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Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

“She Never Gave Up”



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Also in this issue: 1949 Mother's Day Memory; Superstitions; Pratt Avenue Front Porch Stories; The Queen of Hearts; Pine Bluff Hunting Lodge; Blame it on Elvis; Remembering the Krystal; Hummingbirds in your Garden, recipes and much much more!



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She Never Gave Up

by Tom Carney,
Published in 1994

Follow Meridian Street north to where it leaves the city limits, then look closely to the west at the brush and the kudzu vines that seems to cover everything.

If you look closely enough, you will see what appears to be a large pile of stones. Closer examination would reveal that these stones are the remnants of what was once a structure. You won't see much, a few decayed timbers, a window frame lying haphazardly in the undergrowth and a hole where someone had started to dig a well, but quit in despair after encountering solid limestone a few feet beneath the surface.

There's nothing to indicate what kind of a structure it was or who built it.

However, old-timers recall,

"I've learned that being kind is more important than being right."

Andy Rooney

"It's the house that Mary built."

Mary Higgins was born in 1878 into a family which eked out a living as sharecroppers. Her early years were spent in the cotton fields and helping her mother take care of the large family. Her father, a drunkard, often ended up in jail after spending what little money the family had on booze.

It came as no surprise when, at age 15, Mary married.

Unfortunately, the marriage only lasted two years, ending with her husband being sent to prison for making illegal whiskey and leaving her with a year-old child. To make matters worse, her husband announced he had no intention of returning home once he got out of prison. Children, he said, were not his "thing."

Unskilled in any other labor, Mary began cleaning houses. She had an excellent reputation as a hard worker and a kind soul. Soon she had all the work she could manage. Though earning but little money, she managed.

She had worked at the Baker household for almost a year when she heard Mr. Baker describe a "worthless" tract of nearby land that had come into his possession.

Curious, Mary walked out to look at the land. It was a rocky, irregularly-shaped tract that seemed to be useless.

Mary had dreamed all her



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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life about owning her own home on a piece of land that was paid for. And now, here was the land! If only Mr. Baker would sell it to her and if she could afford it.

The next Monday, she arrived for work in her best dress. As Mr. Baker prepared to leave for work, Mary mentioned, "That land."

"Would you be of a mind to sell it?" she asked.

Amused, Baker looked at his cleaning lady. "I might," he replied, "but would you have the money to buy it?"

"No," Mary answered, "but I have an idea." Excitedly, she explained that if he would sell her the land, she would work extra every day and let the money go toward payment.

Probably because of her sincerity, or maybe just because it was such an unusual proposition, Baker agreed to the plan.

Mary's life quickly settled into a routine. Work ten hours a day during the week, and on Saturdays pack a picnic lunch and spend the day on the land she was buying. In her mind she could already see a house with a neat yard and flowers everywhere. Patiently she explained to her infant son how they were going to have their own home someday, and not owe anyone.

After almost two years, the land was hers. She had transformed the small piece of land into a veritable garden of Eden, with flowers everywhere in well-tended beds.

By this time, most people knew of the purchase and the woman's dream of building a house. They also knew she had no money. "It takes money to build a house," they would say, sadly shaking their heads. "And though she's a good woman, she still can't afford it."

Ignoring the comments, Mary persisted in her dreams.

The first Saturday after the land was legally hers, she appeared at the door of a neighboring farm whose land bordered hers.

This time she had a different proposition. She had noticed that one corner of his

land was unfit for planting because of the rocks. "I will clear the corner of all the rocks and haul them off," she said, "for twenty five dollars."

Needless to say, the farmer took her up on her offer. He had been trying for years to cultivate that ground, but had broken so many plows he had finally given up.

Every weekend Mary would lift the rocks into a handcart, push them over to her land and add them to another pile she had gathered.

In the meantime Mary had gathered scrap lumber, odd doors and even broken window casings. After clearing the land and collecting her twenty-five dollars, she ordered a load of sand and concrete from a local building supply company.

Now her life took a different routine. Every weekend she would mix mortar and place the rocks. Amazed, the local residents realized that the woman was actually building a house. A rock house.

When a friend asked how she intended to build a house all by herself, she replied: "You build a brick house brick by brick, don't you? I can't afford noth-



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"Yes, I am an agent of Satan but my duties are largely ceremonial."

Overheard during failed job interview

ing else so I'm building a rock house, one rock at a time!"

The neighbor, whose land Mary had cleared, would often visit the site, just standing there and staring, as she continued her back breaking task. Then without saying a word, he would turn and go back to his house.

Late that fall, after Mary had almost completed the exterior walls, she arrived at her land one morning to find that her neighbor had erected a fence around the house she was building. Angrily she went to see him, demanding to know why.

"Mrs. Higgins," he said, "that house is on my property. You should have been more careful."

Almost in tears, Mary rushed back to town to see Mr. Baker and confront him with the news. After listening to her, Baker made an appointment with a lawyer, where Mary once again told what happened.

Mr. Baker, the lawyer, and Mary, with a copy of the deed in hand, went back out to the land where they carefully paced off the dimensions of the lot.

It was true. Mary had built the house almost twenty feet on the other side of her boundaries.

Most people expected her to give up on her dream. Her son was getting older, she had become a devout churchgoer and there just didn't seem to be much time for her to do anything else. Mary had, in the meantime, rented a house a few hundred feet down the road from her land to be closer to the house she hoped to build.

Instead of giving up though, the next Saturday morning found her back at work, once again patiently gathering rocks

**"If a relationship has to be a secret,
you shouldn't be in it."**

Regina Britz, Huntsville

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and placing them near the new site she had selected. Work progressed much slower this time, but she persisted, often laboring until her hands became bloody from handling the jagged rocks.

Many times, friends and neighbors would stop by, offering to help, but Mary always turned them down.

Mary hoarded every nickel and dime she could save in order to purchase concrete and building materials. By scrimping, she had saved almost forty dollars when fate once again intervened. A neighbor had taken sick and died, leaving a widow and a houseful of children and no way to take care of them.

Resignedly, without saying a word to anyone, Mary took her meager savings and gave it to the widow. During the influenza epidemic that hit Huntsville in 1917, she spent every spare moment taking care of neighbors and friends who had been stricken. Often times, she would show up unannounced with a pot of food for some family who were too ill to take care of themselves.

By 1925, the house was almost completed. Though not an attractive house, it was never-the-less paid for and it appeared as if finally Mary would have her own home.

Unfortunately, the night before she was about to move, vandals broke into the house, and after ransacking it, set fire to it. Years of hard work went up in smoke in just a few minutes time. Seeing the flames, Mary rushed to the site in an effort to extinguish the fire, but it was too late.

A friend later said that was the only time he ever saw Mary Higgins cry.

Most people would have given up by now, but the next

morning saw Mary back at the burned out shell of the house, gingerly picking through the rubble, trying to salvage what she could so that she might start over again.

Years passed, and the construction went much slower this time. What little money Mary managed to save for materials often went to some needy family. Age was beginning to catch up with her, and her body could no longer do the work it once had.

Her hair became tinged with grey and her son was grown and living in Chattanooga. She still spent every possible moment working on the house, but now it appeared to most people as if it were merely a dream that would never be fulfilled. Late one fall evening in 1932, she was trying to pull some nails from an old door casing she had salvaged somewhere when she felt a sharp pain in her side. Moments later she collapsed.

A neighbor later found her and carried her home. Within hours, the house was crowded with friends and neighbors, worried about the little lady's condition. A doctor was summoned and after examining Mary, pronounced her condition critical. "It's only a matter of time," he told the assembled crowd.

As is true in most cases like this, the ladies assembled in the kitchen, talking in hushed tones, while the men gathered on the front porch. Possibly, they were all thinking of the many times Mary had helped them. There was not a person present who could not tell stories about Mary nursing them when they were sick, or of her giving what little money she had to help a neighbor.

As they gazed down the road, they could see the walls of the house that Mary had so laboriously worked on all of her life. Now there was nothing they could do except sit on the front porch and wait.

**"Stress is when you wake up screaming
and you realize you haven't fallen asleep yet."**

Jake Thomas, Woodville



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Abruptly, one of the men got up and left. An hour later he returned, with a truck load of building materials he had purchased. Without a word he unloaded the materials in front of the rock walls. The other men, within minutes, joined him.

They labored through the night by the light of kerosene lanterns. They knew this was their last chance to repay a gentle lady for a lifetime of generosity.

Early next morning, as the men finished hammering the last shingle on the roof, Mary Higgins awoke and asked one of the women tending to her what that noise was. "Mary," the woman said, "The men have finished your house!"

Suddenly, a strange sort of peacefulness seemed to sweep over Mary's face, before she once again lapsed into unconsciousness. A few minutes later, the men, still sweaty and grimy from their night's labor, arrived and after gently picking Mary up, carried her down the hill to her new house. Other men carried the bedroom furnishings, while some of the ladies hastily rushed ahead to hang curtains and place pictures on the walls.

We don't know if Mary ever regained consciousness again before dying a few hours later.

We like to think she did.

The house was sold after her death. The person who bought it purchased it primarily for the land, and let the house fall into total disrepair. People vandalized the house, taking the rocks to build fences and walkways.

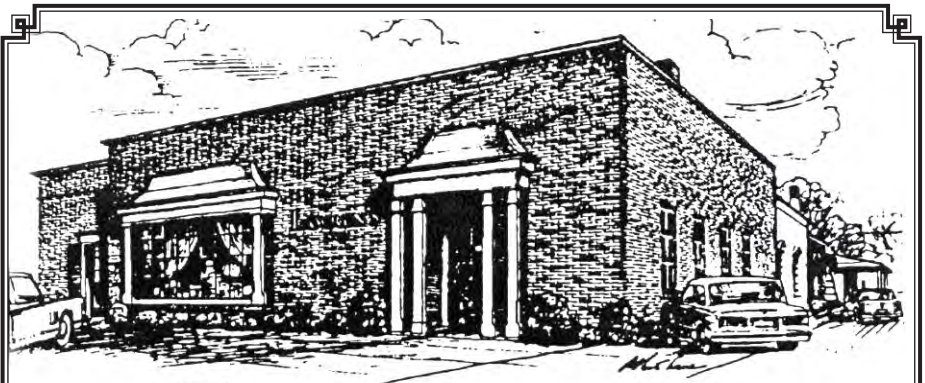
Within just a few years there was nothing left of the house that Mary had built, except for the memories of a lady who refused to give up.



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DOES YOUR CHEWING GUM LOSE ITS FLAVOR?

by L D Rogers

As we get older you never know when something is going to remind you of something that happened in your life. I take dialysis treatments two times a week. Yesterday when I went for my treatment I got settled in the chair and happened to notice a plastic tub sitting on the counter that said DOUBLE BUBBLE. I asked about it and the lady said someone donated it. She asked if I'd like some and brought me a big hand full. That's when I started thinking.

It took me back to World War II. I remember all the things you couldn't get and just about everything was going to the war effort. You just couldn't go to the grocery store and buy a candy bar or bubble gum. When the grocer got a box of candy in, he would only sell one bar to each child or if he got a box of bubble gum, he would only sell five pieces to each child. That made sure that every child got some in the neighborhood.

It just so happened that back in the 1930s a gentleman had recorded a song called, "Does

Your Chewing Gum Lose Its Flavor on the Bedpost Overnight?"

As a little boy, with just five pieces of gum, you might not get anymore for a month, so I had to do something to protect it. Instead of putting it on the bedpost I put mine on the door facing and the next morning I would take it back off. There might be a little piece of wallpaper or paint from the door facing but I would scrape that off and start chewing my gum. It was a little hard at first, but it wasn't long before it was okay.

Everything was going fine until my mother saw the chewing gum on the door facing. One thing about Mother was when she got upset, she never called me by my name. It was always "Son". She asked me what was on the door facing and I told her chewing gum. She asked why it was on there and I told her because I didn't want to throw it away. She told me to take it off and go with her to the kitchen. When we got to the kitchen, she took a small piece of aluminum foil and had me wrap my gum in it and then she put it in the refrigerator. That took care of both of our problems.

It wasn't long before the war was over, and you could get all the chewing gum and candy you wanted. The only problem then was getting the nickel to buy it with.



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THE QUEEN OF HEARTS

*by William Goodson
published in the Huntsville
Times, July 4, 2002*

"Alma Goodson of Huntsville, former co-owner of Goodson's Variety Store and Zesto's, died Wednesday. She was 91."

So said the Times on Thursday, July 4, 2002.

A friend, writing to me in a sympathy card, called her the "Queen of Five Points." She lived in the same house on Clinton Avenue for 62 years. She saw her three children through Miss Mary Bierne Darwin's kindergarten, then on to East Clinton Elementary, finishing at Huntsville High.

(I lied. I only lasted three days in kindergarten, Ms. Darwin finally acknowledging that I had the worst case of the Mommies she had ever seen. My claw marks and tear stains are probably still on her screened porch on McClung Avenue. I would have needed I-V fluids soon.)

Alma wore her crown quietly. To her dying day, she avoided publicity. A few months ago the Five Points Historic District newsletter editor wanted to do a piece on her. It took my two sisters and me pleading with her for days. She's frowning at me now for all these words about her.

I researched the history of the house and lot to have a historic marker placed out front. As it turns out, there had been a baseball field where my father played as a youngster, and our house was just about in left field where he often roamed and where she cheered him on.

Mother had plenty of stories about growing up with six siblings in the Dallas Mill Village. Her father was a foreman at the Cotton Mill. One of the machines there had caught Granddaddy Englebert's index finger and amputated the end of it. He loved to wiggle the wrinkled stub at us children, nudging it menacingly on our arms. We laughed and acted scared.

She would tell of older brother Ben sending money for her to attend Woman's College (now Huntington) and then of her returning the favor for young sister Ruth.

She blushed and told how she and Dad courted, about eloping to get secretly married because a rule at Rison School forbade a married couple to teach there. And then how their principal, the beloved Cecil Fain, later bent the rule to accommodate them.

There wasn't much rule-bending at our house, though, and discipline was simple. Just to the right of our front porch was a mean little bush that grew the stinging-est switches in God's creation. Believe me, it didn't happen often, but I can still see and feel the thin red streaks on my legs.

Mainly, though, she reigned with simple dignity, strong faith, and frugality. A rose garden was her main extravagance.

Never a complainer, I had to drag symptoms out of her to discover just how badly she was doing in her last illness.

"Mother, is your head hurting?"

"Yes."

"Are you dizzy?"

"Yes."

"Don't you think we ought to go see the doctor?"

"Okay."

That's about the closest to whining that she ever came.

We knew things were taking a decided turn when, in the last two years, she had given up both bridge clubs. Partly because there were not enough players anymore, partly because her arthritic hands couldn't manage the cards.

Her last regular activity was attending church at First Methodist. She surprised us all when she embraced the New Song contemporary service. I wondered if John Wesley approved, but I guess she had seen enough changes in her lifetime that one more didn't faze her. After all, a little guitar music at the altar isn't exactly cataclysmic when compared to, say, a man walking on the moon.

I once attended a writers' conference. There was a consensus about the bane of publishers' existence. It is the flood of short story manuscripts they receive in the category of what they call "Dead Daddy Stories."

Thus I tender this piece with some trepidation. It might be sent back to me by the Times barely read.

But the obituary couldn't do justice to a life lived so close to my heart.

The Queen of Hearts.





me. "Daddy, can I ride my bike to the drugstore and get Mother a card?"

He looked at his watch. "If you can return before dinner at six, I guess so. She'd like that."

Thrilled, I dashed to the garage and hopped on my bike. It was warm. I wore a short-sleeve shirt, knickers and leather sandals. The village was only a half-mile away. I could do it.

Zooming down the long hill and finally, to the flat road leading into the village, I pedaled my single-speed bike about as fast as my legs would go and came to

a left turn into the store area. Usually, I'd stop pedaling and coast, but I kept the rotation up this time. At the peak of the turn, my pedal struck the pavement, which caught the edge of my leather sandal, then my big toe. It hurt something awful. Soon as I stopped, I looked at my toe. Blood was gushing out and dripping on the concrete. A large flap of skin, nearly as big as my toenail, was hanging down.

I dumped my bike, sat on the side of the road moaning, and pressed the flap of skin back against my toe. Oh, that hurt. Blood everywhere.

1949 Mother's Day Memory

by M. D. Smith IV

The illustrated card above is not the exact card I got my mother in 1949, but it's very similar. I think the story behind it will interest you.

On Saturday, May 7, before Mother's Day, which this nine-year-old had forgotten, my father reminded me, "Did you get your mother a card or something for tomorrow, son?"

I confessed I hadn't. It was 5 o'clock. I really wanted her to at least have a card from

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Fingertips and toes have the most nerve endings; mine were in alarm mode on my big toe. Pressure helped the bleeding enough for me to pedal slowly the short distance to the drugstore. I duck-walked gently inside, keeping my weight on my left heel.

A few people were at the cash register in front, and I hobbled over to a chair next to the several places they had for lunch and snacks. Everyone noticed me. One of the soda girls, Sandy, shouted, "Doc Gilchrist, little M.D. is here, and his foot is bleeding."

Doc wasn't a doctor but owned and ran the drugstore and filled all the prescriptions. He came from behind the drug counter, walking fast, examined my poor toe and said, "Wait here." Then he looked up. "Sandy, remove his sandal, grab a rag, put it around his toe, and apply pressure." She did while he hurried to the back. He returned with several gauze pads, some peroxide, and a few large Band-Aids.

The bleeding had stopped. Doc gently cleaned the blood from my foot. Boy, did that stuff fizz and foam as he wiped my toe. "Owww..." He put the bandages over both sides of my toe, then wrapped a third one in a circle around the other two. "There," he said. "That ought to hold you till you get home. Want me to call your parents?"

"No," I said. "I can make it, but I got to get my mother a card and be home for dinner."

He pointed to the magazine rack area with a limited selection of Mother's Day cards. Most of them had flowers and stuff or a little girl

hugging her mother's neck. I finally found one with a boy, a dog and a mother. I paid my fifty cents—they said to forget the penny tax, got my purchase in a sack and put it in the handlebar-basket on my bike. A painful trip home, having to stand on the pedals up the hill, and finally there. I explained what happened and why the bandage was on my big toe.

My father said to leave it because it might start bleeding if we took it off.

After dinner, I went to my room to write a message inside the card to my mother. I wrote things I loved about her, from reading me all those stories I still remembered, like the little bunny rabbit that lassoed the sun and got his long tail burned short, to taking care of me when I was sick, standing up for me when I got suspended, and warm hugs that made me feel good. I signed it.

The next morning on the breakfast table was my card

for her and a bottle of perfume my father bought, but put my name on.

She excitedly opened the card, exclaimed how cute it was, then read inside, almost teared up, and gave me the biggest hug.

"Is this card what you got on your trip yesterday when you hurt your toe?"

I nodded.

"This is so special. I'll keep it always," she said, kissing me on the cheek.

After my mother died in 1987, my sister and I were going through all her photo albums, old letters we'd written from camp and later college, and near the bottom was that card. She had kept it all those years.

I have a storage unit filled with boxes of a lifetime of memories, mostly of my married years and raising eight kids, but somewhere sits that card my mother saved.

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Turn to the experts



I think May is about my favorite month of the year. All the winter cold is over and I summer's oppressive heat isn't here yet.

I was telling one of my grandchildren the other evening about my days at East Clinton School in the fifties. The third-graders had pastel paper dresses. Atop a tall pole were streamers that matched the colors in the dresses. Every child would hold on to a streamer and every other child faced the opposite direction. At the signal, they'd start walking in a circle, going under one classmate, and then over the other. It would begin a weave, and at the end, our maypole was tightly woven and decorated our "May" pole. Refreshments of punch, cookies and music followed.

Schools didn't get out until early June, and in these times, it can be earlier in May and start back in early August. What was wrong with starting summer break on June 1 and not returning until the Tuesday after Labor Day? Maybe too many teacher workdays and federal holidays for many occasions.

With the hot days around the corner, better tune up your AC units. I had one go out in my bedroom recently, and it was boiling trying to sleep for the three nights until I could get it repaired. Fortunately, it was a small relay and didn't cost too much. Now, I remember as a child sleeping in mid-summer without air-conditioning. But we didn't go to bed until the cool of the night. We opened all the windows in the house (with screens on them, of course) and used the attic fan to exhaust the hot air out the roof vents and bring in the cool night air. The breeze across the bed made for fine sleeping. I doubt any of my windows

will even open anymore.

Mother's Day is May 11th this year. Mothers of every age appreciate a special card, phone call, and maybe being taken out for lunch. And I don't know of any mother that doesn't appreciate flowers, whatever kind you can get, on that special day.

If you have children, don't forget to sign them up for summer activities that include sports, vacation camps, and swimming lessons. Everyone needs to know how to swim and not fear the water, but a life jacket is still a good idea when motor boating.

This is also the perfect time of the year to add a little company to your life with a young puppy or kitten during the warm weather. The animal shelters are constantly looking for homes for furry friends that cuddle nicely next to you in the winter months.

Lastly, Memorial Day is Monday the 26th. Be sure to fly your flag, attend local parades, and play plenty of John Phillip Sousa music in honor of our veterans and service members all over the world.

I can hear the "Stars and Stripes" playing now.



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Remembering the Loving Teachers at East Clinton School

by Kristie McShane, as told to OHMagazine in July 2013



Many residents of Huntsville have wondered about the little stones that are in front of East Clinton School, right under the front windows of the school. They're heart-shaped stones that have plaques on them with names & dates, and have little marbles, jewelry, etc. embedded in the stone. We recently asked if anyone had information on these stones, and Nancy Little called us. She said she knew exactly whom to call to find out, and it was Kristie McShane.

Kristie (Messina) McShane of Huntsville taught school at East Clinton Elementary School for 10 years. She watched the cherry trees grow outside the school over the years, watched the shadows created inside the school from the leaves. She saw kids get older and leave, she saw teachers she knew get sick and die. She decided she wanted to do something in their memory, and involve the children who had been taught by these ladies..

In 2002 she went to Hobby Lobby with money from the Student Council and help from her room mother and got

starter kits to use for the project. There were four heart-shaped stones, and Kristie told the children in the classes of those teachers to bring little treasures from home that could be inserted into the soft stone.

The students did a great job searching through their treasures for pieces of jewelry, marbles, rings, earrings, butterflies, heart shaped pieces - all to put in a "forever" memorial that would always be there.

At the same time, Kristie contacted George Bennett at Bennett's Nursery who donated 4 dogwood trees to go alongside each of the stones.

Kristie told me that Miss Blevins was a classroom teacher, Mrs. Moss was Special Ed, Mrs. Kamback was the S.P.A.C.E. teacher for gifted kids.

When the time came for the ceremony, Mrs. Foster was the current Principal and she and all the school took part in the event.

Mrs. Moss, the Special Ed teacher, had gone to a faculty meeting on a Wednesday, developed a really bad headache and passed away the following Monday. It was so sudden and very upsetting to all the staff & children. Mrs. Moss' adult children were at the ceremony when the stones were dedicated with love to the teachers who spent most of their lives in teaching their classes.

The teachers honored were:

Renee Katz, Carol Kamback, Susan Blevins, Jueline Moss

A sweet memorial that meant so much to East Clinton School, the staff and the children who were lucky enough to know these very special ladies.

Thank you, Kristie, for telling us about this and now our readers know, too!

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Stories from the Front Porch on Pratt Avenue

Fondest Memories

by Collier Bouldin Hundley, PN

My fondest memories are of the family gatherings at Grandmother's Place along the shaded avenue on Pratt near 5 Points in Huntsville. My father, being the youngest of the brood of three older sisters and the elder brother, held me as the newest addition to these gatherings.

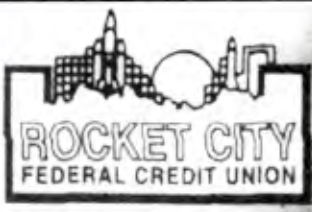
Most kids and cousins would leave the porch to ramble over to the nearby park to swing high, bruise and bang their limbs climbing the monkey bars, or stick themselves to the superheated metal slide that peeled your skin on a hot and humid Alabama summer day.

Not me. If I had my druthers, I would sit between my grandmother and father on the wooden glider and listen to the wonderful stories and remembrance of theirs, my aunts and uncles. I was enthralled with my uncle's tales of serving in the Navy in WW II. My aunts teasing me of all my "girlfriends", me being no more than 5 at the time. They asked to see my fingernails, in which some produced small white flecks within them. They claimed that each one represented a sweetheart.

Was it really that easy?!? The answer proved to be NO but, I trusted what my aunts told me and scrubbed my nails and washed my hands vigorously to cure me.

Evening tide, the waving of funeral home fans to escape the heat and swat skeeters, sweet tea sipped from Mason jars and I with a much resourced, much smaller glass fruit jar. My Great Aunt Ethyl gave me my first nickname of "Brother", would entrust me with her drink glass and ice pick punched lid, to catch fireflies that flitted by.

Those wonderful thoughts still gather as I take the short ride to the Porch on Pratt on my visits to Maple Hill Cemetery to pay respect to their memories and all the stories they told and teachings they taught me.

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John Purdy
Loretta Spencer
Sarah Chappell

Turtlenecks and 'Mater Sandwiches



by Kimberly B. Cook

I play the last chord of the Bach prelude I have been practicing for hours. I shift on the wooden organ bench and my fanny feels like my lips and tongue after a shot of Novocain from the dentist. I have been there since school got out, practicing my runs and trills for hours. My stomach is grumbling, and I have a chemistry test tomorrow.

I put my books in my satchel, turn off the light over the music rack, sling my heavy bag over my shoulder and walk to the wall. I flip the switch downward. The room plunges into darkness.

I feel the muscles of my pupils relaxing, but the darkness is as blinding as a spotlight. I stand there beside the wall, afraid to move. The sanctuary, as familiar to me as my bedroom, is full of pews, piano, stained glass and Communion Table, but it may as well be empty. Nothing. Terrifying.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters." -Genesis 1:1-2

Formless, nothing but the deep, but God's Spirit is hovering. I imagine a lump of clay from my science project, gray, with no separation or color, covered by still water, no moon to pull waves to their height, only depths and gravity pulling inward.

"And God said, 'Let there be light, and there was light.'" -Genesis 1:3

How cool it is to speak things into existence. I say, "Let there be ice cream,"

and there it is. I know a joke:

A scientist says to God, "I can create life in a test tube."

God says, "Show me."

The scientist walks to his freezer, takes out a dish with an embryo, and sets it on the counter to thaw. "There."

"Not so fast. Use your own dirt,"-- heat, carbon, flesh, uterus, eggs, sperm, chromosomes, whatever.

The first question the Westminster catechism poses is, "What is the chief end of man?" I wonder, why did God bother with Creation? Was He bored, lonely? I can't answer this for certain; however, the Bible says I am created in my Father's image, "in the image of God, he [God] created him [me]." I write, sing, play the piano, rearrange the furniture, paint with watercolors, and cook dinner from a Brenda Gantt recipe because it gives me joy to hear, see, and taste what I make. But, it gives me more joy when I share my angel biscuits with others, and they sit at the kitchen table, put gobs of butter on them, and drink sweet tea. What good is an art gallery if the lights are off? So, creating light first makes perfect sense: light puts the "en" with "joy".

This is the Westminster catechist's answer too, that the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever. I believe it is for our enjoyment, our joy joined with His, that God created light, also sunrise and sunset, Orange Beach and Mentone, green beans and pot roast, Orion's Belt and sun, July and January, redfish and deer. We have everything we need, and right here in Alabama.

I am never bored when I have a paintbrush and pots of Cerulean Blue, Permanent Rose, and Yellow Ochre so I can paint me some mountains, trees, and sky with fluffy clouds. I paint my signature as the final flourish. "It is finished," I say. But if I were stranded on Goat Island at Lake Martin, there would be no one to hang my paint-smeared paper on a wall, no one to stand back and say, "Now, that is nice." In five God-days, God created a world, but nothing He created was like Him, there was no one to say, "That looks good."

It is the same thing when I put on makeup because it is date night, and my husband says, "You look hot." That is precisely why God created Eve, so that Adam would have someone to remind him to pick up his pajamas in the floor and put the pillows on the bed every morning. (Not really; that whole "be fruitful and multiply" is the reason you don't care if the throw pillows are on the bed or not.)

Light doesn't just help me see how awesome my husband looks in a turtleneck, but it makes me feel and taste. When I walk outside my house in Alabama that is like a refrigerator, even in the summer (because that is how I like it), I get goose-pimples when the hot sun strikes my bare forearms. I turn my face to the sun even though I know I am going to need one of those special creams to make my freckles disappear. Sunshine is also what makes those Big Boy tomatoes grow so plump in an Alabama farmer's garden so I can eat them on white bread with mayonnaise at the Ag Commissioner's 'Mater Sandwich festival.

Light lets me see God, and it also makes me feel and taste Him. It warms me up so I can relax and enjoy Him. Joy is nothing if not shared. God's light provides everything I need to live, and without it everything dies. I guess that is why He created light first, but I will be sure to ask Him, for sure, when I see Him. The second question will be why God made my husband to put his dishes in the sink instead of the dishwasher.

Superstitions in the Home



* **COUPLES:** If a man wipes his hands on a woman's apron he will soon fall in love with her. This stems from the fact that a woman's perspiration is to be found on her apron.

By contrast, members of the opposite sex should never dry themselves on the same towel as this will invariably lead to a quarrel between them.

* **WASHING UP:** If you break a plate or cup you can expect another breakage before the end of the day unless you deliberately smash some other small item to avoid the bad luck.

* **WATER:** An English country superstition says that it is bad luck to throw any water out of the house after nightfall because it has long been regarded as a deterrent to the denizens of the night. By throwing it out you are weakening your protection during the hours of darkness.

* **DINING TABLE:** When rising from the table, take care not to upset your chair, for this is a sign that you have lied at some time during your conversation.

Anyone who lies down on a table will die within a year; any engaged girl who sits on a table while talking to her fiancé risks losing him; it is unlucky to change your position at the table after a place has been allocated to you; to place your chair back against the wall or fold your napkin after a meal at a friend's home will prevent you ever visiting there again.

* **MIRRORS and LOOKING GLASSES:** To break one will result in seven years bad luck. Early man, on seeing his image reflected in water, believed it represented his soul and should anything disturb this image, his own life was in danger. Mirrors have always been closely associated with magic. Mirrors are covered over with cloth in the room where someone has died for fear that anyone who sees himself in the glass will similarly die.

* **STAIRCASE:** It is unlucky to pass anyone on the stairs (cross your fingers if you do so). Stairways symbolized the means of ascending to the abode of the gods and it was dangerous to trespass; also, early stairways were very narrow and

two people passing each other left themselves open to attack from behind.

Stumbling on the staircase is said to be a good omen and may indicate a wedding in the household before long.

* **UPSTAIRS:** Do not sing in the bath as this will lead to sorrow before evening; any young girl who persistently splashes herself or her clothes when washing will end up with a husband who is a drunk.

Get out of bed on the right side. The left-hand side is associated with the Devil; but, if you can't avoid it, put your right sock and shoe on first.

You will always get the best night's sleep if your bed is positioned in a north-south direction with your head to the south - this will ensure a long life.

To be rich, point your head to the east; to travel widely, the west.

It is unlucky to put a hat on the bed.

* **HOUSEWORK:** China ornaments of animals should never be placed so that they face a door, for they will allow the luck to run out of the house.

It is unlucky to sweep any dust or waste material directly out of the house, as this will carry the good luck with it. Sweep such waste into the center of the room, collect it up in a pan and then carry the lot out of doors to avoid any repercussions.

A new broom should always be used the first time to sweep something into the house, to symbolize luck.

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Heard On the Street

by **Cathey Carney**



Congratulations to **Missy Jenkins** of Gurley who was our first correct caller for the hidden rosebud in the April issue. It was on page 39 under the cat on the New Leash on Life ad. See it now? I made it much too difficult and will make it easier for this month. Missy said that she had to look thru the magazine 3 times to find it. Missy is a stay at home mom of 3 boys and loves reading about our area's history!

A very special lady in Pearland, Texas will be having a birthday in May. On May 23rd, **Gladys Chunn Bryant** turns 91 years young! There will be a very large celebration there with over 100 guests invited to a dinner where Gladys will be honored. She has five generations of family in Huntsville and other parts of the U.S. and she is writing a story about her family for a future issue. Happy, Happy birthday to you Gladys!

Weather Anchor **Ben Smith** of WHNT Channel 19 has just won a prestigious award. Our very own **Ben Smith** took home the ABBY award for Best Weather Anchor in the state of Alabama! He is not only an ABBY winner but also an Emmy award-winning meteo-

rologist on WHNT News 19. The event took place in Birmingham on April 6, 2025.

The WHNT News 19 crew took home additional awards from the 2025 Alabama Broadcasters Association Ceremony. In total, the News 19 crew won six awards. We're very proud of our local station.

Hello to **Gertrud Nein** of Huntsville who contacted us recently. She is a lady whom we have known for years and is so young at heart. So it was a surprise when she told me that she will be turning 90 on her next birthday! Sending much love to you!

We were saddened to learn that **George (G. W.) Robinson** of Brownsboro had passed away after a battle with pancreatic cancer. G.W. loved to play music and was a fan of the late **Bill Monroe**. His exceptional masonry work as a brick layer can be found in buildings and houses throughout Madison County. He was a longtime member at Gurley Church of Christ. He was a kind man devoted to his family, and if you met him you never forgot him.

G.W. was preceded in death by his wife, **Fausteen (Williams)**, and one son, **David**. He was also preceded in death by his father, **Alfred "Tobe" Robinson**, mother **Bernice (Lambert) Robinson**, brothers **Daniel, Mark, William "Bill", Cleveland "Stevie"** and sisters **Betty Sue, Mary Jo, and**

Judy.

G. W.'s survivors include two sisters, **Martha Jean** and **Cathy**, one brother **Charley**, sons **Johnny (Renee)**, **George (Shelia)**, **James**, six grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren. G.W. was a good friend of **Bill Graviett** of Harmony Sound and you could often hear them playing guitar. He was a very special man and will be missed by many friends and family.

As a gardener, I love to hear good tips about growing flowers. **Clematis vines** look absolutely dried out and dead at the end of each season, but then they somehow sprout beautiful leaves and flowers in the spring. They put out vines pretty quickly in the spring and I read that a good planting tip would be to put each vine at the base of a climbing rose. That way they have something to climb on and you are getting both spring and summer color with your roses after the clematis stops blooming!

May 3, from 3-8pm, is the date for the wildly popular **Five Points Porchfest**. It is a music lover's annual event that thousands look forward to each year. It started out small years ago but has grown in popularity each year. It is free, and you just bring chairs, kids, pets and beverage of choice. Wear comfortable shoes. There are bands set up at selected front porches of the homes in Five Points. You listen for a while then

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move on to the next one. Pratt Avenue is a good place to start, east of Star Market & Propst. Look for the yellow signs.

I feed birds and as a result have lots of squirrels who love the sunflower seeds and peanuts. I get my seed at Costco, a 40 pound bag for less than \$25. Anyway I started seeing a really pretty **little blonde squirrel** with the gray ones, and she really stood out with her coloring. So I was just heartbroken when I saw her on the road in front of my house, having been hit by a speeding car. I just hope she died right away and didn't suffer. I brought her to my back garden and buried her, but it's sad not to see her anymore. For most people it wouldn't mean anything, but if drivers could pay more attention maybe there wouldn't be so many wildlife as well as lost pets killed on the roads.

Greetings to **Betty Smith** of Gurley, whom we have heard from recently, as well as **Karla Carter**, also of Gurley. We really like getting messages and notes from our readers.

I have hidden a **tiny magnifying glass** in this issue and it is larger than the rosebud last month, so you will find it. Be the first to call and you win a \$50 annual subscription to OHmagazine and don't have to search to find your latest issue!

Greene Street Farmers Market starts on Thursday, May 1st from 4-8. It is a weekly afternoon event, every Thursday, and something that many look forward to. Usually there's live music and crafts as well as delicious fresh fruits, hot foods, eggs, veges and popsicles. It's located at 208 Eustis Avenue, Huntsville. Your pets are invited too! 2025 dates: May 1st - October 30th.

Lowe Mill is a must see destination for everyone, but especially you folks who are new to Huntsville. It is filled with art studios where you can actually watch the artists at work and interact with them. Lots of interesting stuff to buy as well. They are open Wed-Saturday. Kids are welcome and you can bring your leashed dogs. Lots of musical events going on there as well.

Here's some information on their Saturday markets: Join them every Saturday, 11AM - 4PM, from May 3 until October 25 for the Outdoor Market. Vendors from all over the area will present their finest products, whether made-by-hand, second-hand or made by the earth. **Lowe Mill ARTS & Entertainment** will host this event throughout the grounds providing patrons, pickers, and art lovers with an open air shopping experience (weather permitting). Find them at 2211 Seminole Dr. SW Huntsville, AL 35805

I have an indoor cat who owns me, **Pumpkin**, 14 years old. I read recently that when you leave the house for grocery shopping etc. your cat thinks you are out hunting, like he would be if he could get out. So when you return from your shopping trip your cat wants to see what you came back with as a result of your "hunting." So now when I come home I have a special freeze-dried salmon treat for Pumpkin that he really likes. I can tell by his expression that he feels that I am a success at my hunting and he approves.

Special greetings to **Mr. and Mrs. Roger Nichols** of Huntsville who wrote to tell us that they really like the stories that our writers have been submitting and love the recipes. Thank you for your sweet note and

many thanks to our writers who continue to send their memories of our area! We could not continue this without you.

Wishing love to all our Moms out there, and especially to those who aren't physically with us but in our hearts.

Photo of The Month

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This sweet lady was a dental hygienist for Dr. Austin in Huntsville in the late 50s/early 60s. Can you identify her? Let us know and you win a subscription to Old Huntsville Magazine!



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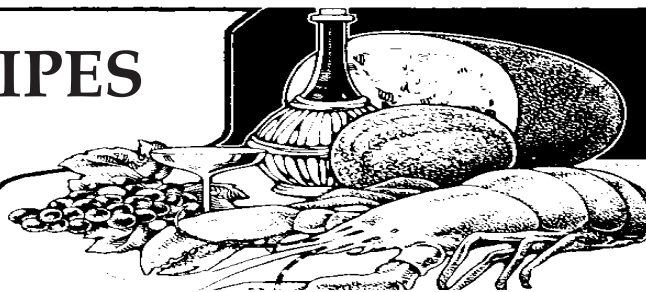
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Cool Eating for Hot Days

Strawberry Spinach Salad

1/3 c. light mayonnaise
1/4 c. unsweetened orange juice
1 t. sugar
1 t. poppy seed
1/2 lb. fresh baby spinach, washed, trimmed and torn into pieces

2 c. fresh sliced strawberries
Combine first 4 ingredients in a small bowl; stir well and set aside. Gently toss spinach and strawberries in a large bowl; arrange on 8 salad plates.

Drizzle 1 tablespoon poppy seed mixture over each salad.

Warm Potato Salad

2 c. cubed red potatoes, uncooked (skin may be left or removed per your preference)
2 T. finely chopped red onion
1 T. plus 1 t. white wine vinegar
2 T. fresh chopped chives
1 t. olive oil

1/2 t. sugar
1/2 t. salt
1/2 t. black pepper
1/2 c. bacon, cooked crisp and crumbled

Place potato in saucepan and add salted water to cover. Bring to boil, cover, reduce heat, and simmer 10 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Drain.

Place potato and onion in a bowl. Combine vinegar and remaining ingredients; stir well. Add to potato mixture and toss to coat. At serving sprinkle the bacon over all.

Two-Alarm Pepper Bread

4 slices French bread, 1" thick
1 T. butter, melted
1 t. dried parsley flakes
1/2 t. crushed red pepper flakes

Dash of coarsely ground black pepper

Place bread slices on ungreased baking sheet. Combine remaining ingredients in a small bowl; brush top side of each bread slice with butter mixture. Bake at

350 degrees for 10 minutes and bread is thoroughly heated. Serve warm. The crushed red pepper flakes can be reduced or increased based on your tastes.

Spicy Bean Salad

2 c. vegetable broth or water
1 c. rice
1 T. white wine vinegar
2 T. extra-virgin olive oil
1/4 t. chili powder
2 cloves garlic, minced
1/2 t. thyme
1/2 t. oregano
1/2 t. Dijon mustard
1 c. black beans, cooked (canned OK)
1 red pepper, seeded and sliced
1 green pepper, seeded and sliced
1 jalapeno, seeded and minced
2 T. fresh cilantro, chopped
2 scallions, thinly sliced

Cook the rice in the broth or water til done. In the meantime, combine the next 7 ingredients in a bowl and whisk well. Toss the cooked rice with the black beans and peppers and then with the

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dressing. Chill for an hour or longer, then add the cilantro and scallions.

Cherries & Cream

1 egg white
2 T. sugar
1/4 c. cream cheese
1 T. sour cream
2 t. white creme de cacao
1 c. pitted fresh sweet cherries (1/2 pound)

Beat egg white (at room temperature) in a small glass or stainless steel bowl at medium speed of an electric mixer until foamy. Gradually add sugar, beating at high speed until stiff peaks form; set aside.

Place cream cheese in a microwaveable cup and microwave, uncovered, on high for 45 seconds to 1 minute or until softened.

Combine cream cheese, sour cream and creme de cacao in a medium bowl, stirring well. Gently fold beaten egg white into cheese mixture. Place 1/4 cup pitted cherries into individual dessert dishes; top each with 1/4 cup cheese mixture. Chill until serving time. Garnish with fresh cherry halves.

Crunchy Caramel Cheesecake

2 8-oz. pkgs. cream cheese, softened

1/2 c. sugar
1 t. vanilla extract
2 eggs
20 caramels, unwrapped
4 T. milk
3/4 c. chopped pecans
1 graham cracker crust

Add the 20 caramels to a saucepan and over medium heat (with the milk) heat slowly til the caramels begin to melt. In a bowl, using an electric mixer, mix the cream cheese, sugar and extract. Mix well, add the eggs and mix again.

Add the pecans to the caramel mixture, pour evenly over the crust. Pour the cream cheese mixture on top of the caramel mixture. Bake at 350 degrees for about 40 minutes, middle can be slightly jiggly

Cool and refrigerate for about 2 hours. Take a few extra caramels and milk and heat til melted, pour over the cooled pie in a drizzling effect. May top with a few pecans for garnish.

Nutty Brown Sugar Pie

2 eggs, beaten
1 c. brown sugar
2 T. all-purpose flour
1 c. maple syrup
2 T. butter, melted
1 t. vanilla
2/3 c. pecans, chopped
Pinch salt
1 unbaked pie shell

Combine eggs, sugar and flour in a large bowl. Mix in the remainder of the ingredients, (not pie shell) and stir well.

Pour the batter into the thawed-out pie shell, bake in pre-heated 400-degree oven for 40 minutes.

Green Cabbage Salad

4 c. crisp, shredded cabbage
1/2 small jar pimiento slices
1/2 green pepper, diced
1 t. celery seed
1 t. salt

1/2 t. black pepper
3 t. Dijon or coarse ground mustard
4 T. sugar
3/4 c. garlic wine vinegar
1 garlic clove, minced
1/2 c. vegetable oil

Wash, drain and combine vegetables in a serving bowl. Put remaining ingredients in a blender and whirl til salad dressing is thoroughly mixed. Add dressing to salad just before serving.

Asian Salad

1 lb. pkg. broccoli slaw
4 green onions, chopped
3 oz. Ramen noodles, Oriental flavor

1/2 c. cashew nuts
1/2 c. sunflower seeds
1/4 c. canola oil
1/2 c. sugar
1/3 c. cider vinegar

Seasoning packet from the Ramen noodles

Break up the noodles and mix with onions and slaw. Mix oil, vinegar, sugar and seasoning and pour over the broccoli mix. Refrigerate for 24 hours. This allows all the flavors to mix, delicious!

Add cashew nuts and sunflower seeds an hour before serving.

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REMEMBERING THE PINE BLUFF GUN CLUB

by Doug Clark



It has been 50 years since the last Trap Shooter pointed their gun towards the bluff overlooking Horse Cove and shouted "PULL", and the last clay target set sail at the Pine Bluff Gun Club on Keel Mountain in Gurley, Alabama. The Pine Bluff Gun Club was the vision of John and Martha Pinkerton who partnered with friends Melvin and Lois Bloyer to create a place to shoot rifles and clay targets. While the years of operation were short (1968 through 1975), the Club's accomplishments were many as it rose to prominence in the State of Alabama, and the Southeast. Attracting skeet and trap shooters from all over the Southeastern United States, it became the go-to place for skeet and trap clay target shooting.

In its 8-year history, the Pine Bluff Gun Club hosted 5 State Trap Competitions, and 4 State Skeet Competitions which was a substantial number for one gun club. Each of these major competitions attracted up to two hundred shooters from all over the southeast. The view over the bluff was beautiful and shooters often brought their families to take in the experience. It was a common occurrence to see spouses in chairs taking in the scenery and the target shooting while their children played among the pine trees. It was indeed a family experience. The shooters and their families were not just customers, as many became friends of the Pinkertons and Bloyers.

So where did it all begin? Kerry Pinkerton, son of John and Martha, explained that his dad owned 237 acres on the western side of Keel Mountain where there were no roads at the time. In the early 1960s John bought a 1949 International TD14 bulldozer and when he was not working as an Electronic Technician for NASA, he was clearing land and planting pine

trees for his retirement investment.

John, Martha and their children Emily and Kerry became friends with Mel Bloyer, his wife Lois and their children Debbie and Lester whom they met at church. Kerry remembers that both families would go up to their land on Keel Mountain after church and have picnics. One time they all went to the bluff overlooking Horse Cove, and he remembers how pretty the view was except for some pine trees. Kerry stated that his mother, Martha Lee Huff Pinkerton had a knack for words and promptly named it "Pine Bluff."

At another picnic they were shooting shotguns at clay targets thrown from a hand thrower. Perhaps the idea of a gun club was born in their subconscious on that day. Shortly thereafter in 1965, both families began traveling to various gun clubs and asking about their operations. After a few months of planning and dreaming, Articles of Incorporation were filed on May 2, 1966, creating The Pine Bluff Gun Club. Listed as the incorporators were: John W. Pinkerton, Martha H. Pinkerton, Melvin G. Bloyer and Lois F. Bloyer. There were very few skeet, trap, and rifle shooting facilities in the state at that time and none in the North Alabama area. They saw a need and put into motion what has now become their dream. The creation of the Pine Bluff Gun Club!

Both families decided to sell their homes in Huntsville and move to the land on Keel Mountain.

A road had to be created from the top of Keel Mountain to Pine Bluff. For the next few months, every spare minute was spent on the bulldozer clearing a 50' wide dirt road about 4 miles long. Once cleared, the County Commission graded and graveled the road and promptly put up a sign at the top of the mountain declaring the new road "Range Road." Before they could move, they had to have water, and drilling for water close to a bluff could be tricky. Mel and Kerry met with a well driller and Mel told the driller he wanted to have the well "witched" first to determine where to drill. Mr. Pinkerton thought the idea was hogwash. Mel had become aware of a man on Keel Mountain who was known to possess that skill. So, Mel and Kerry rode to the other side of Keel Mountain near Cantrell's Grocery Store and located the man, Mr. Bayles Davis, sitting on his porch. Mel asked if he was any good at "witching"? Mr. Davis replied, "No guarantees but ain't never missed".

They took him back to the Bluff and he whipped out a large pocketknife and cut a forked sapling about 4' long. Holding one end of the fork in each hand he started walking around. Kerry said that as Mr. Davis walked around occasionally the end of the stick would bend strongly down. He did this for about 20 minutes, and finally stopped and said, "Thar a crick about 80' down that wanders from over near that big ole oak over past that big split hickory and comes right through thar". He asked Mr. Pinkerton where within that range he wanted the well? Mr. Pinkerton identified the spot and Mr. Davis proceeded to wander some more and shoved his branch in the ground proclaiming, "You'll hit water at 75 foot but better water at 120 foot, nothing much below that as this limestone runs out to the bluff". When the driller was informed of the spot, he just

shrugged his shoulders and started drilling.

Kerry said they hit water at 75' and good water at 120'. Kerry said he was 16 years old at the time and was amazed by what he witnessed and has since done some witching himself with some success. So, houses were sold, and trailers were purchased and brought up the mountain. Both families moved in and began life on Keel Mountain. Kerry stated that his sister Emily was 20 years old at the time and decided quickly that she missed city life and moved back to Huntsville with some of her friends.

The bulldozer was busy clearing the first trap field overlooking the bluff. Some blasting was necessary as they had hit the limestone rock quickly. Mr. Pinkerton hired Mr. Allen "Slim" Hollingsworth from Gurley to do the blasting. After blasting, they spread gravel for shooting positions, built a trap house to locate the newly purchased manually loaded trap machine and opened for business. A few years later, Kerry married Slim's daughter, Carolyn Hollingsworth and they remain married to this day.

The Pine Bluff Gun Club had just opened with one trap field when an old ratty pickup drove up and this older man in worn bibb overalls climbed out. He introduced himself as Bobo from Woodville, Alabama. Kerry said he called him Mr. Bobo and the name stuck. Mr. Bobo said he heard there was some kind of shooting place up here on the mountain and he always wanted to try trap shooting. He pulled this old well-worn Winchester Model 12 off the gun rack in his truck. The slide fell down on the worn-out shotgun. Kerry said, "We weren't expecting much, but would you believe it, Mr. Bobo hit 24 of 25 clay targets in his first ever round of Trap". Mr. Bobo would become one of the weekly shooters and a good friend to the Pinkertons and Bloyers.

News of the Pine Bluff Gun Club was spreading, and each week brought more shooters. There was a need for additional trap and skeet fields, and for workers. The operation of a trap house required a "trap boy" be inside the trap house to place a clay target on the throwing arm. Kerry was now driving the Keel Mountain school bus for Madison County High School, so Mr. Pinkerton asked Kerry to identify kids on the bus that might help during some of the matches.

It was from there that Ricky Olerich was hired as the first worker. Shortly thereafter Eddie Clark, my oldest brother, was hired. They were 15 years old at the time and Ricky remembers helping with shooting matches, helping build 2 skeet and 2 trap houses and with numerous projects at the Gun Club. The pay was \$1 per hour and Ricky said it was great because it gave them gas money for high school dating. The Gun Club grew to 5 trap and 4 skeet fields. It was then that I was hired and shortly afterward my younger brother Steve Clark was hired.

The following are some of the loyal shooters that would come weekly to shoot rounds of skeet or trap at the Pine Bluff Gun Club.

Mr. Bobo - Woodville

Manual Howard - Huntsville

Henry Stinson - Huntsville

Charles Daniels and his daughter Charlene who was about 10 at the time - Huntsville

Kelly Grider - Huntsville

Kirby Moore - Huntsville

Don Keller - Huntsville

Mr. Fred Klan and his family - Green Mountain

The most famous person that I recall competing at the

Pine Bluff Gun Club was Mike Lum of the Atlanta Braves. He participated in one of the competitions and shot 97 or 98 out of 100, which is excellent. As a big Braves fan, it was a memorable experience to get to talk to Mike Lum on the porch of the clubhouse in the summer of 1973.

The Pine Bluff Gun Club had grown into a highly desired place to shoot skeet and trap and became popular throughout the state and southeast while hosting many State Competitions. The beautiful bluff views and the friendliness of the Pinkertons and Bloyers made the Pine Bluff Gun Club a desired destination! Unfortunately, over time other gun clubs opened at more convenient locations such as on the Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, resulting in less shooters traveling to Keel Mountain, and to the closure of the Pine Bluff Gun Club.

When the Pine Bluff Gun Club was created, they had no way of knowing the impact it would have on so many people. There was a sense of pride among the Keel Mountain residents that there was such a beautiful Gun Club on the mountain. It provided great memories and work opportunities for us teenage boys and opened our eyes to the world of shooting clay targets, and to working and earning money. Lifelong friendships were formed between the Pinkertons, Bloyers and several shooters. One such friend and shooter was Charlene Daniel Bertus who was 10 years old when she started shooting clay targets at the Pine Bluff Gun Club with her father, Charles Daniel. Years later she became the Secretary for the State of Alabama Skeet Association. In her bio on the State Skeet Association website, it read:

"My shooting career began when I was about 10 years old at Pine Bluff Gun Club on top of Keel Mountain in Gurley. This club no longer exists but I have many happy memories."

I believe many other shooters share that same sentiment of their experiences at the Pine Bluff Gun Club.

May the memories of John and Martha Pinkerton, Mel and Lois Bloyer and the Pine Bluff Gun Club live on!



Coming Home (1947)

by Bill Alkire



Mom and I moved into Mrs. Gothrup's boarding house in the fall of 1945. The building and our apartment were sold. I was the only child that lived at the boarding house. We were to leave after mom finished her current local college courses.

While we were living there, mom delivered a baby boy. She worked at a local family restaurant serving tables after classes in the afternoon; from 12:00 to 7:00 Tuesday through Saturday. One of the ladies who worked for them generally looked after my baby brother as he was newly born, I needed little attention being seven years old.

I attended public elementary school Monday through Friday. Half a day on Saturday I spent at the Catholic Church where the Nuns taught us the Bible and the etiquette you should use in addressing women, elders, military or those in authority. I attended Kindergarten there as well. They were strict; however, it was rewarding to attend their classes.

We had an electric heater under the baby's bed to prevent him from getting cold. Our second-floor apartment was a long way

from the centralized coal-fired boiler that produced the radiator heat. The heater was nice in the early morning when the coal from the night before began to burn down. When the heat cooled down, the pipes from the steam heat would cool and start their bang or knocking sound.

At seven I was old enough to do most everything on my own. I also cared for my baby brother; feeding, diaper changing when needed. I ate with the tenants for dinner. I ate lunch in the kitchen with the hired servants. I learned about life and how the servants were treated poorly because of their skin color. It was an enlightened time and critical to my character building. They were children of God as the Bible tells us we are all descendants of Abraham. I learned there are those who tend to judge people on the wrong things instead of what is in the heart.

I was always a jokester and tried to make people happy. A smile is such a pleasant response to our problems. I decided to hide and scare my mom when she came home one night, a fun thing.

I contemplated all the places I could hide. First, under the bed; way too crowded and tight, even for a seven-year-old. Second, the clothes hamper; that's where I hid when I didn't want to eat asparagus, it was full of dirty clothes. The last possible place was under the baby's bed. Perfect! I told you about the electric heater, right?

I quickly slid under the baby's bed when I heard mom walking down the hall to our apartment. As she opened the door, I slid my buttocks against the electric heater, which had just come on. The radiant heat had heated the grill that protected anything from touching the heating element. My buttocks came within full contact with the heater grill. The heated grill singed my pajamas and created a waffle design on my buttocks.

Pain shot through my bottom as the grill burnt its way through the thin fabric. My mom didn't scold me as I thought, she put Vaseline on the burns and found a clean pajama bottom to sleep in. I never tried that foolish thing again.



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Tales from 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.

Most of the residences of Merrimack Village owed their living to the Mill and wages were barely enough to survive. There was not a lot of money passed to the kids. Since there was little or no money, fishing (Brahan Spring), Tonk, ball, or hunting with a sling shot was the summer passtime. A little explanation on some of these pastimes.

Fishing at the Spring; The Mill owned the spring and that is where they got water for the mill and the village homes. The mill had a 6 foot fence around the spring and they tried to keep folks from fishing except for a fishing rodeo once a year. The mill had maintenance employees who tried to keep us kids from fishing in the pond. The sporadic effort was a total failure, 40 to 50 year olds showing up 2 or 3 times a month trying to keep 12 to 15 year old kids out of an area where the gates did not go all the way to the ground. As we proved many times we could outrun them.

Tonk; This was a card game played with pennies since most had little or no money. The game was a rummy type 5 card draw and discard with a 3 of a kind or spread of sequential same suit. The most interesting game I remember is between Charles (Nub) Neil and Bobby Elrod. Nub's Dad had warned him to cut out the gambling of which they ignored. They were having a game in Nub's bedroom and Nubs' dad called the police to come and throw a scare into them.

As I understand there was a strong money Tonk game at the Elks Lodge on Franklin at noon. The players were some of the wealthy members of Huntsville and several dollars were exchanged. I hear Judge Banks father, Basil Banks (an excellent card player) was very successful at Tonk.

Ball; Any ball that we had was played many hours per day after chores and fishing.

Hunting; When the Mill built the housing for their employees they planted a nut & fruit tree in every yard. This encouraged squirrels, doves, & rabbits in the village and around in the open fields surrounding the village. Since we could cut our own stocks and discarded bike and auto inner tubes were readily available, we made our own sling shots. Some of us were proficient with hitting prey with rocks, marbles, or steel balls. This provided extra meat for the table.

Most of the things we did as kids would horrify parents today but without parks, telephones, TV, AC, or computers we spent most of our awake hours outside without supervision. Since everyone knew everybody and there was close proximity of housing, we were almost never alone. We were free of predators. It was a wonderful time and place to grow up. I call this childhood at the Rock.





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Setting the Record Straight, Part 3

by David Bowser



In part three of this article I will present to you some things not normally known about Russel Erskine, giving you a clearer picture of his person.

Being born Jan. 24, 1871 in Huntsville, AL was not an easy place or era to have lived in because of the Reconstruction Act after the Civil War.

As a young boy Russel liked to play at the train depot in Huntsville and found that the train passengers were hungry, so he started selling them apples. They had a snack and Russel had some money in his pocket. This was his first business venture. Russel caught the attention of the depot manager and was hired as an office boy. It has been reported that Russel became the depot bookkeeper but I can't confirm this.

At age 16 Russel's Dad moved the family to St. Louis, Missouri where Russel got a job as a shoe clerk for \$1.50 a week. He quit school preferring to work, but somewhere in this timeframe started taking accounting and bookkeeping classes. Later he moved to a wholesale drug company as their bookkeeper at age 21. This quote is from an article of the

"Studebaker Wheel" an in-house paper for Studebaker employees, printed June, 1928.

"He saw an opportunity to keep 2 sets of books and demanded it. He asked to do the work of 2 men. He got the assignment and one third more pay." This required more hours and no vacations for 3 years. Russel was a go-getter.

At age 27 he took a job as chief clerk for American Cotton Co. in St. Louis, by the time he was 31 he was Supervisor for 300 cotton gins in the South with that company. Do you see a pattern here?

In 1903 he married Annie Lyell Garland of West Virginia. Not much is written about her, but she loved playing the piano and would not tolerate any interruptions. His next job was with Yale Towne and Lock Co., then in 1910 he became Vice President of Underwood Typewriter Co. In 1910 he earned his C.P.A. certificate. By this time Mr. Erskine was sought after by top notch companies.

1911: Bingo, The Big Time; Job of a life time. The Studebaker Corp. hired him on as Treasurer and member of the Executive committee. Starting salary: \$20 thousand big ones a year!!! That sure beats selling apples! Just like always Mr. Erskine got right to work and in 6 months had cut bookkeeping forms from 4000 to 1500. This alone saved the company thousands of dollars in paper.

A little tidbit; Russel's ancestors were early settlers of Huntsville. His great grandfather, Albert Russel, started as a private and rose to a Colonel in the Revolutionary War. He is buried in Maple Hill cem-

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etery. He had great uncles who served with the Confederacy as doctors who latter moved to Memphis with practices there. One died while tending to victims of the Yellow Fever epidemic. Russel enjoyed collecting letters and mementos of his ancestors, he also liked decorating with Scottish and English themes.

In 1913 Mr. Erskine became First Vice President of Studebaker.

The year was 1915 and Europe is at war and the U.S. is teetering on the edge of entering it too, but most Americans and President Wilson prefer neutrality. For now.

1915 is a milestone year for him. Albert Russel Erskine became the first non-family member to head up Studebaker as President, but 1915 is a bitter-sweet year for Russel. That year his mother passed away, but on the good side, the Erskines adopted a 6 year old boy. Russel promptly named him "Russel Erskine Jr." "Russ" for short. The promotion to President of Studebaker was positive.

From this point forward Mr. Erskine's life would really become interesting. He would meet and befriend people and do and see things that he might have never imagined as a young boy in Huntsville, Alabama. It was not long before he started improving employees lives. Paid vacations, a pension plan, bonuses and within a few years raised wages nearly 300%. He was fond of test driving new Studebakers, and in 1915 drove a new Studebaker 6 from South Bend, Ind. to New York City. 1,600 miles.

His favorite game was golf,

liked playing poker, smoking cigars and having a drink. He kept a dictionary handy, and for a short diversion would read it. His vocabulary was remarkable.

South Bend, Indiana was now his adopted city and he made a mark there by supporting various charities and causes. Later, a list of his works will be published. Also, work was started on his 30-plus room mansion.

1917: War! The U.S. entered the "War to end all Wars" World War I. Mr. Erskine sent a telegram to President Wilson offering Studebaker's factories for the war effort. They made harbor mines and 4.7 gun carriages. Mr. Erskine then stopped work on his home feeling it not right at that time to build such an opulent home while our service people were in such horrid conditions overseas.

As you can see, Mr. Erskine was very ambitious. He worked hard and played hard and had little time for those who did not work hard. At the same time he remembered where he came from and those hard times after the uncivil war. Mr. Erskine could be good to people and worthy causes.

Next.....Well.... buy the next issue of Old Huntsville magazine and find out. Pretty soon we are going to get into some nitty-gritty stuff.



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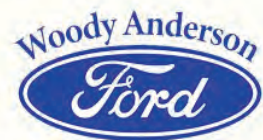
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"I'm lost and I've gone to look for myself. If I should return before I get back, please ask me to wait."

Jimmy Allen, Paint Rock

THE MONTH OF MAY AND KYLE'S BIRTH

by Iolanda Hicks

There are several interesting history facts and special days that stand out in May. The Month of May is the 5th month of the year with 31 days and its name originates from Latin. May is named after the Roman goddess, Maia, and that name is shared with a Greek goddess. Maia has a few meanings, with Mother, nurse and midwife being 3 of them. "April showers bring May flowers" is almost a sing song, short quote, which originated some time in the 1500s and the Lily of the Valley happens to be the flower for May. It is the month in North America that marks the beginning of summer and the end of spring.

Some of what May is known for are as follows: May Day, the first, is sometimes known as International Worker's Day and in some places, festivals, Maypole dancing still happens; Cinco the Mayo is on the 5th, celebrating the Mexican Army's victory over the French Empire at the Battle of Puebla; Mother's Day is on the second Sunday of the month, honoring motherhood and our mothers; Memorial Day is on the last day of the month, honoring our veterans who died while serving in the U.S. military; and last but not least, the Kentucky Derby and the major auto racing event, the Indianapolis 500, is always held in this special month!

Events, good and bad, occur to each one of us all the time, as the months and years pass. One memory of mine happened on the evening of May 30th, 2004. It was a really stormy night and the weather was not helicopter friendly. For the event I am sharing, a helicopter would have saved time but that didn't happen. I was babysitting my 2 and a half year old first-born grandson, Joshua, on the evening of the 30th, while my son took his wife to Huntsville Hospital's Women & Childrens.

Grandson number 2 was on his way, Kyle. It was such a strange night with all the thunder, rain and lightning! Kyle was born late in the evening but neither his mother nor his father got to hold Kyle before he was whisked away and transported by ambulance to the Children's Hospital in Birmingham, Alabama. It took probably twice as long or more that way than by air, but flying to the destination was not an option with the weather being so stormy.

Kyle was born a blue baby and the attending doctor did not hesitate to say that Kyle was the bluest baby she had ever seen. I soon found out

that Kyle had a condition called Transposition of the Greater Arteries (TGA). TGA is a congenital heart defect "where the aorta and pulmonary artery are attached to the wrong ventricles in the heart."

Mom and Dad came home the next day with no baby. Kyle was in Birmingham having a procedure preformed on that tiny little body, allowing more oxygen to flow through his even smaller arteries. A life-saving plan was being orchestrated as expediently as was possible. I remember sitting in the kitchen listening to all the calls my son was making to try and save his son, starting the day after his son was born. Mom was sitting on the couch, staring straight ahead, looking so lost. No words of encouragement or consolation helped either parent that day.

Tears came freely during those first 48 hours thinking of that sweet boy, all alone with strangers. Word soon came for what was next for Kyle. He was to fly by medical transport to the Childrens Hospital in Boston, Massachusetts on Tuesday, Jun 1st. The next few days were crazy and crucial. Kyle went through tests, the next day, in Boston. On Thursday, his little 4-day old body was attached to a heart machine and corrective surgery was performed to switch those arteries to the right parts of that infant's heart. Dr. Pedro J. del Nido performed the surgery and it was a success.

It is my belief that God guided that doctor's hands on that day. I have heard since, that Dr. del Nido is Chairman of that hospital's Department of Cardiac Surgery. For 2 decades, Kyle has had to go for yearly check ups with a cardiologist in Huntsville and all those have been good. That very blessed young man turns 21 on May 30, 2025.

There is more that can be said of this fifth month as there is to say for every one of the 12 months of the year but for time sake, I will cut this article short. From Pinterest, I would like to share a children's poem that I think makes for a sweet ending to my May story:

*May is the month of sunshine and flowers,
birds in their nests, and one or two showers.
Games to play and kites to fly or just looking
at the sky. We could spend a year this way, if
the year were made of May.*

"Some national parks have long waiting lists for camping reservations. Something is very wrong when you have to wait a year to sleep next to a tree."

Bill Sutterland, Woodville

News from 1885

Declared Insane

In the case of Binder, the man who, a few weeks ago placed a cross tie on the track of the M & C Railway, three miles below Huntsville, it was yesterday decided by Judge Richardson to send him to the State Lunatic Asylum at Tuscaloosa. Binder, it will be remembered, was the party who attempted to hew down the flag staff at the National Cemetery, in Chattanooga, and also raised considerable cain at the engine room of the Bell Factory, recently.

Stick Ringing Man

Two days ago the "Stick Ringing" man took possession of the corner of Randolph Street and the Square, and he did quite a thriving business. Yesterday the "Electric Shock Battery" man installed himself on the other corner and his machine attracted a large crowd all day.

Early Morning Business in the Market House

In the gray dawn of the early morning, when all outdoors is still free from the hurry and bustle of trade, the interior of the city market house presents a gay and lively appearance. The early customers are generally hotel stewards and proprietors of boarding houses who come early to get the choicest steaks and roasts for their tables. They are all a jolly and good-natured lot of men, always smiling and never out of temper. We have a world of respect for butchers especially the muscular ones.

A Real Cup of Coffee

One of the constant fixtures of the market house is a worthy woman "Leathy" Edwards. First thing in the morning she is to be found serving up hot coffee to her many customers. Her coffee is real coffee and no mistake. It is the cup that cheers and never inebriates.

"The key to a beautiful, well-kept lawn is a good mower. I highly recommend one who is muscular and shirtless."

Maxine

Mrs. Edwards has been talking lately about going to Tuscaloosa and the stall owners of the market house are all sad at the announcement. If they would all get together and get aunt "Leathy" a sealskin saque we think she might be persuaded to stay.

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WILLIE JEAN THOMASON STEPHENS - MY MOTHER

by David M. Stephens

My father called her Willie Jean, her friends just called her Jean, our family called her Mimi, and I called her Momma, but we all called her because she was the rock foundation that our entire family stood upon and the glue that bound us together.

My mother was born May 2, 1932 in the little town of Langston, Alabama, halfway between Scottsboro and Guntersville. Her father was a farmer and master carpenter, and her mother was a homemaker. She also had a sister named Ada Jane, who was five years older.

"You don't manage people; you manage things. You lead people."

Adm. Grace Hooper

In 1937, the Guntersville Dam would soon flood my grandfather's farmland, so TVA bought his farm. In 1938, he packed up the family and headed to Madison County, where the soil was rich and the farmland was cheap. He bought an old farmhouse and sixty-six acres. They lived in the old farmhouse until my grandfather could build a new one.

The new house had no running water or electricity, but there was a hand-dug well a few feet from the front porch where they drew water with a bucket. They had an outhouse in the backyard, which my mother said was "Colder than a well digger's pick in Utah" during the harsh winters. The house was heated by an open fireplace in the living room and a wood-burning cook stove in the kitchen. Electricity finally reached their house in 1948 when my mother was 16. My grandfather added a bathroom onto the side of the house and installed a sink with running water in the kitchen. Then he bought a new electric stove for my grandmother to cook their meals.

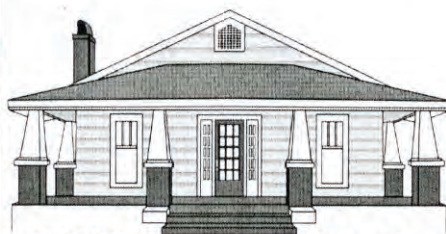
Their lives became more comfortable; however, the work was still hard. Momma said her father's winters were spent doing any carpentry work he could find. He helped build Wheeler Dam, which took him away from home for months at a time, and Momma and her sister had to handle the chores on the farm. Her father raised hogs for meat and extra money. They had cows for milk and mules for plowing, and they all had to be fed and cared for. They also raised chickens for eggs and meat; however, my mother turned those chickens into pets. The chickens loved to be held and petted and even let her paint their claws like toenails. She said the chickens would lift their feet and prance around the yard like they were something special with their painted feet.

Springtime was spent helping in the fields. They planted corn for the livestock and cotton for a cash crop. Momma's summers were spent walking row after long row of cotton, chopping out the weeds. This was an extremely hot and tiring job, but since my grandfather had no sons, the two daughters had to help with the crops.

Momma enjoyed her childhood but knew the farm was not where she wanted to spend her life. She had been dating Milton, her future husband, for several years while she was a teenager, and they had plans of getting married when Momma finished high school. On May 2, 1950, Momma turned eighteen years old. On May 18, 1950 Momma walked across the New Market High School stage and received her high school diploma. Then, on May 20, 1950, Dad borrowed six dollars from his

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father, and he and my mother drove to Iuka, Mississippi, where they were married in the living room of the Preacher's house. Momma always told me the Preacher said all in one breath, "I now pronounce you man and wife. That will be six dollars, please." Daddy paid him with the six dollars he had borrowed from his dad.

They moved to Huntsville and began their careers. Momma worked for the Army on Redstone Arsenal for thirty-two years, and Daddy worked for the local Chevron Oil jobber in Huntsville for over thirty years. They raised two sons and enjoyed over sixty-seven years of marriage.

I have so many stories I want to share about their lives, and I will try to keep writing some in the future, but today, I will finish with this little story.

My mother spent her retirement traveling and working in her flower beds. She hated weeds, which probably stemmed from her days of chopping cotton, and she loved pulling weeds from her flower beds. A year before Momma passed, she was trying to schedule a meeting with her financial advisor. They kept missing each other's calls, so the advisor's secretary told Momma she would have the advisor call on Friday morning. That Friday, Daddy came to my house to work in his garden, and Momma stayed home to answer the call.

Well, it was a beautiful day, and as Momma sat looking out the window at her flower beds, she decided to go outside and pull a few weeds. They had cordless phones, so she grabbed the one on the table between their recliners and walked out to the backyard.

A few hours later, Daddy returned home and as he entered the house he yelled for Momma, but she didn't answer. He looked out the back window and saw her working in the flower beds; he also noticed the light flashing on the answering machine. He pushed the play button, and sure enough, it was the advisor.

Daddy flew out the back door and yelled, "Honey! Did you come out here and miss your call again?"

Well, that lit my mother on fire. She spun around, stuck her arm in the air, and said, "I have been holding this thing in my hand all morning long, and the #\$@%&% has not rung one single time!!!"

Daddy looked at what she was holding in her hand and said, "Well, Honey, that's probably because you are holding the TV remote control."

Momma passed away on March 19, 2018, at eighty-six years old, and our family has never been the same. I miss her, her wisdom and her smile every day.

A New Market man says his wife is an accomplished after-dinner speaker. Also before and during dinner.



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A Mother's Day Story

by Sue Jones Cross

I had a wonderful magical childhood growing up in the late 50s, early 60s in a cozy, friendly little town named Junior, West Virginia. Everybody knew everybody, all the kids played together in the backyards and all the stay-at-home Mothers (mine included) watched over each other's kids while they cleaned, cooked, baked, dried clothes outside in the sunshine and canned fresh food from their gardens. Nobody had much money but we as kids never knew that. We all went to church and school activities together, we grew up happy, cared for and we felt very loved during our young lives.

When I was a sophomore in high school I remember a particular event when my Mother "saved the day." At that time, all four classes (freshman through senior) held basketball tournaments and we always tried to win. This was not varsity basketball with our regular selected cheerleaders, but all the boys in all classes were eligible to play in rounds until the better team won. So I decided to try out for cheerleader and actually won the election. I learned what to do and practiced for weeks in our backyard, on the porch, in my room; jumping, spinning, clapping, making up new routines. My Mother was my coach, working right alongside me.

Finally the day of the games arrived and I had memorized all my cheers. She sent me off on the school bus with my outfit of class colors consisting of: a very full circle skirt of navy blue corduroy with gold satin lining; gold long sleeved cable knit sweater; white bobby sox and new snow-white tennis shoes with pom-poms tied into the laces.

I was ready, a bit nervous but excited to be representing our class. The gym was overflowing with students, parents, teachers, family members and visitors. The whistle blew and the game started.

I started leading cheers from the sidelines. When the first timeout was called, that was my cue to go to work. I ran out to the middle of the gym floor, turned around to face my class and all the many, many, many visitors - and FROZE. The sight of all those people looking at me standing there all alone, waiting for me to do something - just took my breath away. I panicked. I forgot everything I had learned. I couldn't think, couldn't get any air into my lungs and my feet refused to move.

It seemed like hours went by but in reality was probably a few seconds. I finally got my bearings and made the best of it. Thankfully the break was short so when the game resumed I grabbed a pen and paper and ran to the school office in a panic to call my Mother. (I can't remember why she couldn't be at the game but it was a good thing she was home).

After she verbally dried my tears and got me calmed down, she slowly and clearly went over each cheer I had learned. With great clarity and calmness she reviewed the movements - when to jump, when to clap - everything. My memory returned and I went back to the gym a new kid - full of poise, confidence, purpose and smiles. I successfully completed the game with my dignity intact - all because of my dear sweet Mother. She saved me and the day!

This was just one of many loving stories about my precious Mother. She passed away in 1998 and I still miss her every single day. You never forget your Mom.

PS - we lost the game that day, so we didn't move any farther in the playoffs. I finally decided that my cheerleading days were over forever! I had been in our school's marching band since fifth grade playing a clarinet, so I knew I could do that, and that activity I could stick with!

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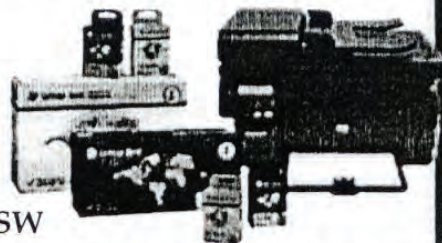
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1916 Town News

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

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

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

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

* Brothers Collide in Auto Accident

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

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

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

* For Rent - two rooms, only one block to town, electric lights, use of telephone. Telephone 158, party 1 or apply in person to home at 206 Green Street.

* John A. Royal is offering \$5 for information that may lead to the return of his wife. He is offering a reward of 2-1/2 cents per pound and says she weighs in at 200 pounds and is 38 years old. She is 5 feet 3 inches tall. She disappeared last Wednesday.

* J.D. Bragg Suffers \$1000 Fire at Dallas Today

At about 2 in the afternoon fire of unknown origin starting in the soft drink stand of Ben Moring at Dallas Village destroyed the general mercantile store and its contents belonging to J. D. Bragg and also his residence adjoining. The residence was occupied by Mr. Walker, who saved practically all of his household goods. Mr. Bragg's store and contents are a total loss. He carried no insurance on his stock of goods.



**Happy Mother's Day to all the
Beautiful, Loving Moms!**
Our love for you lasts all through the Year!

With Love to the
Huntsville High Class of 1966

Oscar Llerena

The Rock Cliff Service Station, Part II



"Goob"

by David L. Bacchus

There is a lot I could write about the years my wife, Sandra, and I have had together, but this is a story of that rock store that was close to her childhood home and the folks who ran it. All three of the rock structures, the store and two houses, were built by Carl Morring, Sr. whose farm, called "Poplar Terrace," was directly across the highway. The Morrisings were long time residents of the area, having a large estate that had been in the family as far back as the late 1800s to early 1900s.

When the Lee Highway through North Alabama (U. S. 72) was constructed, with initial grading beginning in 1933, the new road would pass directly through Carl Morring's farm. Carl may have decided to take advantage of the situation by building a service station at the resulting intersection of the new Lee Highway with the already existing Dug Hill Road anticipating that a lot of automobile traffic would soon be flowing that way.

Supporting the timing of this decision is a 1936 USGS Topographical Map of the area showing that both the service station and the two houses were already present. Their construction, therefore,

must have occurred sometime between 1933 and 1936. The rock for the outer walls of the store, as well as the two houses, could even have very well come from the same source as that used in building the highway. It also appears that the service station had been, from the very start, given the name Rock Cliff. This is based on a Huntsville Times article of August 8, 1937 concerning the paving of the Lee Highway between Huntsville and Scottsboro that states "the top coating will be placed as far as the Rock Cliff filling station."

It is currently unknown who originally operated the Rock Cliff Service Station. By the early-to-mid 1940s, at least, we know that the proprietors of the store were Wessie Miller's parents, John Monroe Miller, Sr. and his wife Bessie Pearl Taylor Miller (more familiarly known as Pop and Granny by their children and grandchildren). John, like most other men who grew up in that area, had been a farmer for much of his life and according to the 1940 Federal census was still farming at that time. It is thus entirely possible that John and Bessie were not the original proprietors of the service station but assumed this position sometime later.

In any event, when John and Bessie did begin operating the Rock Cliff store it was both a service station and a small grocery. It also served as both a place of business and the residence of the Millers, the store occupying the left (east side) of the building and the Miller's living quarters consisting of the two rooms on the right. As did many country homes and buildings at that time, the store, as well as the two houses, had no plumbing and thus no indoor bath facilities. Water was provided by a well beside the store, and an outhouse was located out back. When wash day came around, Bessie had a black iron pot at the side of the building that she heated water in. Yet despite these inconveniences by today's standards and the limited space available, the 1950 Federal census shows John and Bessie residing there with the three youngest of their eight children, Alton, Laura and Doris, all still-single adults ranging in age from 20 to 26.

To say the J. M. Miller family was living in cramped quarters would certainly be a gross understatement. To make do, one of the two rooms they resided in served as a kitchen and eating area, the second as both a living room and a bedroom, with Laura and Doris sleeping on a couch that made into a bed. At some point, Jimmy, a son of John and Bessie's oldest child, Pauline, began sleeping there as well, having a bed in the back of the store with a curtain around it for the sake of privacy.

Concerning the two rock houses close by, it's not clear ex-

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"France"

actly when Wessie and Lyndall moved into the one Sandra grew up in. Having married shortly after WWII ended when Sandra was age 2, they had lived first on Patton Street (later becoming Pratt Avenue) in Huntsville but had moved to the Rock Cliff area at least by 1950. The other rock house was occupied, possibly at about the same time frame, by Bill Martin and his wife Lorene. Bill, about the same age as John Miller, was a carpenter by trade.

Sandra can recall getting in trouble when she and other kids would be playing ball out back and the ball would accidentally go into Bill Martin's garden. She said he was very picky about his garden and didn't like the idea of kids stepping foot into it.

Sometime in the early 1950s, John and Bessie turned their Rock Cliff business over to their third oldest child, son Ronald Earl "Hick" Miller, Sr., and his wife Wilma. They had two small children at the time, Gayle and Sarah, with the family later gaining two more children, Ronald Jr. and Deborah. Hick, by the way, was actually called Buddy Hick by other Miller family members, but he wasn't the only son of John and Bessie with the term "Buddy" attached to his name. There was also Buddy John M., Buddy Wessie and Buddy A.

About the time Buddy Hick and Wilma began operating the store, John and Bessie moved out and into a white block house directly behind it on Dug Hill Road. Whether Buddy Hick and Wilma ever lived at the store

is currently unclear, but in any event they would operate the store for only a short period of time, a couple of years at most. By February 1954, John and Bessie's second oldest child, daughter Consta, with her husband, France, had taken over the reins. They had one daughter, Judy Marie, age 9, who, being only about eighteen months younger than Sandra, had become one of her closest friends.

Judy, by the way, has generously provided her own memories of the store as well as those of her daughter, Tammy, and Laura Miller's son, Mark Jones providing a vital part of this story.

Consta, called "Goob," and France definitely did not reside at the store but lived, instead, in Ryland, about a mile away. With their home having been located adjacent to the Southern Railroad line, Sandra, as a young girl frequently spending the night there, has vivid memories of hearing the sound of trains that would occasionally pass very close by.

Goob and her husband France would continue to run the store for many years, although Sandra recalls it was primarily "Aunt Goob," as she called her, who did most of the running. Sandra remembers Goob, in fact, being the one who usually pumped gas out front when the occasion arose and handled the day-to-day business of the store.

When customers did make a purchase, Goob, understanding how times were often hard, would allow them to pay on credit if needed. For years she had a book she kept and would simply record in it by hand who made each purchase and the amount. It would be years later before she would finally get an adding machine to make things easier.



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More MAY-Hem

by Elizabeth Wharry

If something is strange, quirky or just downright weird, it will catch my attention. One of those attention getters are some of the bizarre laws from around the country. It would actually be quite costly to remove them from the books, so they are not enforced much any more.

In Florida, if a woman is unmarried, she may not parachute on Sunday. It is illegal to bathe while nude. In Sarasota, don't get caught singing while wearing swimwear. And absolutely NO fishing off a bridge from a moving vehicle.

In Mississippi, it is illegal to sell cat meat for human consumption. (Cats and rabbits look similar when they are skinned out). Want to shave in the middle of Main Street? That's a minor misdemeanor. In Temperance, one's dog must wear a diaper in public. Drugstores may not sell poison to children.

Texas has some doozies. It is illegal to use a feather duster in a public building (especially if the feathers are still attached to the bird!) Port Arthur forbids obnoxious odors to be emitted from the body in an elevator. In certain cities, it is illegal to go barefoot outside one's home. It's a violation of "sanitation and appearances".

Nebraska says you may not fly a plane while drunk. It is illegal to go whale hunting (Nebraska is land locked). Do not sneeze or allow a child to burp during church services or parents are subject to arrest. And just to keep things really weird, leather false teeth are verboten!

In Arizona, do NOT allow your horse, donkey or mule to sleep in the bathtub. Parents, do not croon nursery rhymes to your children after 8PM. Let the horse, donkey or mule get in trouble for that!

In New Mexico, it is illegal to dance while wearing a sombrero. In Las Cruces, don't carry a lunch pail in public. I think one would look silly dancing while carrying a lunch pail.

Want to ride a bicycle in a public pool? California says that's a no go. So is wearing cowboy boots unless one has at least 2 cows. Going to drive sheep down Hollywood Blvd? Best count them first. The limit is 1999. If you cry on the witness stand, that is considered contempt of court.

In Idaho, age discrimination is rampant. One may not own a motorcycle over the age of 88. While in Boise, no fishing from the back of a giraffe. It's Sunday, and the kiddies want to ride the merry go round. No way! That is a minor misdemeanor.

I hope you have gotten a grin, a giggle or a guffaw from these silly laws. If you would like to see more of them, please let our editor know.

Happy Mother's Day!

"My wife wants me to wear a bracelet that belonged to her grandfather. It says 'Do Not Resuscitate.'"

Rodney Dangerfield

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Loving Life at Terrace Lake in Guntersville, Alabama

L D Rogers is a writer for Old Huntsville Magazine and here he is enjoying a Saturday afternoon with everyone reading the magazine! It's always an exciting day at Terrace Lake when the new issue arrives.

Here's what L D has to say: "Because of medical problems, I have been living at Terrace Lake Assisted Living in Guntersville for over 2 years now. I should have moved here sooner. It is a wonderful place to live. We do fun activities, celebrate birthdays and holidays together, and will soon enjoy our spring picnic by the lake."

"I have been doing a lot of writing since I've been here and sending my stories to Old Huntsville Magazine. A while back I showed one of the ladies an issue with a story of mine in it and she really liked it. From then on, I had my daughter pick up an extra copy. Then I found out that she was passing the magazine on to some other ladies, so I asked Carrie to bring more copies.

This is a picture of the ladies that really love the magazine."

"We want to thank Cathey Carney, her team, and all the Old Huntsville readers and writers for a magazine that we enjoy so much!"



Left to Right: Mary Hughes, Madelyn Stanton, L D Rogers and Margaret Anthony

ABSURD NEWS HERE AND THERE

The fattest man who ever lived was Robert Earl Hughes of Fish Hook, Illinois. He weighed 1,069 pounds in the last year of his life, and his waist measurement was 124 inches. When he died in 1958 he was buried in a piano case and taken to the cemetery by a moving van.

- At full maturity Claude Seurat - the skinniest man who ever lived - had a back-to-chest thickness of only three inches.

- On June 13, 1948 a Los Angeles resident named Jack O'Leary caught a bad fit of hiccups. It was not until June 1, 1956 - about 160 million hiccups later that the fit finally ended. During that time Jack lost 64 pounds and received through the mail over 60,000 suggestions for cures of the hiccup.

clearly at night than long dresses or slacks.

- In 1893 a young man was found dead on a county road in Kentucky, with fourteen bullet holes in him. The coroner's jury rendered a verdict of "death by undue excitement."

- A physician told the Madison County medical society, in 1909, that one of his patients, a young woman, was attacked with frightful pains in her legs; that after two weeks of suffering she recovered and it was found that she was six inches taller than before. The report was received with impressive silence. No medical organization has been able to explain this.

- A Chicago native turned himself into the police in 1917 for bigamy. An investigation revealed

he was married to nine women at the same time. About his arrest, he said, "This is much easier."

* Police in Nashville, Tennessee interrogated a suspect by placing a metal colander on this head and connecting it with wires to a photocopy machine. The message "He's lying" was placed in the copier, and police pressed the copy button each time they thought the suspect wasn't telling the truth. Believing the "lie detector" was working, the suspect confessed.

* A Memphis man who later said he was "tired of walking" stole a steamroller and led police on a 5 mph chase until an officer stepped aboard and brought the vehicle to a halt.

"Having a baby is like taking your lower lip and forcing it over your head."

Carol Burnett

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PET TIPS FROM ANGEL

Hummingbirds in Your Garden

A good way to attract the hummingbirds is to plant a hummingbird garden. A hummingbird garden can be rather large, rolling across several acres, to very small such as a window-box planter or a couple of plants and feeder on a porch. Hummingbirds have no sense of smell, so what the flower smells like doesn't really matter. Choose trumpet flowers like those on a Honeysuckle plant, or a Trumpet Vine. If you don't know the name of a particular flower, don't worry.

Hummingbirds love to drink nectar from flowers and feeders. Hummingbird feeders can be purchased and come in all shapes and sizes. You can make your own hummingbird feeder using old bottles and other things around your home.

As much as hummingbirds need nectar as part of their daily diet, you will also need water to attract them. Hummingbirds need water to drink and bathe.

It is easy to incorporate water into your hummingbird garden by adding a water mister that will not only water the plants, but allow the hummingbirds to take a quick shower. Hummingbirds are also attracted to bird-baths with fountains.

Hummingbirds are attracted to an area that has lots of little bugs to eat. They need protein to survive and eating tiny bugs like gnats and spiders give them that needed protein. Don't use pesticides around hummingbirds. They will take care of those annoying little bugs for you.

Hummingbirds love to play around in the sunshine and even take a little sun bath, however, they also need shade and wind protection. They are attracted to areas that have both. They need the sunshine just like we do. However they need the shade to rest, perch and nest.

It is also important to protect your hummingbirds from predators such as cats and blue jays. They can feel more fearless than other birds simply because of their speed. They can even become accustomed to certain people they know. They can, in time, zip all around someone's head and ankles without a care.

To a hummingbird, you are a 90 foot tall monster that can eat them. They don't know that you would never hurt them until you can prove it. When you move, make sure your movements are slow and deliberate. Try sitting out with the hummingbirds on a daily basis.



Change the feeders during daylight hours so they can see who is providing such good nectar. After a while, sit with a feeder right next to you and watch them drop by for a drink. Eventually, they may start to think of you as a perch.

Troubleshooting

If you are having problems attracting hummingbirds, be patient. Hummingbirds will be in virtually every part of the Americas at one time or another.

Here are some other tips you might want to try to help you attract the most hummingbirds:

- Try placing your hummingbird feeders near flowers that hummingbirds like.
- Run strings or line to create a place for the them to perch.
- Spread feeders out, or place a lot of feeders bunched together so that a territorial hummingbird cannot monopolize all of them.
- Place the feeders at a variety of heights. Some hummingbirds feel more comfortable feeding at higher levels of fourteen feet or so, while others like to feed at ground level.

As you can see, with a little thought and patience, attracting hummingbirds is not all that difficult and will be rewarding to you!

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From the Desk of Tom Carney

The Wooden Bowl

by Tom Carney

A frail old man went to live with his son, daughter-in-law, and four-year old grandson. The old man's hands trembled, his eyesight was blurred, his step faltered.

The family ate together at the table. But the elderly grandfather's shaky hands and failing sight made eating difficult. Peas rolled off his spoon onto the floor.

When he grasped the glass, his hands were trembling and milk spilled on the tablecloth.

The son and daughter-in-law became very irritated with the mess.

"We must do something about father," said the son.

"I've had enough of his spilled milk, noisy eating and all the food on the floor."

So the husband and wife set up a small table and chair in the corner of the kitchen.

There, Grandfather ate alone while the rest of the family enjoyed dinner.

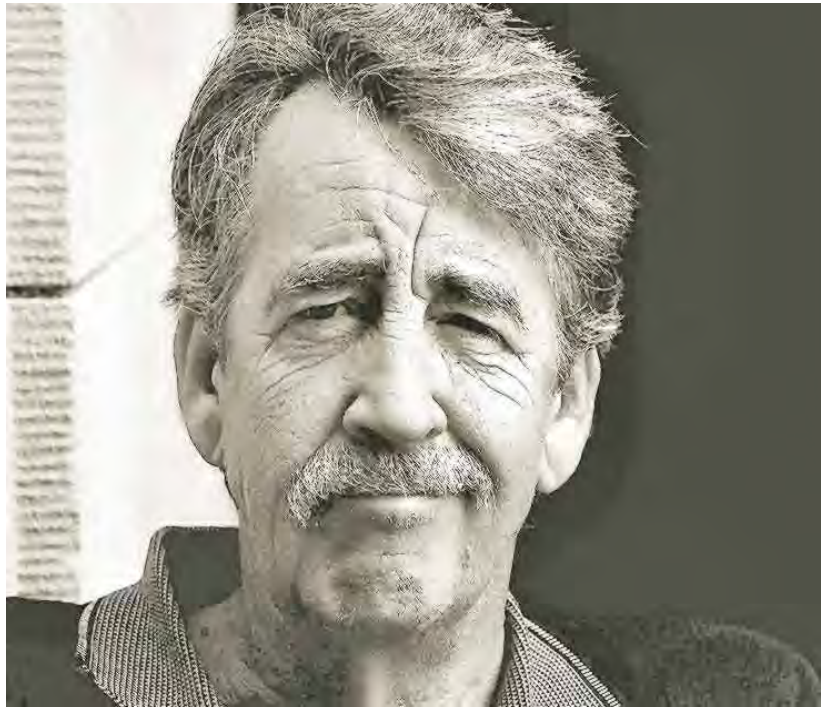
Since Grandfather had broken a dish or two, his food was served in a wooden bowl.

When the family glanced in Grandfather's direction, sometimes they saw a tear running down his cheek as he ate, sitting alone.

Still, the only words the couple had for him were sharp admonitions when he dropped a fork or spilled food.

The couple's four-year old son watched it all in silence.

One evening before supper, the father noticed his son playing with wood scraps on the



floor. He asked the child sweetly, "What are you making, Joey?"

Just as sweetly, the boy responded, "Oh, I'm making a little bowl for you and Mama to eat your food in when I grow up."

The four-year-old smiled and went back to work. The words so struck the parents so that they were speechless. Then tears started to stream down their cheeks.

Though no word was spoken, both knew what must be done. That evening the husband took Grandfather's hand and gently led him back to the family table.

For the remainder of his days he ate every meal with the family. And for some reason, neither husband nor wife seemed to care any longer when a fork was dropped, milk spilled, or the tablecloth soiled.

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A Thankful Recipient



by Cheryl Tribble, June 2018

As the years pass, many details of our history come forward. I would like to share one such memory today about the Kiwanis Club and an event that happened long ago. As many of you know the Kiwanis Club sponsors many charities and individuals across the nation. I too, was one of the lucky people that benefited from their generosity long ago.

I was the oldest of four children being raised by a single Mom. Economically we struggled each day. My Mom actually made \$60.00 per week (no child support from my Dad) to support a family of five. In those days, a teenager might make 50 cents an hour for baby sitting. So, you can appreciate our situation.

"Without my pets, my wallet would be full and my house would be clean, but my heart would be empty."

Amy Eades, Madison

I was raised in Southern California. I attended school in the Los Angeles School District. Right before my 1965 graduation (about 3 weeks) I was notified that I was the recipient of a "In-School Scholarship" being granted by one of the Kiwanis Clubs in Los Angeles. I do not know how I got on the list of candidates nor who recommended me. The amount was for \$50.00. It was a considerable amount of money at the time. This was such a wonderful surprise, a blessing and forever remembered.

I was able to rent my cap-and-gown for the graduation ceremony. Thanks so much. I was one of the top students in the class and had to be on stage - this was an important situation. There was even enough left that I could purchase a new dress for the occasion. Therefore, no direct impact on our financial situation at home. Yes!

I am amazed that all these decades later, I am now a satellite member of the Golden K Kiwanis club and editor for Old Huntsville Magazine. The old saying "what goes around, comes around..." is certainly true in this case.

Editor's Note: The Golden K Kiwanis Huntsville got their start in 1985 and for almost 30 years distributed the Old Huntsville magazine as their sole fundraiser. They held their weekly meetings at the Downtown Rescue Mission, starting in 2012. In those years the club raised \$650,000 through the sales of Old Huntsville, all of it given to children's charities and local agencies.

Cheryl is the Senior Editor of Old Huntsville Magazine.

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Floyd Hardin

by Nolan Myrick,
2015

I wanted to write a little story about Floyd Hardin. I was 11 years old when he came to Huntsville. I lived at 1312 Beirne Avenue in northeast Huntsville. I got my hair cut at 5th Street Beauty & Barber Shop, now Andrew Jackson Way. Clarence Carroll owned it and he cut my hair until Floyd showed up.

Things sort of changed when Floyd got there. There were a lot of happy times then. I let Floyd cut my hair from then on. When Floyd didn't have anyone in

his chair he would say to customers who were waiting, "You can come over here and I'll cut your hair." Some people would say, "I'll wait for Clarence." Everyone had their favorite hair cutter. I was one of the first to want to wait for Floyd, instead of Clarence. He always gave me a quarter when he cut my hair, then I paid him \$1.25 for his work. Floyd cut my hair until I got married, then my wife started doing it at home.

Floyd married Helen Thigpen. They used to take me with them when they first started dating. Helen went to church at 5th Street Baptist and I did as well. We were all like a big family and I felt so comfortable there.

We also went fishing on Moores Mill Road, over by where Joe Poar had his catfish ponds. One time after I moved, Floyd came to my farm and fished in my pond. I remember him at the Lincoln County Fair. The day he bought my dinner at the fair, Grady Reeves was with him. Floyd loved handing out dollar bills to young kids - he was just so much fun to be around.

I can say Floyd made me a better person. When I got my farm up in Hurricane Creek, I cut a lot of firewood. As I came to town in the evenings to deliver the wood I drove down Andrew Jackson and blew the horn when I passed the barber shop. Whenever Floyd was standing outside he'd wave at me.

I left Huntsville about 40 years ago. Recently I took my grandson Boone to meet Floyd. The last time I saw Floyd he told me that if I ever needed a haircut he would do it for free as long as he was around. I surely do miss him.



POLLY

Hello, my name is Polly. I am almost 3 years old and am considered a brown tabby cat. When I first came to the Ark Animal Shelter I had my little kittens with me. They have all been adopted. Since coming here I have received all my shots and have been spayed and micro-chipped. One special feature about me is that I have an extra toe on each of my front feet. That means I am polydactyl.

Makes me look like I am wearing mittens! I am a sweet kitty that gets along well with the other cats here at the shelter, but I am very shy. So when people come to visit I tend to avoid them and run out on our patio and watch them from the window. But I do come out for the volunteers and eat snacks and play with toys. I'd love to have a home of my own but need someone who is very patient and will take the time to get to know me until I am comfortable and get over being scared. If you are looking for a sweet cat please come and meet me and get to know me. I would be such a good cat for a patient and welcoming family. Ask to meet Polly, that's me.

"The answer to this last question will determine if you are drunk or not. Was Mickey Mouse a cat or a dog?"

Overheard when a driver was pulled over by State Trooper for speeding

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EASY GARDENING TIPS

by Cathey Carney

Since we're in gardening season, here are some of my favorite (and mostly original) planting tips.

- * When you need ivy for potting and will be needing quite a bit of it for window boxes, planters, etc. - buy a hanging basket of it - you will find the length you need to use, as well as the shape for hanging - and there are usually 10-20 plants in one basket!

- * Those coco liners for hanging baskets tend to drain water from the soil much too quickly. Brenda Gantt of Andalusia, AL came up with an idea that retains the water. Just put your coco liner in as usual but cover that with a layer of cotton material, then add your soil and flowers. Much more of the water will be retained.

- * Don't plant trees that will grow large, too close to your home - the roots will crack your foundation years down the road.

- * Anyone can make a beautiful color bowl of flowers - start with a "Spike" plant (available at nurseries), put in right in the middle, then fill in with smaller flowers around the Spike, then finish with hanging ivy or other plants that hang and balance out your taller plants.

- * Silver plants make a striking contrast in flower beds - in fact, some herbs like curry have a really pretty silver color.

- * To keep squirrels from

digging in your pots of plants, many swear by sprinkling the soil with cayenne pepper or ground cinnamon.

- * When you're working in your garden and don't want to be bothered by mosquitoes, spray some "Skin So Soft" by Avon on exposed arms and legs before you go out.

- * Have you noticed that when you water your garden after a dry spell, you become surrounded by insects? That's because they get thirsty, too, and are just trying to get a drink!

- * Run your fingernails along a bar of soap before you start digging in your garden, and they'll be much easier to clean.

- * To mow a sloped lawn buy a pair of golf shoes with spikes for added traction. Always mow crosswise and not up and down.

- * Plain old table salt will kill grass in your sidewalk cracks.

- * Find an area in your garden where you can bury your vegetable and fruit scraps. You will soon have dark, fertile soil.

- * Do you lose your small garden tools in the grass? Paint

the handles a really bright neon color and you will spot them more easily.

- * Lazily curving planting areas around your home will generally look better than straight lines.

- * If you have small indoor plants you want to water slowly, take a paper cup and punch a small hole in the side near the bottom. Push it down about 1/2 inch into the soil and fill it with water. This will work for your larger outdoor plants as well.

- * For the Kids - almost any plant can be rooted - flowers as well as vegetables. Green onions (use the bottom portion you cut off), rosemary, Kale, celery - all plants want to live on and your children will really enjoy watching roots form. Cut flower stems, strip off leaves from halfway down, put in vase with water. Just make sure none of the leaves are in water - just the stems. You'll find some plants root right away and some just won't.

It's never too early to show your child how to garden!



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Blame It On Elvis

*by John E. Carson,
June 2018*

I could not help it; when I met my wife I just knew she was the one. What is it that draws one person to another? It is more than just a pretty face, more than just curves or muscles, even more than money or title or position. At least, in the case of a true love - one that was meant to be.

Born in 1951, I grew up a romantic (as most men are) and I was raised to cherish and respect the opposite sex. In those days, the music on the radio not only entertained us, but reinforced the values we were taught at home. Songs like "Young Love" by Sonny James, "You Are My Special Angel" by Bobby Helms, "True Love Ways" by Buddy Holly, "Only You" by the Platters, and so many others, played in the background of our childhood and teen years, etching themselves into our minds and hearts forever, becoming an invisible compass to guide by in our search for the One.

But I would have to say that one song in particular came to mind when I met my bride to be; Elvis Presley's "Can't Help Falling in Love". Whatever "It" is, she had it. I can still see her standing by the lake as she waited for me to pick her up for a date set up by her sister and my older brother.

Wise men might say only fools rush in, but I wasn't listening. Looking back over these 45 years together I would say they

are not always right. We could not have come from two more different worlds, trust me; Gene Pitney's "Town Without Pity" would have applied here - as Johnny Rivers sang, I came from "The Poor Side of Town".

Of course, falling in love keeps one focused on the present and pleasantly so, and even as the lovers dream about the future, it still seems far off. I should have been thinking of Jimmie Rodgers song, "Kisses Sweeter Than Wine"; it may have prepared me for the next time I fell in love - yes, I fell in love with another while still married to my wife, when our first daughter was born. A different but just as powerful love that brings me joy to this day - and then it happened again when our second daughter was born!

As if that wasn't enough, each of them had two children and I have fallen in love with all of them, which brings to mind another Jimmie Rodgers tune, "Uh, Oh, I'm Falling in Love Again".

Through all the ups and downs of married life we were guided by Tommy Edwards who assured us that "It's All in The Game". Is there a force more powerful than love, yet one so gentle at the same time? Were we tested along the way? Yes, but one cannot know their strength until they learn their weaknesses. The Temptations brought sunshine to the cloudy days with "My Girl" and the Drifters helped us get away from it all "Under the Boardwalk" and "Up on the Roof".

Roy Orbison told us about "Running Scared" and Paul Anka helped us mend with "Put Your Head on My Shoulder" and reminded us that we were meant for each other with "You Are My Destiny" and the Ray Charles classic expressed my feelings perfectly in his song, "I Can't Stop Loving You".

Doris Troy's "Just One Look", brings me back to where it all started. That day by the lake, as the Beatles song, "I Saw Her Standing There", so aptly puts it.

We dated for nine months and on a hot sweltering day, August 4th, we had a beautiful wedding in a Presbyterian Church, to the dismay of some of our older relatives who debated over religion.

But God knew what he was doing when he put us together and today the love I have been given has been multiplied many times over. Retired now, I live with my wonderful wife in the Blue Bayou that Roy Orbison planted in my mind; God has answered all my prayers - all the things we worked so hard for have come to pass or are in the works.

Five years ago, I fell in love again. Another "Special Angel" came into our lives and again all it took was, "Just One Look" at our rescued dog, Mister Freckles, who has opened doors to paths I had no idea I would walk, all while filling the void in our empty nest with his unconditional love.

And to think it all started with "A Hundred Pounds of Clay", as Gene McDaniels told us with his timeless tune.

A hopeless romantic, I know I will keep falling in love; with my wife, my children, my dog, my friends, my family and with life itself.

I can't help it, and I wouldn't have it any other way.



The Mind's Eye



by Gerald Alvis,
The Poet of Green Lawn

I cleaned out my office last week. I passed on some how-to art books to my oldest granddaughter, who has this extraordinary talent for drawing. While even my stick figures aren't easily identifiable, these books taught me something significant that I apply frequently.

My wife has caught me many times just looking at her. She would give me that girlish grin she flashes and asks, "what are you looking at" in a coy, almost self-conscious way. I say, "a beautiful woman I first fell in love with long ago."

Well, that's a partial truth, not about the love stuff, but as

she suspects and has never challenged, there is more.

I learned from these art books about drawing to recreate an object or scene, even something you might see daily. It taught me to look at it as if you were seeing it for the first time. See the detail and appreciate it. Apply it to memory, then look again and again as the image is transferred to a canvas or paper. Or perhaps even later from the mind's eye. Yes, it is in the symmetry but also the details.

I smile as I study her as the memories return. Beauty shouldn't be taken for granted. Then I do as previously mentioned and pretend I've never seen her before this moment. Then I hold her and speak to her as if I'll never see her again.

It's there whether we acknowledge and appreciate it or not. Moments, seasons, and even lifetimes are fleeting, but the beauty remains not only in the present. These images become the paintings that line the corridors to our hearts.

This, gentlemen, is how you stay in love!

As far as my wife, well honey, now you know!

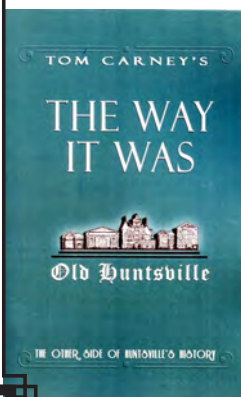
Kitchen Items in 1890

- 2 large earthen bowls
- 2 sweeping brooms
- 1 bread box
- 2 cake boxes
- 1 candlestick
- 1 ash bucket
- 1 gridiron
- 1 wire toaster
- 1 large flour box
- 1 clothes wringer
- 8 dozen clothes pins
- 1 flour sifter
- 1 tea kettle
- 1 step ladder
- 1 meat saw
- 4 stone jars
- 1 stove
- 1 coal shovel
- 2 granite-ware stew pans
- 2 wooden chopping bowls, 2 sizes
- 1 large tin pail and 1 large wooden pail
- 4 milk pans
- 1 milk strainer
- 2 scoops - 1 for flour, 1 for sugar
- 2 sugar boxes, 1 for fine and 1 for coarse sugars
- 1 wash boiler
- 1 wash board

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BY TOM CARNEY



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My Mom

By David Kirby



My Mom, Betty Rose McDonald Kirby, was born on February 11, 1935, in a small community in Winston County, Alabama called Double Springs. She was the oldest of 3 children and the only girl.

My Grandfather, Early McDonald, wasn't eligible for the draft of World War II because of a hearing loss from an ear infection when he was a child. So because of the hard times that all of the United States of America was experiencing, he left Alabama and followed the job market across the U.S. He finally settled in Hawthorne, Nevada where he worked at the U.S. Army Depot that is still located at Hawthorne today.

It was while they were living there that my mom's mother passed away from an aneurysm on the brain when Mom was at the young age of nine years old. My mom spoke many times about the trip back to Alabama for the burial, on a train, with her mother being in a pine box in a freight car on the back of train. After the funeral her family moved to Vanduser, MO where my grandfather's family originated from.

Mom was a very skinny girl and weighed less than 100 pounds. She wore horn rimmed glasses and was picked on by the boys of the small town school she attended there in Vanduser. One year the boys of the school influenced everyone at the school to vote mom as Homecoming Queen because she was such a "plain Jane".

My grandfather, Mom's dad, was very strict with mom and her two brothers as far as to what he referred to as, "worldly allurements." So the only way mom could go to the movies or to a local teenage hangout was to spend the night with her girl cousin Billie Joe and the two of them would slip off and go out.

They usually went to the local teenage hangout place. This place had a sockhop on one end of the building where the teenagers hung out and a dance hall with a bar on the other for adults. Mom's cousin, Billie Joe would meet her boyfriend at the sockhop and many times would leave Mom there alone. Billie Joe's parents wouldn't let her go to the sockhop by herself and so that's why she always wanted mom to go with her.

Billie Joe was a popular girl in school so she didn't have any problem getting a boyfriend. Mom finally grew tired of being left alone by her cousin and told her she

wasn't gonna go with her anymore if she was just gonna leave her there by herself. So, Billie Joe came up with the idea to get Mom a date. Billie Joe's boyfriend said he knew a guy. So the next weekend, my mom met my dad for the first time.

These two met on a blind date and 15 days later they were married. Mom was 15 years old and dad was 20. They moved to Alabama. Mom gave birth to 5 children, one girl, the oldest of us all, and 5 boys. The 4th boy was stillborn.

Now, I already mentioned about the mean boys that picked on mom when she was in High School. At some point the old Vanduser, MO school house closed. But every so often someone would organize a Vanduser School reunion and invited all who had ever attended.

So about 40 years into Mom and Dad's marriage they went back to Vanduser for a school reunion. Everyone had a name tag. Mom was now a beautiful lady that had blossomed. All of the boys that had made fun of her fell all over themselves when they saw her all these years later. Of course they were all grown men that were fat and bald now. Mom always looked 10 to 15 years younger than she really was.

She was finally a real Homecoming Beauty Queen. I love how life turns things around!

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Remembering the Krystal



*by Ted Roberts,
July 2013*

The sad thing was that she passed away on the 15th - and nobody seemed to notice but me. Not a soul mentioned it but me. "She's gone, I tell you - lights out - no cars in the lot. Big 'For Rent' sign in front."

"Oh, you're just having a bad day. There's plenty of them left. C'mon man."

I stared in disbelief. Nobody cared but me. Naturally, nobody had my kind of relation with her but me. In the late 40s, for 25 cents you could get four of 'em for a quarter; "with extra onion and pickle, please". This encounter was usually on the way home from swimming lessons at the Y.

Who could forget the steamy, soggy bun enclosing a thin sliver of meat, those chopped, not sliced, onions? There was nothing like it. You dare not call it a hamburger. This is not one of those tire-sized, sloppy burgers that wouldn't fit

into a horse's mouth and soaked your shirt with a mix of mayo and tomato juice. This was a neat little thing that fit in your shirt pocket. It was not a hamburger any more than a crayfish was a lobster. It was sui generis, which means - if you're a student of Latin - one of a kind. (Every chef should learn the term.) Then there's that old classic: "There's nothing like a dame" - uh I mean "Krystal".

Yes, that's what I'm talking about - the Krystal - the heart of my culinary life since I could fish a nickel and pennies out of my pocket with a hole in it. When we were kids, Krystals were so universal that they substituted for currency. Like: "two Krystals say that Notre Dame will win by 14 this Saturday." In those poverty stricken years a hamburger, due to a post recession economy, was a skinny slab of beef on a bun baked without enough yeast. So a Krystal was the ultimate. But somehow with a flavor concocted in Hamburger Heaven. "Let's go get a sandwich" in my boyhood meant, "Let's go get a Krystal."

But then came the war and suddenly, due to plenty of jobs, pockets jingled with change. Besides the old mom and pop sandwich shops, the chains with their gigantic, hard to eat, drippy, mouth-challenging burgers hit the street. But they weren't the same to me. They were meals artificially mounted on bread. And there was no way you could eat one and read the paper at the same time without flavoring your clothes in mayo, pickle, and onion, which caused you to lose valuable friends and incur cleaning bills more expensive than your weekly hamburger bill.

None of this helped the big K, but they're still marching on with their miniature, inexpensive fare. Consider also their contribution to the culture. Today's new culinary term is "slider" only recently established in the language. Well, guess who was selling "sliders" in 1940? Also, they were only a nickel!

"The humor of Ted, the 'Scribbler on the Roof', appears in newspapers around the U.S., on WLRH, our local National Public Radio and numerous web sites."

Ted passed away in April 2, 2020. He is missed and his spirit will never be forgotten.

"Lawyers believe a man is innocent until proven broke."

Val Stewart, Arab



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HUNTSVILLE HISTORY THROUGHOUT THE YEARS



The 1890's were a time of growth for Huntsville. There were 162 houses located in the area known as Dallas, and Cicero Hall opened a soda water factory. There were 20 doctors and, in case you didn't pay your bill, there were also 31 lawyers.



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