Toledo Pressed Steel Company of Toledo, Ohio. They got a patent for their specific design in 1929 and, with a head start, outsold all the other competition combined across the United States. Toledo Steel made over ten million of them. They sold retail for \$1.50 each or \$15.00 a dozen (\$1.25 each).

The nearly round, heavy steel containers were flat on the bottom to prevent them from rolling or tipping over. Later versions, and the ones most people remember, had removable steel tops with oval vent holes for combustion, but like the Zippo lighter, they were “wind-proof.” There was almost no way to blow a later model out. The usual way was to snuff out the flame with an attached steel cup, but the light-

weight chain often broke, and workers learned any type of tin can or cup would smother the flame when you wanted it out. Otherwise, they burned all night and day regardless of wind or rain.

A filling of kerosene for fuel was good for nearly two days, depending on how high the wick extended and how large the yellow flame licked out of the shielded top. You’d unscrew the wind shield cover, then pull on the metal wick assembly to expose a two-and-a-half-inch hole to fuel the steel container. Then, reassemble and ignite with a flame, and it would burn for a long time.

Railroads also bought a significant number of the Toledo Torches for use around the switching yards for hazards to workers and trains that were hard to see at night.

Here’s the text of an interesting newspaper article from The Poughkeepsie Eagle-News, Thursday, March 22, 1934.

“Alarmed over the increasing accidents on the highways at night involving trucks, Assemblyman Fite introduced to the Legislature yesterday, a bill that would require trucks to carry kerosene torches to be lighted as warning signals when necessary to stop on the road. This bill is a substitute for a measure which Mr. Fite introduced recently, which would require the carrying of flares. The assemblyman said he realized that flares would only burn 15 minutes, whereas the kerosene torches will burn for 15 hours or more. (Actually, 36 hours with wick low). The torches referred to in the bill are the type used by contractors for lighting the area around dangerous excavations or barriers. They are strong and unaffected by wind or rain.”

Add many of the truckers in the U.S. at that time, carrying several of them for breakdowns and emergency repair, which helped sales to no small extent.

(From The Ithaca Journal, Sat, Nov. 23, 1940)

“A double row of smoking kerosene torches

**“You can tell it’s going to be a bad day
when your car horn goes off
accidentally and remains stuck as you
follow a group of Hell’s Angels
down the highway.”**

Joe Jamison - Woodville

lined the way, borrowed from the equipment of the Hook and Ladder Company, lighted the way from the sprawling gateway of the fairgrounds to the central octagonal building where the dance was to be held."

"We'll be in a nice pickle if we have a fire during the doings and need them torches," said Foreman Ike Johnson of the Hook and Ladders.

As you can see, the Toledo Torches were used for many purposes for over forty years until they were gradually replaced by other roadside lighting devices and reflectors. It was not uncommon for people to use them outdoors for garden parties, as well as the standard old kerosene lanterns with a glass globe and long handles that could be hung on nails, branches, and other supports.

These "torches" had another use discovered early in their usage, as reported in

The El Paso Herald-Post, Tuesday, Jul. 20, 1937:

"I want to urge Garden Club members and their friends to fight the bugs with kerosene torches, the only effective method of destroying them," Mrs. Piatt said. She said she saw bugs "by millions," in the larvae stage. They hatch under the vacant lot weeds near her home.

No doubt it was a bug repellent, as most smoky flames were, but it is doubtful that it killed many bugs. They merely avoided the area.

Smaller hand-held lanterns and torches were used extensively for cave exploring as written here in The Republic (Columbus, Indiana) Thursday, February 17, 1938:

"Instead of trusting to a lantern's feeble light to guide them in their cave exploration, they rigged up two crude kerosene torches—one for each—with these, a canteen of water, a sack of grub and a can of kerosene to replenish the torches, they went down the rope ladder and spent three days and nights under-




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ground, exploring more and more chambers and passages, until their diminishing food and oil supply warned them that it was time for the to take the back tract. By this time, they had explored miles of subterranean passages and grottoes of marvelous beauty."

Yet another use in the early years was in sheep ranching. From Des Moines Register (May 8, 1932) "Coyotes Get Lambs."

"Every year, coyotes get off with many lambs from flock masters. Even if lambs only brought \$2 each, the price of ten of them buys a lot of grub. Now you can nearly eliminate the loss by using Toledo Torches at a cost of only \$1.50 each.

Made of indestructible pressed steel designed so they can't blow out, rain out, and can't tip over. They burn for 36 hours with one filling. If a Toledo Torch saves just one lamb, they've more than paid for themselves, and all the others saved for years to come are just pure velvet."

Any place away from electricity needing light at night in the early part of the nineteenth century. People often used some type of kerosene torch or lantern.

A last and more modern use, based on what my father did back in the sixties, I bought one of these Toledo Torches from eBay (\$40) and got a five-foot length of stovepipe that fit the torch perfectly—then painted the entire assembly red, along with a red 5-gallon paint bucket filled with sand. Wedge the bottom pipe into the sand, drip some candle wax at the top, and set it outside for a Giant Christmas Candle decoration with a live flame. A spotlight on the entire outfit helps at night. People slowed down to stare at what looked like a real red candle in the wind on my front lawn.

They are still around today, and the Toledo Torch brand can be bought on eBay for as low as \$20 in poor but working condition to \$50 in nearly new condition.

"The spinal column is a long bunch of bones. The head sits at the top and you sit on the bottom."

Seen on 4th grade science test



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MAN HIDES IN WELL FOR NINE YEARS

from 1893 Newspaper

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

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

He escaped from jail after he was sent there on a murder charge 10 year sago.

Owens lived at the bottom of a deep dry well on his farm all the time the law was searching for him. He fixed the well into comfortable living quarters and was never in danger.

He remained there day-times and came out at night to be with his wife and children.

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

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

Unfortunately, for Owens, he became careless and officers

came upon him so suddenly that he was caught in the act of getting into his home away from home.

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

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

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

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

For the last three years he has spent much time on the surface, even to the extent of helping with the work around the place. In the warmer seasons he did much work to help his wife and children with digging and gardening so that they all had enough food to last through the cold months.

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

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



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Such effort has been amply rewarded. For through this organization, the motor car which is contributing in so large a measure toward making life easier, pleasanter and more worth while has been made available to millions.

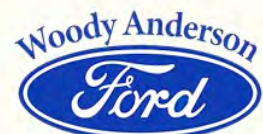
The Ford Motor Company views its situation today less with pride in great achievement than with sincere and sober realization of new and larger opportunities for service to mankind.

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THE MARSHALL COUNTY MALL

by David Kirby

The Marshall County Mall in the 70s, Albertville was just a small town. The stores that lines the few blocks of the down town shopping area was only about 3 blocks on Main Street and about the same on South Broad Street. Most of the stores were owned by local merchants. I remember a few of them like Isbell's Hardware, Hammers, Dendy's, Elmore's 5&10. There were many more. Most I can't remember anymore.

Out on Baltimore Avenue there was a shopping center. Here there was Howard Brothers and McCoy's. Conway street ran to the left side of this shopping center and on the left side of Conway was the Martin Theater. On the other side of Baltimore Avenue was a couple of popular business. One

of them was called the Key Korner where you could get burgers and shakes. The Key Korner had two walk-up windows where they took your order and before too long you had some good food that made your tongue slap you brains out. My sister-in-law Vanessa worked there as a teenager.

In the 70s news went through the town that there was going to be a Mall coming to Marshall County. I remember hearing about this, but I didn't know what

a "mall" was. I asked one of my brothers what a mall was, and he explained it to me by saying it's a big shopping center that has many stores in it and they are all in one big building. He said you can get anything you want at a mall.

To an 11 year old boy, this sounded amazing to me. I could only imagine the things this mall would have.

Finally, we found out they were gonna build this mall right down the highway from Janet Street. This place would be less than 1/2 mile from my house. I couldn't wait until it was completed. In those days my brothers and I had hors-

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es. We would ride through the woods, across the creek and come up behind the construction sight for the mall and watch them build. We even rode our horses inside the building one weekend. There weren't any windows or doors in the walls yet, so we just rode those horses right in and took a tour of the building.

Finally, the opening day came. People lined up down Hwy. 431 to get into the parking lot. This parking lot was the biggest paved parking lot I had ever seen and it was packed. I'm guessing the size of that parking lot was about 10 acres. One of the new stores that was the biggest store in the mall was, "Grants." Grants was a department store.

When we finally got to go, I headed straight for the toy department. I had never seen so many different toys in my life. Howard Brothers had a small area in their store for the toy section, and McCoy's was even smaller, but this place had aisle after aisle of toys for all ages. There was one long aisle of model cars, trucks, airplanes and battleships lined up on both sides of the aisle.

Then there was the BB gun section. This is where I saw an air rifle for the first time. I dreamed of getting an air rifle.

By the time the mall had its grand opening, it was only a few weeks until my 12th birthday. There was this one air rifle I knew I had to have. It was a Crosman pellet and BB, air power rifle. Pump it ten times and it was as powerful as a 22 rifle! At least that's what the salesmen said. I made sure Mom and Dad knew about that air gun.

When we went to the mall, I would drag them over to the BB gun section and show it to them. I'd talk about it at supper and was sure to always remind them that my birthday was coming up. Finally, July 20th rolled around, and sure enough, Mom and Dad bought me that air rifle. It had a reservoir for BB's and it also shot lead pellets. This gun was as long as my Dad's 22 rifle and I could shoot through the middle of the "O," in the word Coca Cola on a coke can from a 100 yards away.

By fall that year some of my friends got one too and we would squirrel hunt every day after school. We would use the pellets for squirrel hunting. Of course Dad gave me the speech about not shooting anyone or shooting windows, or his pigs. But we had plenty of targets to shoot at, and we always found enough money from somewhere to keep us supplied in BB's and pellets.

My friends and I spent many a summer day walking up and down Turkey creek hoping to see an ole water moccasin snake and see if we could shoot its eye out.

It's funny now as I sit here writing this story, I can't even remember what happened to that Crosman pellet air powered rifle.

Dutch people believe that cats can spread gossip around town and are careful not to discuss anything delicate in front of them.

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SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT, PART 1

by David Bowser



On January 24, 1871, a baby boy was born in Huntsville, Alabama. His ancestors were intelligent, hard working, gritty people of Scottish origin who were successful in America as doctors and professional people.

Later in life this Huntsvillian became a leading industrialist heading up a major American company who gave freely of his time and resources. His list of friends and associates read like a directory of America's Who's Who, that included the heads of higher education and financial institutions.

In Huntsville, AL he bought land on the eastern boundary of Maple Hill Cemetery and gave it to Maple Hill. He had built the main road going into Maple Hill and built the entrance walls there in honor of his mother. He

also invested over \$10,000.00 in a new hotel being built in his home town of Huntsville, AL.

Later in life he settled in South Bend, Ind. with that becoming his newly adopted city and for them he built an 18 hole golf course along with 16 acres for a public park. This he gave to South Bend. Also, he was on several civic boards.

As President of a large American company, he started a paid vacation plan, a pension plan and in just a few short years raised his employees wages nearly 300% and in general improved working conditions.

Meanwhile, in Huntsville,

some leading citizens were making plans for a grand hotel for our city, but started having a little trouble attracting investors in their venture, the Huntsville Hotel Co. Someone in the newly formed company remembered a local boy who had done quite well for himself and decided to give this native Huntsvillian a call and ask if he would be willing to financially join them in their venture.

This call went to Albert Russel Erskine, then of South Bend, Indiana. He said he would if they named the hotel after him, The Russel Erskine Hotel. They agreed and he agreed.

At this time Russel Ers-



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Erskine was the President of the Studebaker Corp., the car manufacturer. Mr. Erskine first bought 100 shares of their stock at \$100.00 a share equaling \$10,000.00. The stock certificates I found in his name are dated May 1, 1928. There are stock certificates for 50 more shares dated June 21, 1929. All are paid in full.

This is where a point of contention has risen. This is where I want to set the record straight. The intent of this article is to present to the good people of this area the truth about Mr. Erskine's dealings with the Huntsville Hotel Co., aka The Russel Erskine Hotel. If I've made any mistakes in this article they are unintentional and means I goofed up. Simple as that.

For several decades now very unkind things have been said and written about Mr. Erskine's dealings with the Huntsville Hotel Company. Things like: he promised to buy hotel stock but didn't. He attended the hotel's grand opening, was wined and dined but left Huntsville without leaving any money behind.

Or how about this one. He paid only \$500.00 toward the stock. It's easy to pass along gossip, or to present in writing some juicy tidbit without checking for facts. It's easier to repeat than to research.

Through my research on Mr. Erskine, my opinion was that these un-kind things were out of character for him. This is where I decided to research this point to find the truth, whatever it might be.

Here are some of my sources of my information. The Erskine Grandchildren, Randy and Judy Erskine, with Judy being the family historian and Susan Erskine Whitmore and husband. Judy has sent me tons of pictures and info. Richard Quinn, a leading authority of all things Studebaker, and most of the pictures used were provided by him.

The archives department of Huntsville library. The archives department of the U.A.H. library, and on top of that I've played Mr. Erskine for several years at the Maple Hill Cemetery stroll and have acquired many articles and newspaper stories over the years.

There is more to this story that will be brought up in following issues of Old Huntsville, so be sure to buy next month's issue.

On a desk in a Madison reception area:

"We shoot every 3rd salesman and the 2nd one just left"



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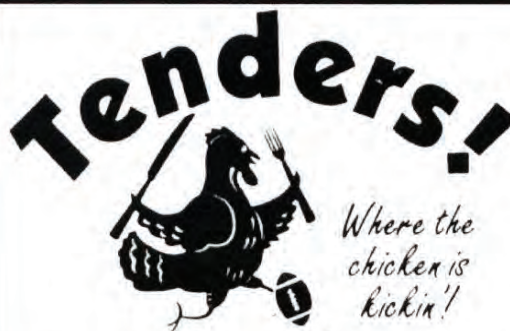


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March Madness

by Elizabeth Wharry

Trivia can be fun. A favorite pastime of mine is looking up strange laws. Here are a few from around the country.

In Maine, the following actions are illegal... playing the violin while walking down the street, tickling a woman with a feather duster, and blowing your nose in public. But officer, my nose was dripping!

In Vermont, absolutely no whistling under water! Tiny bubbles, anyone? Ladies, make sure you have your husband's permission to wear dentures...even if you're single or widowed. Painting a horse is cause for arrest...does that include carousel horses?

In New Hampshire, you'd best have a permit to clean up trash and litter from a beach. What if it's one's own trash? Don't even think of dancing or keeping time to music in a tavern!

Massachusetts has some doozies...don't scare pigeons, or take a lion to the movies, eat peanuts in church, or have a gorilla in the back seat of your car. I wonder how having the lion and the gorilla in the car at the same time would turn out?

In Pennsylvania, absolutely no sleeping or fortune telling on top of a refrigerator. Don't ride in a boat while on the highway. Are you going to ride the trolley? Leave your mule, donkey, or horse at home. What if the fortune teller dozes off?

In Ohio, do not install a slot machine in an outhouse. Seriously?! In Indiana, it is illegal to fish with a crossbow, or ride a horse faster than 10 miles an hour.

In Milwaukee, WI it is illegal to park for more than 2 hours on a street...unless you have a horse tied to it.

I am from Kansas, and one of these laws makes no sense! Kansas is completely landlocked. It is illegal to hunt whales. Alrighty then! Don't get caught duck hunting while riding a mule either!

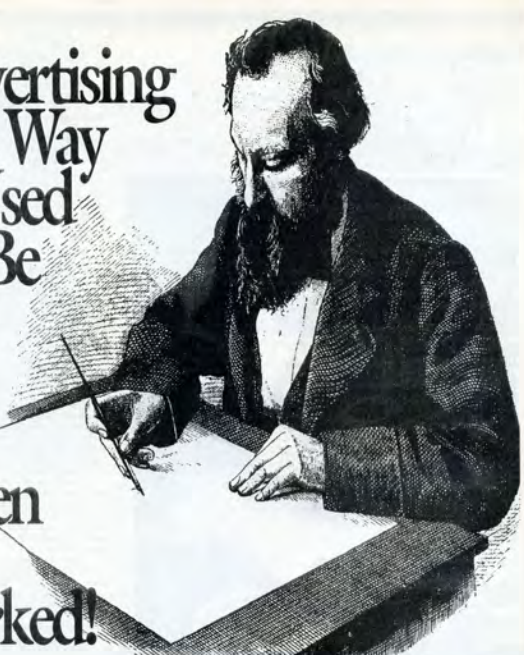
Alabama has some rather peculiar laws as well. Don't wear fake mustaches in church. Are real ones OK? In Mobile, a woman must have a waiver and permit to wear high heels. One may not drive blindfolded. Want to drive the wrong

way on a one way street? Put a lantern on the front of your vehicle. In Lee County, don't get caught selling peanuts after sundown on a Wednesday. And for heaven's sake, get rid of that still!

I hope you got a smile, a chuckle or a giggle today. Happy St. Patrick's day!

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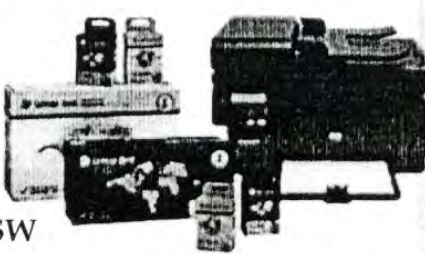
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*by Gerald Alvis, The Poet of
Greenlawn*



Our table had filled up quickly, some I knew, some were strangers. Our ages also varied; I was somewhere in the middle of the seasoned. We were anticipating a speaker whose anecdotal remarks would provide clarity and motivation and inspire the gathered. There is just something about a story well told by someone living it!

I excused myself for a coffee refill as I had arrived a bit early on this chilly Saturday morning. Heading back over to the snack/ coffee urn area, I remembered why I wore a thick sweater as it was the first day of winter, the solstice, or the shortest day of the year. I turned, headed back to the table, and looked over at the lively group I would be momentarily rejoining. Happiness was on their faces, but some sported questioning looks as sports, politics, and a little religion were thrown into the simultaneous conversations. You just picked one and jumped in midstream.

It's so interesting how the mind works; a few steps shy of the return destination, I looked up at my son, seated across from me, and felt transported back to 1990, where a similar scene played out long ago.

We moved to our farm in Tennessee and made our first trip to the local Seed and Feed in a small rural town. Inside was a similar gathering around a potbellied stove a group of men had assembled. Shavings were on the floor, and the same expressions and conversational topics mentioned prior were being addressed. The pieces of wood were hewed by the knives drawn by these gentlemen clothed in overalls. Curlers, they were called, which showcased the sharpness of the knife and skill of the carver; the longer would be briefly acknowledged, and then the topic would take up where it was momentarily paused.

This was before the internet and the plethora of data that moves towards and vies for our attention. This was a time when we really communicated.

I pulled my sons aside as they were young and said remember this because it will soon go away.

It did, along with the Mom and Pop grocery stores and shops where you knew each other by name. A piece of American history was transpiring before us. So yes, it's three-plus decades later, and today does mark a change in the seasons. Life and time yes, they do go on, but the need for human connection and communication will always remain.



**STAY IN TOUCH WITH YOUR
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HUNTSVILLE HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 1966**

A Lesson from My Father

by David M. Stephens

I have been fortunate to have toured many natural and man made wonders in this country and beyond. I have seen Big Sur, the Grand Canyon, Hoover Dam, the Black Canyons of the Gunnison National Park, the salt flats of Utah, Yellowstone, and even the little gorgeous blue-eyed blonde sales girl wearing the western hat in the Kemosabe store in Aspen. I wrote a story about her. I called it The Eighth Wonder of the World. Of course, it was not my wife's favorite story.

But, I have to say the view that gives me the greatest joy is seeing my four horses standing in the green pasture beside my home. Nothing gives me a smile and peace in my soul like my horses. I love each one.

The only thing I don't like about my horses is the expense and work involved. I spend my winter letting my horses in their stalls each night and releasing them every morning. I spend my afternoons mucking stalls, washing and filling water, and feeding buckets. My horses consumed at least two to three hours of my time every day. I know they are horses, but I couldn't leave them outside at night in the cold. They love their stalls, especially on the days I stripped their stalls and put in new bedding. It is like clean sheet day for us. They trot in, flop down in their stalls, and roll around as if it's the greatest feeling in the world. I now realize that horses are just great, big, spoiled dogs.

I have to admit I have grown weary of all the work and decided to let them be horses and not spoiled kids this summer. I turned them out to the pastures and shut the barn doors. Of course, the first night, it rained all night, and I tossed and turned all night, knowing my horses were getting wet. The next morning, I opened the doors on the north end of the riding arena so they could go in at night to get out of the weather. I store hay on the south end, so I needed a barrier to keep them from eating all my hay. I ran three strands of rope across the arena about thirty feet inside the door. I figured sixty by thirty was enough space for four horses. The next morning, I walked into the arena to find all four horses standing at the hay buffet. It seems my overly smart, spoiled babies realized the rope was not electric, and they crawled through it. I knew I needed something sturdier.

I didn't want anything permanent, so I decided to build a temporary wooden fence. Instead of putting a post in the ground, I devised feet for the post and made a two-rail fence with twenty-foot-long two-by-sixes screwed to the post and each side of the building. I framed a six-foot opening on one end to install a gate I could pass through.



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After searching my shop, I realized I didn't have a gate. I called the Co-op and got a price of \$69 for an economy six-foot gate. It was their closing time, so I told them I would come by the following day.

The next day was Wednesday and I had my writing class at ten thirty. I got up early, drove to the Co-op, and told Mat, the manager, that I wanted the \$69 economy gate. He rang it up, picked up the intercom, and told his yard person I was coming around for the gate. When I pulled up, the young man was already standing there holding the gate. The poor little skinny guy struggled to lift the gate into my truck, so I got out and helped. I thought to myself, if he is going to be loading fifty-pound bags of feed and seed, he needs to grow some muscle.

When I arrived home, it was time for my class at UAH, so I left the gate in the truck and headed to class in the car. After class, I changed clothes, ate lunch, and headed to the arena to unload and install the gate. Much to my surprise, I couldn't lift the gate out of the truck myself. I mumbled an apology to the yard boy for my thoughts and used the tractor to unload it.

That's when I realized what had happened. Instead of the economy gate, he had loaded the extreme duty bull gate. My first thought was, oh well, I can make it work. The hinge bolts are wrong, but I have some used ones that will work, and it will save me a trip back to the Co-op. That's when my mind drifted back to around 1968, when I was ten years old.

My mother was a civilian contract specialist in procurement for the government at Redstone Arsenal. My father worked for the Standard Oil Jobber in Huntsville, and one of his main responsibilities was making the company deposits every afternoon at Central

Bank on Country Club Drive. A perk of his job was he got to know and flirt with all the ladies at the bank every afternoon.

My mother was paid every two weeks, and my job was getting her check out of the mailbox when the postman ran so nothing would happen to it. When my father got off work at 4:30, he would come home to pick up Daisy, the nanny, and take her home. By the time he arrived back home, my mother would have been there. We would all jump in the car and race to Central Bank to cash my mother's check. Or, as I liked to call it to my mother's amusement.... our check. Central Bank had one outside teller window that stayed open until 5:30. After we cashed her check, we would go out to eat and then to GEX to buy groceries.

Now, both sets of my grandparents in Hazel Green had huge gardens. We spent our summers planting, hoeing, and tying up tomatoes. Then, we would harvest beans, corn, okra, peas, onions, and many other vegetables. We spent every Fourth of July picking up thirty to forty bushels of potatoes. My mother canned and froze vegetables. They would also buy a calf from the processor and fill a freezer with beef.

Every night, my mother would prepare a meat and three vegetables. We only ate somewhere besides home on my mother's payday. We would eat dinner and then go to GEX on North Parkway to buy groceries for the next two weeks. I always looked forward to eating somewhere besides home. I always wanted pizza or a hamburger. I would even settle for a hot dog and a root beer from Mugs Up. But where did my parents take us? The Bon-Air restaurant on Meridian Street. What did they make me order? The Special; a meat and three. I never understood that.

On this one particular day, my mother was late getting home from work, and we made it to the bank with only minutes to spare. The teller cashed the check, placed the envelope in the drawer, and sent it out. Dad picked up the envelope, thanked her and handed the money to Momma. As he drove off, Momma began counting the money. When we pulled up to the Parkway, Momma said, "Milton, she gave us an extra twenty." Dad responded with, "Are you sure? Count it again." He then pulled out onto the parkway. With my little pea brain, I was thinking, hot dog; we got extra money.

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Momma looked at Dad and told him she was certain we had twenty dollars too much. This was way before there were overpasses on the Parkway and way before kids were forced to wear seat belts. My usual seat was on the edge of the middle of the back seat with my elbows and head hanging over the back of the front seat so I could see everything that was going on.

Well, as soon as we reached a crossover in the median, Dad did a power slide U-turn. This slammed me into the right side door. As soon as the car was straight, the gas pedal hit the floorboard, and so did I. That four hundred cubic inch Pontiac engine roared to life. My father always loved speed and amazed me at how well he could handle a car. I pulled myself up just in time for Dad to make another sliding turn onto Country Club Drive. I slid against the car door again. Before I could move, we made a hard right into the bank and I hit the opposite door. Then, a hard left into the drive-through lane slid me directly behind my mother.

When we reached the teller window, Dad hit the brakes and stood that car on its nose. My forehead connected with the back of my mother's head with a crack. She yelped and snapped at me to get back in my seat. As I rubbed my forehead, I saw the teller lady had already closed up and pulled down her shade. That didn't deter my father. He reached out and began beating on her window.

After a minute or so, I saw the edge of her shade ease back, and the teller timidly peeked out. She recognized my father, raised her shade and turned on her microphone. Daddy was waving the twenty dollar bill and telling her she had given us too much money. She had a tremendous look of relief and thanked my father at least a half dozen times. She was smiling and waving as we drove off.

I asked my father why she was so happy we returned it because it wasn't even her money. He explained that she had a drawer of cash, and at the end of each day, her drawer had to balance. If it didn't, and she was short, she would be in trouble, and he thought the bank might even take the loss out of her paycheck.

I don't know if they would charge her for it, but if they did, this was back when twenty dollars was a lot of money. The minimum wage was \$1.60 then, so the twenty dollars was more than a day's pay for that young lady.

Today, as I stood there looking at the gate, I realized the two lessons I had learned that day so many years ago had returned to me.

Never accept what you didn't earn, and never keep what you didn't pay for.

Mat at the Co-op thanked me several times for returning the expensive extreme-duty bull gate.

And you know what; the \$69 economy gate is holding my horses in just fine.



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Voltaire

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Tips from Liz

- If you burn your tongue, sprinkle some white sugar on it for fast relief.
- A good way to restore hair and prevent baldness is to mix a tablespoonful of honey with a jigger of vodka and the juice from a medium onion. Rub it into the scalp every night, cover, sleep, awaken, shampoo and rinse daily.
- For thicker eyelashes, apply castor oil to them each night.
- To help diminish puffiness under your eyes, stop eating salt.
- Osteo Bi-Flex is an over-the-counter pill that really helps with the pains of arthritis - helps lubricate your joints.
- If you have a yard that gets sun nearly all day, you can't go wrong with a Zoysia grass, called Meyer. The sod will give you a lush lawn nearly overnight, and it will kill out weeds since it's so thick. Best part of it, you can get rid of your gas-powered lawn mower and buy a light aluminum push mower to mow your Zoysia. No oil, no expensive gas, and it's so quiet!! We have heard good reports about the electric lawn mowers as well, that operate with batteries that are rechargeable.
- If a tick has embedded itself in your skin, get clear nail polish and drop two drops on the insect. It will release its grasp and back out. GET IT and kill it! Then just wipe the polish off your skin.
- Keep potted geraniums around your back porch where you sit - mosquitoes hate them.
- Take your pills standing up and keep standing for 2 more minutes.

At my sister's wedding i chipped my front tooth on a Mint Julep, bent over to spit it out, hit my head on a beer keg and was knocked unconscious."

Employee excuse for missing a day of work

Take them with at least 1/2 cup of water while standing - this will give the pills a chance to move quickly along, instead of staying in your esophagus where they may disintegrate and cause heartburn or nausea.

- Peppermint tea is soothing. It also helps with digestion problems and rids you of that bloated feeling. Drink a cup of peppermint tea after (not during) your meal.

- After you've eaten one of those heavy, rich meals that leaves you miserable, try this for relief. Take a wire hair brush or metal comb and brush the backs of both your hands for about 4 minutes. It will relieve that sluggish feeling.

- If gout is causing alot of pain for you, stop eating red meat, sugar and white flour. Many sufferers have sworn by this.

- For arthritis and inflammation, foods like turmeric, ginger and green leafy vegetables are known to have anti-inflammatory properties. By lowering overall inflammation in the body, you can improve knee health and support natural lubrication in your shoulder and hip joints as well. A smoothie with ginger, spinach, blueberries and a banana would be delicious and fill you up. Healthy for you and could have good results with your arthritis pain.

- Fatigued? Mix a cup of warm water with 2 tablespoons of apple cider vinegar and add a teaspoonful of honey. Have this tonic every morning before breakfast and within days you will have more energy.

- If you're in a warm room and feel faint, just run cold tap water over your wrists for fast relief. Ice cubes rubbed on the wrists also work.

- An irritated or clogged gallbladder can make you feel sluggish and tired, even first thing in the morning. Each morning, take 3 tablespoons of fresh lemon juice in half a glass of warm water, a half hour before breakfast. Try this for a week and see if it makes a difference in your energy level.

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STRANGE NEWS HERE AND THERE IN 1985



- When the Smith and Wesson Company opened a golf driving range in 1984 in Springfield, Massachusetts, they didn't consider the sea gulls in the area. The driving range was forced to close

a week later after flocks of the birds began bombarding company executives, motorists and neighbors with hundreds of golf balls they would pick up, fly into the air with, and drop.

- One group that quickly responded to an appeal to donate clothing to survivors of an earthquake in Armenia was a Washington, D.C., nudist club.

- A lady in Birmingham, Alabama filed a lawsuit against the maker of hair care products after her hair burst into flames, as she was standing in 96 degree weather waiting for a bus. A pass-

ing policeman worked fast to help put out the flames, but the lady claimed to have suffered permanent disfigurement.

- Randy Myer, city public information director in Lexington, Kentucky, paid \$400 for a set of steel-belted tires that were "bullet proof, spike proof and bomb proof." A month later he had a flat running over a ball-point pen. "It still worked," he claimed.

- Researchers at Georgia Tech paid volunteers \$15 to fall down a flight of stairs as part of a project to find out how a body falls.

- A man by the name of Lawler Samson was arrested in Florida after a woman reported that the 65 year old man was hugging and kissing trees and telephone poles. His \$32 fine was suspended with the understanding that he would not break any other laws for a year.

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A Butterfly Garden

Reduce Pesticides

To avoid harming butterflies be careful when applying chemicals on or near plants. You can handpick some pests, such as beetles. A regular, hard blast of water can remove plant pests, such as aphids, that cause unplanned plant damage.

Another advantage of decreased garden chemical use is the presence of other garden helpers, which pesticides can kill. These are beneficial critters, such as spiders, lacewings, ladybugs and ground beetles that eat the plant pests. There are also other pollinators, such as honey bees, that benefit from reduced chemical use.

Location

Butterfly gardens should be in full sun. All insects are cold-blooded. Their body temperature is dependent on the environmental temperature. Enhance the sun's warming energy with stepping stones or a gravel path. Butterfly adults will bask in these areas to warm themselves from the radiant heat. Your garden will also benefit, because most of the plants used by butterflies grow best in full sun.

Shelters

Include a few blooming shrubs in your butterfly garden or have evergreens nearby for shelter. Butterflies will hide in these areas on cloudy days or at night and find protection from the rain and wind when needed. Your garden might even be located near the garage, gazebo, or garden shed. These permanent structures also give shelter and protection.

Puddles and Parsley

Male butterfly adults need to puddle. They obtain water and minerals from the shallows of the wet places. To make a permanent puddle, bury a shallow pan of wet gravel or sand to its rim. Fill it with liquids, such as fruit drinks or plain tap water. Also plant parsley among your garden for them to lay eggs in.

Flowers

Flowers provide the nectar food adult butterflies need. Butterfly season in Alabama is early spring to late fall. Choose a variety of plants, including annuals, perennials and woody shrubs, to have flowers continuously



through the seasons. This plant diversity also attracts a greater variety of butterfly visitors. Many of our native butterflies more often visit purple, red, orange, and yellow flowers.

How many insects have you noticed flying in straight lines? Remember, butterflies are insects. Their compound eyes have poor vision for distinguishing tiny details. Large sweeps of each flower are most attractive to these near-sighted creatures.

Also, consider their mouth parts. Butterflies suck liquid food with a straw-like mouth. Tubular-shape flowers are ideally suited. Butterflies prefer clusters of tubular or flat-topped flowers, but remember to have a variety. Compound flowers such as verbena, daisies and butterfly bushes offer numerous nectars; containers for sipping in a single stop.

Nectar

Butterflies have a highly developed sense of smell in their antennae. They seek flowers with rich nectar. Surprisingly, some of our newer plant varieties have little sugary nectar due to the breeding and selection process for other plant traits. Choose open-pollinated, fragrant, flowering plants with a single petal row rather than double. Fragrance is sometimes a nectar signal that you can easily detect.

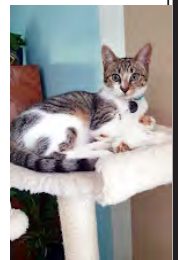
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From the Desk of Tom Carney

The Teacher

by Tom Carney

Floyd Hardin figured that he was one lucky man. He had built up a good business, made more friends than one man had a right to. Yes, Huntsville had been good to Floyd.

One day Floyd is in his barber shop, just cutting hair the way he always does, when he hears some of his customers talking about all the people that can't read or write. Now, the more Floyd got to thinking about it, the more he began to realize that he had found a way he could really do something for the community.

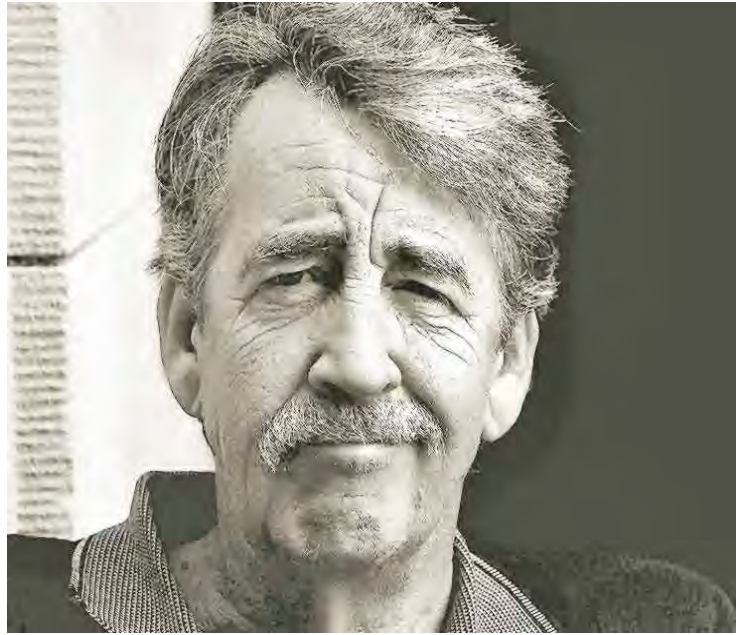
First thing the next morning, he starts spreading the word that he's going to start teaching reading and "riteing" in the back of his oarber shop. He went out, bought a bunch of desks, books, paper and pencils and it wasn't long before his barber shop started looking like a school room.

Floyd's night school was an instant success. First night, there were almost twenty people there and he had them all up there doing their alphabets on the blackboard. Well, almost all of them.

There was this one old codger, he came in late, pulled up a chair in the very back of the room and never opened his mouth. He would just sit there, night after night, listening to Floyd doing nis teaching.

It didn't take long before this old guy started getting on Floyd's nerves. Floyd began to take this old codger as a personal challenge on his ability to teach, so he started taking extra special pains to try and reach this old man.

Sure enough, it wasn't just a couple of weeks before the man had moved his desk up to the middle of the room. By this time you could see that the old guy was hanging on to every word that Floyd said. Come the end of me month, his desk was sitting on



the very front row, not five feet from where Floyd was standing and talking.

It wasn't long after that, while Floyd was gathering up his books after class one night, that he noticed that the old gentleman was hanging around, waiting for all the other students to leave.

After making sure that everyone else had left, the old guy walked over to Floyd's desk, hat in hand. "Mr. Floyd," he says, "I surely do want to thank you. I'll be 83 years old come this next winter, and I ain't never been able to write nothing until you started helping me."

Now, you gotta know Floyd to know how proud he was.

He stood there, chest poked out, one hand on his suspenders and his other arm around the old man's shoulders. He figured that he could teach, but he didn't have any idea that he was this good.

"Old Man," says Floyd, "I'm mighty proud of you. What did you write?"

"I don't know," says the old man, "I can't read yet."

My Memorial Service

By L D Rogers

One day my daughter, my son-in-law and I were talking when one of them brought up the subject of a memorial service they were having for a member of their church that had passed away.

I told my daughter that I thought I would like to have a memorial service. My daughter smiled and said, "Daddy, I think that would be a good idea." So, I said, "How about next Saturday?"

She looked at me kind of funny and said, "Daddy, that usually happens after someone passes away." Then I replied, "Well, that would take all the fun out of it!"



TALES OF THE ROCK

by Don Stanley

The Rock was a concrete curb that separated a sidewalk from a parking lot in front of the playground of Joe Bradley School. It was across "The Merrimack Pike now Triana Blvd." from the Merrimack Mills company stores. The stores are now called Merrimack Hall.

The rock was an outdoor hangout and gathering spot for those mostly living in Huntsville Park. At almost any time of the day or night and any weather you might find someone hanging out at the Rock or sitting in their car at the parking lot.

This story happened in the winter of the early 60's. Nobody in Huntsville Park locked things up because of the tight knit community and almost everyone knew all the neighbors and all the neighbors' business.

"My mother's idea of natural childbirth was giving birth without makeup. She was hyper-positive - the world is a wonderful place; rainbows and unicorns. If you said anything contrary to her, you were basically exiled."

Robin Williams

I had driven my 1951, 4 door, 2 tone green, 6 cylinder Chevrolet to the Rock and left it unlocked. I probably got in the car with my good friend Bobby Elrod to go on a double date. Bobby dated Caroline Johnson since Junior High School and they have remained some of my closest friends. Bobby & Caroline have been married for over 60 years.

I got dropped off at my car in the wee hours of the next day and it was really cold as I remember and no one was at the Rock. I jumped in my car and drove home, parked in the backyard and hurried inside because of the weather. That afternoon I drove down to the Rock to see if anything was going on and I was met with laughter when I drove up. I then learned of the rest of the story "My apology to

Paul Harvey."

Ronald "Monk Man" Kennedy had come to the Rock that previous evening and had consumed a few adult beverages. As the crowd left he crawled in the back seat of my car and fell asleep. I did not know he was in my car as I drove home.

Early the next morning he woke and had no idea where he was. He walked around the block until he saw the Mill and then knew where he was. He walked back to the Rock and told his side of the story.

Now what could have happened? If he had awakened on the trip home and he had said something or touched me on the shoulder I might have wrecked the car or jumped out without stopping or had a severe heart attack.

We will call this story the "Rock Dilemma".

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Remembering my Mom

by Jim Vann

My mother was born at a small community called Garth in Jackson County on August 1 in 1900. She was premature and weighed only 3 pounds at birth.

I was told that they took a shoe box, lined it with cotton and that served as her incubator. I was told that they would take one of her diaper pins and fasten her to the pillow she was laying on to keep her from rolling off.

In the mean time, her mother graced her with 2 sisters and 3 brothers.

At the age of 11, the family moved from Garth to the Brownsboro area.

I was told that her Dad moved the family to that area because of Central School. Her dad was a firm believer in getting a good education. Because of her small size, they did not allow her to start

school at Central until her next younger sister started school.

She graduated from Central School at the age of 21 years in 1921.

I have her diploma and found it interesting that the head of the county school system at that time was S.R. Butler. S.R. Butler was who Butler High School was named in honor of.

This fragile little lady grew up and married my father. They produced 4 children. We were not rich so with hardly any prenatal care, we were all born at home with a doctor in attendance.

I'm not sure about all 4 children but from this 3 pound mother, I was told that I weighed 10 pounds at birth and had one sister that weighed 12 pounds at birth.

My mother only lived to be 61 years old and perhaps we were one of the reasons for her short lifespan. She was an incredible lady, a very strong Christian and a very hard worker.

For several years, before we got a real washing machine and clothes dryer, she did all the family laundry using an old "ringer washer" that was located in a building in our back yard. The building had been used as a chicken house when we raised chickens.

I remember helping her with the laundry when I was small. The old chicken house had no air conditioning or even circulating air and I remember her sweating profusely doing the laundry in the summer months. I remember after the clothes were put thru the "ringer" part of the machine, I would help hang the clothes to dry using clothes pins to attach the laundry to the 3 line clothesline in our back yard.

My mother never learned to drive a car although my dad was in the car business. She walked to her beauty shop appointment about once a month. Her beautician lived about 4 blocks from our house.

She insisted that we never missed going to church every time the doors were opened for a service. We always sat down front on the second row on the right side when we went to church. We got there late one Sunday morning and sat in the back of the church under the balcony. I was about 4 years old at the time and after church, asked my mother why we didn't go to church that day. Thinking that if we didn't sit in our regular seats we hadn't been to church.

She was an excellent seamstress and I remember one of my all-time favorite shirts she made for me using the material from a flour sack. The material had blue



sea gulls imprinted on the white cloth. I wore that shirt proudly for several years.

In later years, as my dad's income increased, they hired a black lady to help clean our house and do most of the ironing of the laundry. The whole family loved that nice lady that helped my mother and she loved all of us too.

My mom became very weak in about 1959/1960. It was discovered that she had leukemia and she rapidly got worse. They didn't know much about leukemia in those days.

One treatment was to just provide blood transfusions. I think she had about 35 blood transfusions the last 2 months she was alive.

I was in the Army, stationed at Fort Belvoir, Virginia when they thought she wasn't going to live much longer. I got to come home and visited her in the hospital. She would have me look out the window at the hospital and tell her if it was raining. For some reason she thought she would die while it was raining. She seemed to improve and they let her go home. I went back to Fort Belvoir but in about two weeks, she passed away.

When my mother passed away, I did not shed a tear for my wonderful mother until that same black lady walked up to her casket and gently leaned over and touched my Mom's face.

For some reason I broke down then and cried like a baby.

Mother was a wonderful mother, and grandmother. All the grandkids called her "MOM". MOM had a good voice and loved to sing. She usually sang those old hymns that I still love today and usually sang while she was cooking.

I have written two or three songs in my lifetime and one of them is entitled "A WOMAN IN THE KITCHEN SINGING".

I never tried to get it published but it would have made a great song for either Randy Travis or Dolly Parton.

MOM was a fantastic Lady and a lot of people learned a lot of good life lessons from her during her lifetime.

CHASING THE YOUNG YEARLING

by Annette Enomoto

ALL YOU PEOPLE WHO WERE RAISED ON A FARM WILL UNDERSTAND THIS.

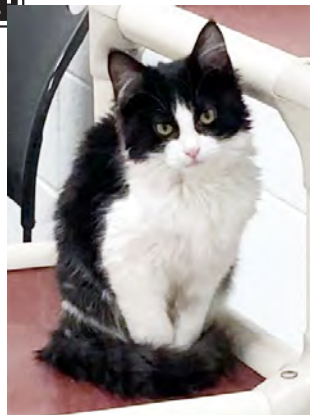
ONE CLOUDY RAINY DAY IT WAS OVERCAST AND MISTING, THE FAMILY WERE TRYING TO GET THE COWS TO THE BARN TO PICK OUT THE ONES THAT WE WANTED TO TAKE TO THE SALE. THERE WERE A BULL THAT DECIDED HE WAS NOT GOING. WE ALL GOT TOGETHER TO HERD IT TO THE BARN.

I WAS WITH MY MOTHER-IN-LAW AND WE WERE RUNNING AFTER THE BULL WHO WAS RUNNING TO THE WOODS. WE WERE TRYING TO HEAD HIM OFF FROM GOING TO THE WOODS. MY MOTHER-IN-LAW SLIPPED AND FELL FACE DOWN WITH HER ARMS STRAIGHT OUT AND HER LEGS STRETCHED OUT JUST LIKE THE OLD "SUPERMAN" MOVIE.

IT WAS SO FUNNY TO ME THAT I STARTED LAUGHING AND LAUGHING. I LAUGHED ALL THE WAY TO WHERE SHE WAS.

I STOPPED LAUGHING TO SAY "ARE YOU HURT?" AND I STARTED LAUGHING AGAIN. BY THEN THE OTHERS CAUGHT UP TO US AND MY MOTHER-IN-LAW SAID TO ALL OF US "BETTY JO WILL HELP YOU BUT SHE IS GOING TO LAUGH ALL THE WAY TO THE HOSPITAL."

LATER I TOLD HER I WAS SORRY BUT THE SITUATION WAS JUST SO FUNNY SO I COULDN'T STOP LAUGHING. ALSO AS I AM WRITING THIS I AM STILL LAUGHING ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED!



SNICKERS

Hello, my name is Snickers. I am a beautiful female black and white kitty. I came to the Ark Animal shelter in January 2025 with my sibling and mama cat. The vet thinks my birthday is in October 2024. I have been spayed and received all my shots and been micro chipped. I am considered a special needs cat because I tested positive for Feline Immunodeficiency Virus or FIV. Having this virus means that I am more susceptible to infections and diseases and need to live a healthy lifestyle and never go outside. It

is not transmitted to people or dogs, only other cats. It may have been passed on to me from my mother. Having FIV means I should be the only cat in the household or only with other FIV cats. I can live a long life but will need to receive regular veterinary care to maintain my health. I am a sweet girl and love to play with my brother Nestle and mother Emme. If you are looking for a sweet and friendly special cat like me, please come to the Ark Shelter and ask to see Snickers, that's me.

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Moving to Huntsville in 1948

by Bill Miller



In 1948 I was working for Butler & Cobb Contractors from Montgomery on a job in Gadsden, AL, one of the many places that my family and I had lived while working for them. In May they mailed me Drawings, Specifications and all the beginning paperwork I needed and instructed me to move to Huntsville to construct a U.S. Naval Reserve Center.

After briefing the Superintendent that relieved me, I checked a road map and decided to travel Highway 431 through Gurley and across Monte Sano Mountain. The old road, now known as Old Big Cove Road, was very narrow with sharp curves and narrow bridges and has changed little over the years.

I was towing a 35 ft. house trailer and there were times I had to pull over as far as possible to the edge of the road to meet on-coming traffic. My wife became upset and remarked that it looked like the road was ending and the jumping off place would be around the next curve, and maybe we should turn back before we get to the top of the mountain.

When we got down the mountain where California and Old Big Cove intersected we saw the Roper home with a large flower garden and wind mill in front of the house (the present site of Huntsville Hospital East). Next, was Huntsville Hospital and the city limit sign. We turned right and were soon at the Court House Square.

"My father warned me about men and booze but he never said anything about women and cocaine."

Tallulah Bankhead

I parked (plenty of space, very few cars in sight) on the Square and walked to the police station which was located where the parking deck on Madison and Fountain Street is at present. I introduced myself, told the man why I was in town and asked for house trailer accommodations. He directed me to the intersection of Green Street and Holmes Avenue to a trailer park there next to the Catholic School and service station.

The next day I opened a Post Office box to establish an address, next I opened a bank account and began to inquire about an engineering firm. I was directed to the office of G.W. Jones and Sons. Their Chief Engineer was Mr. Bill Blevins,

After studying the drawings and specifications and determining the site location, he quoted me a price of \$100 for stake-out and bench marks. We then went to the site and he told me that it had once been a garbage and trash area. I asked Mr. Blevins about building materials, concrete, hardware and an earth moving contractor.

He took me to Huntsville Building Materials which was located on Wheeler Avenue and introduced me to Dick and Joe Van Valkenburg.

Within the next few days Mr. Cecil Ashburn of Ashburn & Gray Construction Company came by the job and traded to do the earth work.

Joe, Dick and Cecil soon became my good friends. I kept close contact with each one of these men. We have since lost our friends Joe and Dick, however, Cecil and I are still close and get together often. We have worked together on

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many projects since then in and around Huntsville until Cecil sold Ashburn & Gray and semi-retired.

The Naval Reserve building was located on Monroe Street near the new Embassy Hotel until it was torn down during part of the Civic Center expansion. In 1948 there was a street that crossed beside the railroad trestle, then turned east back to the old Council School. This was a dirt road used to get to the fill site.

A Sunday outing in 1948 was a trip to the park on Monte Sano or to the Big Springs Park. The trip to the park at times was entertaining if the families that lived in the apartments behind cotton row had hung their laundry over the balcony to dry.

Saturday was a day to shop, or visit downtown. Almost everything you needed was within walking distance of the Square. You could hear a sermon on many street corners, smell fresh popped corn, parched peanuts, and cooking smells coming from the restaurants.

Huntsville soon became home. It was then and still is the best place I have ever lived.

Bacon & Chicken Casserole

- 4 boneless chicken breasts, uncooked
- 4 strips bacon
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- 1 carton sour cream
- 1 sml. jar dried beef, chopped up

Mix soup with sour cream. Sprinkle chipped beef in bottom of casserole and cover with soup/sour cream mixture.

Wrap strip of bacon around each chicken breast and place on top over mixture. Bake uncovered for 45 minutes at 350 degrees.



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SURVIVING THE DEPRESSION

By Cathey Carney



I thought you would enjoy reading about family survival tactics used during the Depression years that our readers have sent in over the years.

- * Women made everything out of flour sacks, including skirts and dresses for girls.

- * There was lots of sickness, we used to take 666 which was so bitter, it only took one spoonful to cure you. We also used castor oil, Black Drought or kerosene and sugar.

- * We always used our ground coffee 3 times.

- * Mama stretched our butter by softening it, then beating it with a can of evaporated milk.

- * Road meat was Depression food. Fowl or wild game killed by cars was quickly retrieved and dressed out for the next meal.

- * A favorite kid's game would be to curl up in an old tire and have someone push you down a hill!

- * Leftover gift wrap and ribbons were always carefully removed, ironed and saved.

- * My Dad would patch the tops and sides of our shoes with tire patches. We used hardened tallow to polish our shoes.

- * Mom always watched the first 3 days of spring to see what the next three months would bring.

- * Everyone had a cabbage patch. Cabbage was used in sauerkraut, as well as a hot vegetable.

- * We used to try to collect all the wild nuts like hickory and hazelnuts before the squirrels got them.

- * The weed, Queen Anne's Lace, was dipped in flour and fried. It kept the family from going to bed hungry many times.

- * Bread was torn into pieces and added to fried potatoes, to make "Stretch Potatoes."

- * Farmers planted only the potato eyes for the garden, then ate the rest of it.

- * We used cardboard in our shoes and washed our hair in Pels Naptha.

- * We brushed our teeth with salt and soda.

- * Mama wrapped my school sandwiches in the cornflake box liner. I used it day after day.

- * To unshrink woolen sweaters Mama would boil them in a solution of 1 part white vinegar to 2 parts water, then stretch to original size and dry.

- * Baths took place on Saturday and the cleanest one bathed first, then the rest of the family used the same water in the old wash tub, the dirtiest person last.

- * Everything was patched and darned. Orange crates were used for everything from furniture to storage containers.

- * Weddings were simple and beautiful, with the average cost of everything - dress, veil, bridal and groom's cakes, reception, etc. being around \$50.

- * An unopened box of baking soda will stay good up to 2 years; baking powder 18 months; cake mix good for a year; flavored gelatin, 18 months and unflavored gelatin, 3 years.

- * Baking bread will help improve your spirits when you're feeling low. Pound and knead the dough as if you were trying to beat away all your problems, then pull and push it into shape. Bake the bread, enjoy that wonderful smell in your kitchen, then eat a couple of slices with real butter, while it's still warm.

- * Tea bags are often good for two servings. We used it for the first cup, took it out and saved it, then put it back in the hot water later for a second cup.

"I've found that if you tuck one pant leg into your sock when you go out, people expect alot less of you."

Bert Knowles, Arab



Thank you!

**Thank you to our
Police Officers,
Fire-fighters,
Paramedics,
EMTs - We
appreciate all
you do to keep us
Safe Every Day.**

Going Home

by Lynn Roberts



Grandmother died and was buried in one of the worst blizzards ever to hit the land. People talked about it for years. Of her, they spoke little, death being the way of things.

I couldn't go to the funeral, being away at some convention or other, but I sent a nice wreath, expensive too.

I did well on my job. got several promotions, even bought a townhouse, all brick and modern with not one piece of claw-footed furniture in it, though I did buy an antique frame the other day on a whim.

I don't know just when I began to think of strawberry turnovers or just why I restored the old quilt that had lain in a trunk for years. Nor could I explain why the sudden sight of a peony bush or a lemon lily would sting my eyes and stop me short.

When I went home to visit, the Old Bedford Church was gone and in its place was a gas station, a few houses and a small sign that proclaimed. "New Bedford."

The old cemetery had new gates, a marbled entrance, paved roads and smoothed lawns.

Gone were the dirt paths and cactus plants, except farther back into the older section. There were the pillars of great grandmother on the Grantham side, and Uncle John Hinshaw and Aunt Ola ... and my grandmother; leaning, but sturdy.

There was a kitchen fragrance in the air, though I knew it must be the newly mowed grass, for even here, the lawn was tended, but for some subtle nagging at my feet.

Stooping, I found a cactus plant, withered, but still living. I plucked it gently, turning it over, amazed it had escaped the mower's blade.

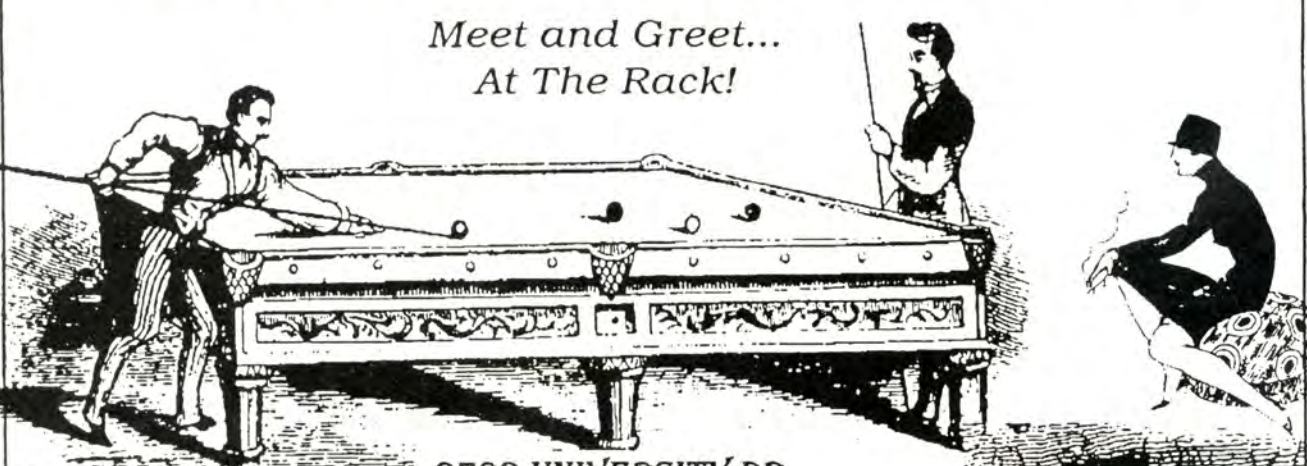
"Are you afraid to die?" I whispered.

"Why no, honey, I've gone home."

Old Ad seen in Old Huntsville Magazine in April 1995

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HUNTSVILLE HISTORY THROUGHOUT THE YEARS



The depression of the 1930s was a time of severe hardship for many people. In 1938 there were 24,000 workers employed in Madison County, although there were still many who could not find a job and depended on the \$8 unemployment check they received every month.

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