



No. 388

June 2025



Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

Huntsville's Moonshine Wars



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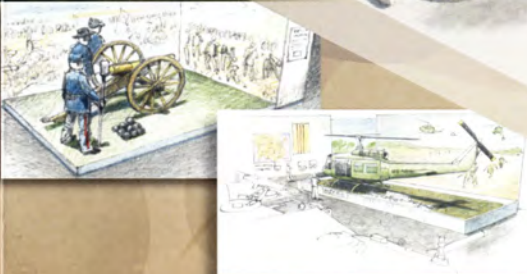
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Huntsville's Moonshine Wars

by Tom Carney,
first published in 1993

The courtroom was silent as the judge shuffled his papers. Finally, after taking a long look at the man standing in front of him, he asked: "Well, what do you have to say for yourself?"

The defendant, remembering that his lawyer had told him to be honest and tell the truth, replied: "Your Honor, my name is Jim Brasemore and I make moonshine. Matter of fact, I make the best white whiskey in Madison County!"

Jim Brasemore was a moonshiner and he talks freely about it, now that the statute of limitations has run out.

He learned the art of whiskey-making from his father, who had learned it from his father. Young Jim started feeding a firebox when he was only seven or eight years old.

"The best way to get your husband to do something is to suggest perhaps he's too old to do it."

Ann Bancroft

"We had this groundhog still out next to the Flint River," he says. A groundhog was a still built into the side of a hill or cliff. Such distilleries were hard to detect. "Every morning Mama would pack us a lunch of biscuits and fatback and we would set out walking. We had to walk about three or four miles to the still, but back then it didn't seem like a long way," he remembers.

The Brasemores had a reputation for making some of the best liquor in the county and, of course, that made a lot of people jealous.

"There was this family, Ricketts I believe the name was, that used to live close to us. The old man was what you would call shiftless, never did a hard day's work in his life. He used to come around and buy liquor from us and then sell it to the field hands," he recalls.

"Of course before he sold it, he would cut it down 'til it didn't even taste like good whiskey. Everybody knew it was Brasemore whiskey, so they didn't question it too much. When Daddy heard about what Ricketts was doing, he wouldn't sell him anymore. We had a reputation to maintain, you understand."

Not long after that, the Brasemores got to noticing that someone was stealing from them. Some culprit would sneak into their "holding areas" in the woods, where they stashed their whiskey until



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it could be picked up by the haulers. The whiskey started disappearing, a couple of gallons at a time. They put together a plan to catch the thieves.

"One morning just after sunup, Daddy comes and wakes me up. We were ready to put our plan into action. We headed for the stash place and took along this old shotgun, a rabbit-ears Parker. After we got to the stash, we made us a hideout under some brush."

"On up in the morning, here comes old man Ricketts, just lumbering along like some old fat hog. We watched and sure enough, he goes straight to the whiskey and helps himself to a couple gallons."

"Ricketts was just about the fattest man I ever knew, and when he bent over his 'hind end looked like the broad side of a barn. I reckon it was more than Daddy could resist, 'cause he cut loose with that old Parker and when he got done it looked like termites had gotten hold of the rear end of Ricketts' britches!"

"Fortunately, the gun was loaded with saltpeter and the shot wasn't very dangerous, although Ricketts had to eat his meals standing up for a few weeks."

When the younger Brasemore was born in 1902, homemade whiskey was a respectable and thriving industry in Madison County. Although many people today would frown on the practice, at that time many families depended on it for a living. The alternative was to work in the Mills (if they were lucky enough to find one that was hiring) or try to survive as a dirt farmer.

"Daddy got caught the first time in about 1916 or '17. The law was paying informers to tell on people. They put his bail bond at fifty dollars. That was on a Friday, and we didn't have any money, so the next morning Mama gets me to hitch up the mule and we loaded up the wagon with what whiskey we had left. Back then, Saturday was the big trade day downtown and the streets would be so busy you could hardly walk."

"We tied the wagon in front of the Courthouse and just sat there all day, selling whiskey. Everybody knew what Mama

was doing, so a lot of people who didn't even drink would stop and buy some."

"For medicine," they would say.

"On up in the morning a deputy came by and asked her what she thought she was doing."

"I'm gettin' my man out of jail," she replied. Back then no one messed with Mama. "Anything else you want to know?" she asked the deputy.

"No ma'am," the deputy replied sheepishly, "but I reckon I'll take a gallon if you got any left, my croup has been acting up lately." They got their dad out of jail that day, but he didn't stay free long. When his trial came up, he was sentenced to 12 months on the county farm. "Pickin' peas," he called it.

"I was a pretty good size boy by then and with Daddy in jail it was up to me to run the business," the younger Brasemore recalls. "Before he got caught, Daddy had hid the worm (copper condensation coil) and I got a neighbor to build me a pot."

"It wasn't but just a couple of weeks 'til I was back in business. When I run off my first batch they said the sheriff thought my father had escaped."

"Nobody makes whiskey that good," the sher-



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iff said, "except for old man Brasemore!"

"I hadn't forgotten about the mongrel dog that had informed on Daddy, though. Giles was his name. Him and the deputy that arrested Daddy were big drinking buddies. This deputy lived out next to Chase Nursery and every Sunday like clockwork, those two would pitch a big drunk."

"Some of my cousins helped me and we took this old worn-out still, it only had a ten-gallon pot, and we set it up out back of his house in a brush patch. First thing Sunday morning we loaded it with mash and started cooking. If you have ever been around a still, you know you can't hide the smell and sure enough, on up in the morning the deputy gets a strong whiff and decides to investigate."

"Well, here we are, me and my cousins are hiding in the brush, and the deputy and Giles are stretched out in front of the still sipping free whiskey and acting like they are in hog heaven."

"Next thing you know, there's this big ruckus and when the deputy opened his eyes, there was the sheriff pointing this big pistol at him," he relates.

"You and Giles are under arrest for making whiskey," the sheriff said.

Seems as if someone had sent the sheriff a note.

"Like I said, while Daddy was in jail I was running the business. One of the first things I did, after I got a little ahead, was to buy me a truck. Daddy wouldn't have nothing to do with automobiles, he had worked with a mule all of his life. Well I was bound and determined to impress him, so the day he was to get out I took the truck and loaded it down with as much whiskey as I could put on it. It hadn't been picked up in a while and we had a sizable load."

"Things didn't work out the way I figured and the truck broke down a couple of miles from the house. I got the mule, hitched it to the truck and began to pull it on home."

"Daddy was sitting on the front porch when I pulled up in front of the house. He took a long look at that truck I had bought and then took an even longer look at his mule that was pulling it. Finally, after spitting out a long stream of tobacco juice, he asked me, 'Well, what else can it do?'"

"He never did like that truck. Every time I got stuck in mud or whatever, he was always there to tell me that with a mule it would not have happened."

Young Jim got married in the fall of 1925 to a city girl who wouldn't have anything to do with making whiskey. One of her uncles got him a job in Merrimac Cotton Mill.

Jim wanted to quit the whiskey business, but working in the Mill was not for him. He would come home at night spitting up lint and cotton dust and his wife Laurie could tell he wasn't happy.

"Finally, 'bout a year later I come home from work one day and she's packing our things in boxes. She told me we were moving back to the country."

"Kenneth Abbott and I set up a still down next to Byrd's Spring where there was this hunting club. We ran it most of one year and then we put another one down next to the bridge at Whitesburg."

"That was the biggest one I ever run, a 2,500-gallon ground-hog."

"The probability of being watched is directly proportional to the stupidity of your act."

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"By this time we had two stills running and plenty of whiskey to sell, so we figured we would expand our business. Normally we would sell the whiskey to a tripper or hauler who would distribute it to the bootleggers. We figured that instead of paying the middle man we would take the money ourselves."

Many people have sought Jim's advice about the whiskey business: "I tell all of them the same thing. Have lots of kin-folks. They are about the only ones you can really trust."

"Anyway, we got Mickey, my second cousin who owned a Ford coupe, to start hauling for us. That went real good. Then George, another cousin, decided to come in the business. He was driving a milk truck and had a regular route at the time. Once a week we would load him up with whiskey and he would make home deliveries all over town."

It appeared that the Brasemore crowd was making all the money in the world and that's what caused the trouble.

At that time there was another family in Huntsville that was big in the whiskey business, too. They were connected to a bunch of moonshiners over in Cloud's Cove. Unfortunately they began to get angry when they realized the Brasemore outfit was cutting into their profits.

"The first we knew about it was when they shot Abbott, my partner, at the Whitesburg still. He had been tending it along with some hired hands when someone shot him from behind with a shot gun. It didn't kill him, but he was crippled for the rest of his life."

"Next, they started going after the boys who hauled the whiskey. They shot at them, ran them off the road, and they even set Mickey's house on fire."

"The law knew something was going on and they started to really crack down on whiskey making. This hurt us bad, as we couldn't keep a still running more than a month without it getting raided."

"I don't think it bothered that Cloud's Cove bunch, though. There

was only one way in there and one way out. If you weren't kin you didn't get in!"

"I was sitting in a shot house in West Huntsville when they shot me. It was Oct. 23, 1934. I had delivered some whiskey and had stopped to watch a dice game. When I walked out they were waiting for me."

"I knew exactly what was fixing to happen when I saw that car window roll down and I started to reach for my pistol. I never had a chance."

"Claude Murphy had been shooting dice inside and when he heard the gun shots he ran outside. When he saw me laying there, he said he thought I was dead."

"After I got shot, we pretty well shut the business down. We laid low and just decided to let bygones be bygones."

Three months later, two of the assailants were ambushed near Meridianville and severely wounded.

When questioned about this, Brasemore's only comment was, "I reckon that's what you call bygones." Things weren't the same after that. There had been too much trouble and the law was now watching every move the moonshiners made.

"I remember one time when Cousins, a boy we had driving for us, was stopped downtown. He was hauling a load of whiskey and was right in front of the movie theater when the

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law spotted him. Traffic was backed up for a red light and Cousins knew he couldn't get the car away, so he just jumped out and took off running."

"The police jumped out of their cars and started chasing him on foot. Mickey was standing on the sidewalk and when he saw what was going on, he jumped in Cousins' car and when the light changed, he just took off."

"It didn't take the police long to catch Cousins, but when they got back they discovered the evidence was gone! They, roughed him up a bit, but finally had to let him go."

"Was the law honest back then? Let me ask you a question. How many policemen do you know that never took a drink? All of them knew what was going on, but you got to remember back then, most everyone was kin to one another. We never worried too much about the city or county police unless there was an election coming up, and even then they tried not to bother us too much. They never came right out and asked you for money, but you knew you had to give."

"I remember one election back in the late 30s when the judge was making speeches. He'd be up there talking about getting rid of the bootleggers and I would be outside passing out free drinks to everyone who would vote for him."

"One time the judge's car broke down up around New Market, so he hitched a ride with us. All day long, we drove him around while he was spitting hell and brimstone about whiskey and the whole time he was sipping the white whiskey that we were giving him. When we got back to town that night, he was so drunk his wife made him sleep on the front porch."

"By the time the Second War came around, it had become difficult for an independent

whiskey operator to make any money. There were too many "big" family names in the business."

A hardware store owner manufactured various-size stills in the basement. For an extra twenty-five dollars a nearby furniture store would deliver the distillery to its intended site.

When sugar became rationed during the war, a downtown grocery wholesale house sold sugar under the counter. Often, when they would receive a large shipment, the wholesaler would sell it off to moonshiners at a private auction to the highest bidder. One prominent family in Huntsville even financed moonshine operations - at a high interest rate, of course.

Many successful businesses in Huntsville today were founded with the profits of the whiskey business.

"They didn't have sense enough to come in out of the rain back when their grand-daddies was making whiskey, now they got fine houses and put on airs like they are blue-bloods or something!"

"Now look at this," he said, pointing to a recent society page from The Huntsville Times. "That girl used to sleep on the back seat of a Ford coupe, sucking a lollipop, while her daddy delivered whiskey for me."

"There are a lot of secrets this town will never know."



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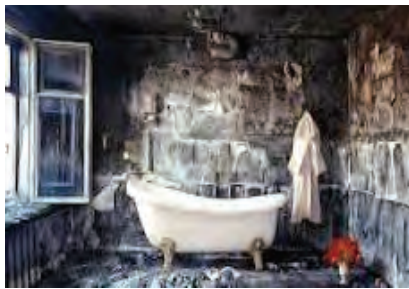
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THE SATURDAY NIGHT BATH



by L D Rogers

I hadn't given much thought to how we kept clean when I was growing up. Until our water heater went out recently where I live at Terrace Lake in Guntersville. I got to thinking about how we stayed clean back in my younger days. We didn't.

Saturday night was bath night and we each took turns getting in the bathtub for our bath. We had to be clean the next morning so we could go to Sunday school and church. We were very fortunate to have a kerosene water heater, so we had hot water for our baths.

One thing was for sure, once we took our bath there was no more going outside and playing. We sat on the couch and listened to the radio until we went to bed. Sure didn't take a chance on going outside and getting dirty.

Baths at my mother's parents was a different story. They lived on a farm and didn't have electricity or running water. When we went to see them, we took our baths

outside in a number two wash tub if the weather permitted.

My granny had a fire pit in her back yard with a black iron kettle. When she got ready to do our baths, she would get us to draw water from the well, put it in the kettle, then she would build a fire under the kettle.

It didn't take long before there was plenty of hot water ready for our baths. Of course, when you got out of the tub you had a number 2 stamped on your back side. We went in order from who was least dirty to most dirty. It was different in the wintertime though. We couldn't bring the tub inside to take a bath, so we had to use a wash bowl.

One time I asked Granny how we took a bath just using a wash bowl. She told me that you wash up as far as possible, then you wash down as far as possible, and then you wash possible.

Looking back, it was a lot of fun, but those days do make me thankful for the showers we have today.

Pasta and Chickpea Salad

10 oz. rotini, cooked
20 oz. chickpeas, canned OK
1/4 sweet onion, thinly sliced
1 green pepper, seeded and diced
1 red pepper, seeded and diced
1 c. black olives, pitted and sliced
1 T. fresh parsley, chopped

Dressing:

1/3 c. olive oil
1 T. wine vinegar
1 T. lemon juice
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 t. Dijon mustard
1/2 t. oregano
1/2 t. red pepper flakes
1/8 t. salt
1/4 t. pepper

Combine the first 7 ingredients in a bowl and toss. Whisk together the remaining ingredients and toss with the pasta mix. Healthy & Delicious!

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"The trouble with owning a home is no matter where you sit, you're looking at something you should be doing."

Danny Cleek, homeowner



Getting Caught

by William Goodson

It was a Friday, the winter of my junior year in high school. The next day we were to be inducted into the National Honor Society. I had never—NEVER—cut class before.

Our regular physics teacher, Mr. Dunn, was gone all week, and we had suffered through four classes with a substitute who thought Brownian movement had to do with the running skills of the Cleveland halfback, Jim Brown. Bob Moorman, Dave Turner and I could see no harm in skipping the last class of boredom with her, especially since it was

fifth period, and sixth period, which in our case was basketball practice, had been cancelled. So we did.

We sneaked off to Sid's Drive-in, the local hangout at Five Points, and had a soda.

While we were listening to Pat Boone's "Love Letters in the Sand," and unbeknownst to us, the alarm went out to every Madison County village and farm. Soon one of the principal's henchmen called Sid's and inquired if we were by any chance there.

"Hey, it's the school," the cook said with his hand over the phone, "Are you here?"

None of the three of us felt like becoming hunted men, our faces on Post Office walls all over the country, so we sheepishly nodded. We trudged back to school.

Miss Annie Merts, the assistant principal, summoned us to her office. Our chins were dragging our shoe-tops. In spite of three humble apologies, Miss Annie delivered the swift and sure verdict: No Honor Society for us. Tears flowed from all parties, including Miss Annie. She called our parents to report on us.

When I arrived home, Mother informed me that she knew, that she had received a call when we were first missed, that she had called Dad, who was disinclined to search for me, commenting something to the effect that I'd gotten myself into it, I could get myself out of it.

The three of us sat in the audience the next day observing our respectable classmates being inducted. It was a Day That Will Live in Infamy, to quote a famous president.

I don't know that missing out on the Honor Society has materially affected my life in any way. But I assure you that I never cut a class again.

I have let it be known to my closest confidantes that it gives me great secret pleasure to hope that some day--post-humously, perhaps I might be inducted yet as an honorary member.

There'll be more about this later.



"Cats are way smarter than dogs. You sure won't catch any cat pulling a heavy sled through cold icy snow."

Pumpkin the cat

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John Purdy
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Why I Love Huntsville, Alabama

by Gladys Ophelia Chunn Bryant

I am Gladys Ophelia Chunn (Bryant). I was born May 23, 1934 in Pond Beat, now known as Redstone Arsenal, NASA Space Center in Huntsville, AL. My Mother Sarah Rebecca was the oldest daughter of 11 children of Baker Chunn and Hickmon Tyler Chunn who raised me along with 8 of their children. My Grandmother Sally Acklin Chunn and the Midwife, aided my mother, Sarah and her daughter-in-law to bring me and Willie Chunn (Ellison) into God's beautiful world, on May 4, 1934. I was raised by my Grandparents Baker and

Hickmon Tyler Chunn in an old two-story house. I remember it being one large room with an entrance through the back kitchen door, with a small room in the attic where we had to climb 6 rickety stairs to access the room (and it probably was unsafe for children). Aunt Willie and I were born in this house up side of a hill on Burton Road, Pond Beat.

When I was 4 years old, Mr. Edgar Cliff supplied my Grandfather Baker with new lumber to build his own home. The home was down the hill closer to the cotton and corn fields on his land, in the town of Huntsville. My Grandfather Baker completed the two rooms, one in the front with a front window, and the second in the back with a small kitchen window. There was one door at the front of the house with a long porch and a back door off the kitchen.

My Grandfather Baker Chunn (wife Hickmon) was a sharecropper, the oldest son of Matthew and Sally Chunn living under the 40/60 yearly contract with Mr. Cliff in Pond Beat. He moved over the mountain to an area now called Goat Neck into a log cabin house. The house had an extended added room and a hall between the log cabin large room and a newer (panels) room. It also has a front window and a fireplace with a new chimney at the end. You could enter this room from the back door of the hall in between the log cabin and the add on room.

This cabin house has an upstairs with a large attic crawl up, but it did not allow adults to stand up straight because of the low ceiling. I loved going up in the attic, lying on old clothes. Once Aunt Lettie found a jar of Homebrew up there

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and drank some and I will never forget that.

Presently I live in a one-bedroom 55+ retirement/living community, in Pearland, TX near my daughter Harelda. I have lived here since September 2017.

I am a retired educator, I taught school in Alabama, Tennessee, Missouri and Kansas. I taught grades K-6, and the last 6 years as a Special Education Learning Disabled Reading Specialist in the Kansas City, MO Public School System.

I am profoundly, mercifully, gracefully blessed at 91 years old - enjoy communicating with each of my 7 biological adult children, 14 grandchildren (5 grandsons and 9 granddaughters), 7 great grands, 8 great-great grands and 2 great-great-great grands. First Son Cedric, father of 3, lives in Los Angeles, CA, and is retired from Hollywood Technicolor. First Daughter Jan, mother of 1 son, grandmother of 2, and retired from the Army Core of Engineers lives in Kansas City, MO. Second Son Marl Aubrey, father of 1 daughter, 2 loving sons (1 deceased), lives in Memphis, TN, and is presently employed at P.M.C.

Third Son Timothy, father of 2 daughters (1 loving daughter), grandfather of 4, great grandfather of 4, lives in Kansas City, MO, and is the neighborhood handyman and car driver for his sister Jan. Second Daughter Aleta, mother of 3 sons, 1 daughter, 1 granddaughter works in Finance and lives in McKinney, TX. Fourth Son Christopher DeChunn, a father of 1 daughter, 1 loved son, 2 loved grandsons of Seattle, WA, lives in Lees Summit, MO and works for T-Mobile there.

Third Daughter Harelda, mother of 2 daughters, is an Assistant City Attorney for the City of Houston and lives in Pearland, TX.

I have had an ongoing passion for my hometown of Huntsville, AL during my time there 1952-1960. My first 4 children were born on the colored wing at Huntsville Hospital. Dr. Joseph F. Drake (Black) was the attending physician for Cedric, Mark and Timothy. Dr. James Jordan was the attending physician for my daughter Jan.

Even at the age of 91 years young, all of my hospital stays were at Huntsville Hospital, including December 14-18, 1998, after a near fatal car wreck on I565 in Huntsville, AL.

I am the founder of the Tyler Chunn Family Reunion. The banquet was held on the 4th of July 1980 at the Carriage Inn Hotel (now Jordan Lane and University).

I was there for our 24th Family Reunion July 3 - July 10, 2024, hosted by Cousin Deloris Chunn Moore.

I am encouraging upcoming Tyler Chunn decedents to go to college after high school, get a certificate, vote at age 18, work

hard on your jobs, read the Bible along with all other books/assignments and do not settle for any grades less than a B.

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June is a fun time for kids and adults. School is out, days are warmer, pools are open, and Concerts in the Park start at Big Springs on the first Monday in June and run for ten weeks, ending the first Monday in August. Time is 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm. Pack a picnic basket, take your blanket and yard chair, and plan to enjoy a night of fun entertainment in Big Springs Park.

The Red Cross needs blood donations. So, if you or someone you know can donate, it might save the life of someone you love or even yourself. It is called the Gift of Life.

June is the sixth month of the year, and you know what that means, just six months until Christmas, so better start shopping before the prices go up. June 20th has the most daylight of the year, and then the daylight hours become less until late December.

With kids out playing in the fields and yards, watch out for ticks - Lyme disease has been reported, and if you find a tick on yourself or your child, remove it, place it in a plastic bag and call your doctor to inform him of what has happened.

Don't forget Father's Day on June 15th. Make plans now to do something special for the man in your life. It originated on June 19, 1910. The first celebration was in Spokane, Washington.

Someone asked me the other day what the thing kids looked forward to in the late forties and fifties was, and I knew right away what all of us kids loved the most - swimming in the city pool. It was in Big Springs Park, where the Art Museum now sits. We would ride our bikes there and spend the whole day at the pool. I can still remember how cold the water was. When we came out of the water, our teeth would be chattering.

The city had people at all the playgrounds called supervisors. They worked from 9:00 to 5:00. Games were provided, and on Friday nights, we had a movie and you were encouraged to bring a sack supper. Drinks were provided.

After graduating high school, I applied for the supervisor job and did that fun job for two summers. Sorry, the city stopped offering this service to children during the summer. Now make plans and enjoy the summer.

"The best place to be when you're sad is in your Mama's lap."

Franny Jacobs, Madison (age 7)

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Teacher

by Gerald Alvis, The Poet of Greenlawn

Beyond the fluence and abilities, the difference between a person accomplished in talent or task and a beginner is that the novice will often freeze up and get frustrated from mistakes. Both have a love for this endeavor that draws them, but the comfort of a status quo can be enticing, a place to tarry and only ponder. This is why talent, though inherent, can remain latent.

Those who have gone further in honing their skills are constantly developing and refining their forte (especially those on the forefront) and have come to expect them as part of the process, be it a miscalculation, a note played wrong, or a belief overturned.

But oh, to speak a word of and show the acceptance and example. To encourage the reach, allowing for correction, this is an expertise we should all long for not only in sheet music and brush but also in the microscope, telescope, and the deep things of the heart.

My hat is off, and I salute the person who may feel and look awkward but who is doing it anyway. They are the ones to watch; they keep getting back up, chiseling, and refining. It's our chance to be more than just a witness but also to be a part of another developing human being. A part of us lives on in this way. Those so tenacious they are going to figure it out anyway. Why not let the rope down from the tree house, offer another color to the palette, show them where to look in the sky, and then watch them explore?

During our walk in our brief time here, it's important to remember that we are all beginners, just in different subjects.

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From the Porch on Pratt Avenue

"The Quarry"

by Collier Bouldin Hundley, PN

It was May, our 4th grade year at Whiteburg Elementary School. My little "gang" consisted of my best friend Danny Fazioli, along with Peter Grahm and Ashmead Courtenay. We were 9 or 10, young and full of mischief, and boys being boys, played with reckless abandon and daring deeds.

Danny had an arm like an ace pitcher in the Majors. He could hurl a rock far with amazing accuracy. Peter collected miniature liquor bottles, some full, and some with a bubble knocked back from the steamed open seal he readily secured back to hide all the appearances of tampering. Ashmead was the quiet one and I was the mischievous imp.

One pastime we shared was the trek to the out of bounds adventure of the Quarry. Now, the Quarry was set back off Golf Road (where Danny lived in an apartment) and up past the edge of "Muni", the Municipal Golf Course. We would meet at Danny's and hike through the woods behind the Plush Horse to the Quarry. There we would gasp at the immense crater created by huge machinery. Those gigantic earth and rock movers looked like ants from the cusp of our observation point. We would watch their choreography of precise movements for hours.

In school, we planned to visit the Quarry again and play after last bell. I couldn't go because of "house arrest" for trying to cross Memorial Parkway on foot alone, and Peter's dad noticed a few of his miniature bottles were lacking the full volume so he was out. That left the duo of Ashmead and Danny to set out for the sad and tragic escapade.

They arrived that sunny and slightly cool May Day with blue skies and plenty of opportunity to play unfettered by parental authority and view. It began as challenge upon

challenge, dare upon dares, with who could throw the furthest rock, (a task easily won by Danny), then to who could muster the strength to roll the large boulders which held the Quarry's edge as to prevent the very thing the boys were fixing to attempt. Ignoring the cautionary and unmarked warning, the game was afoot, and challenge accepted. Rock, papers, scissors found Danny the first to roll. A hefty sized boulder was rolled to the quarry's edge and away it went, bouncing, banging, boldly to the bottom with echoes abounding!

Not to be outdone, Ashmead chose a much larger specimen, one that he struggled to lift and caused his young legs to tremble and footing to stumble. He eased it towards the edge and with a mighty shove over the edge both he and the huge stone tumbled nearly 80 feet to the cold hard limestone floor.

Danny fled to his apartment in a panic and hid in his mother's closet until she returned home from work and heard his soulfully sad, unstoppable sobs.

The police were called as well as Ashmead's parents. Danny led them along the trail to the Quarry's precipice where our friend had fallen. No question that our dear friend had not survived the circumstances.

Mrs. McCamy's 4th grade class were asked to serve as honorary pallbearers, and we were seated along the first pew of The Church of Nativity to observe William Ashmead Courtenay's funeral. A boy too young to die and his classmates too young to witness death this early.

"Wouldn't take her to a dogfight
'cause I'm scared she'd win."

*Local Suggestion for a good
country song*



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Father's Day Reflections

by M. D. Smith IV

From the earliest years I can remember, my father, M.D. Smith III was a pal to me with anything related to swimming, hunting or fishing. He'd grown up with a pool at his house, and we always had one at ours. He built the first in our backyard (another longer story) on Canterbury Road in Mt. Brook.

Fishing? He'd learned that as a boy, too, and took me on fishing trips to Florida, and his favorite spot was the Homosassa River above Tampa, fed by Crystal River Springs and emptied into the Gulf. Bass was his true love. The 1954 photo of us in the rowboat was on a trip when I was 13 and he was 37. Taking shore lunches, we ate some of the bass we'd caught that morning or fillet some of the mullet bait for lunch if we caught nothing.

I've loved hunting since my Red Ryder BB gun days, and he bought me a .22 rifle. I practiced in the basement against an angled steel backstop with a sandbox below that he had built for me. We hunted small game and occasionally got a squirrel or two. We always ate what we bagged hunting. He took me to skeet ranges and taught me how to shoot shotguns on the fly for quail and dove. I never broke all 25, but once I beat him with 23 to his 22 clay pigeons. We later hunted ducks in the win-

ter in the freezing mangrove islands at the mouth of the Homosassa River and only downed a couple of inedible geese. We had no feeling below our knees and had to build a fire to warm up going back.

My dad was in the broadcasting business in his later years, working with my grandmother at WBRC-AM-FM-TV until she sold it in 1953, and he went into radio for himself. He bought WHBS in 1958 and went Top-40 records as WAAY Radio. He bought Channel 31 in 1963, and I graduated with a major in broadcasting from the University of Alabama. I started there in November, just before President Kennedy was shot.

I have nothing but great and pleasant memories of my dad until he became my boss at the TV station. I joked about being a member of the SOBs of America, which stands for 'Sons of Bosses,' which is not an easy role to perform. It came to a head in 1978 when, during a time of curtailing spending, I gave a deserving employee a \$5 per week raise — not much.

My Dad countermanded my request from the home office and instructed me to withdraw it and tell the employee. I said the man earned the raise, hadn't had one in a year, and I could easily save that much on office supplies. I hung up after protesting, to no avail. I couldn't possibly repeat the words I sputtered in my office. I'd have no respect as the General Manager in the future if it were revealed that HE was the decision maker and I was a figurehead. He said that wasn't the point. He'd said no additional expenses. I immediately started looking for a job elsewhere and was working on my resume for a TV station in Washington State with an opening for a manager. I'd had 15 years of experience running a TV station. Our news ratings were number one. I had credentials and had to draw the line.

I don't know if my mother had some input or what, but Dad called the next morning and rescinded his order — the raise would stand. That was as close as it ever got to me pulling up and moving my family far away. I'm glad it didn't come to that. A few years later, I heard third-hand that my father said he was mad at the time but later proud of how I stood up to him and for not wanting to rescind a promised raise to an employee — made me feel good.

My father had his hands full trying to keep our AM radio stations making money. He increased the power at WAAY to 50,000 watts and added stereo to the equipment. We were one of the earliest stations to do that. The last photo of us together announcing the change was in 1983. We all found out he had late-stage lung cancer in June 1985, and he died in September. My father always encouraged my kids to come to their house, only a half-mile away in our neighborhood, swim, and have lunches on weekends, and it was good to be close to my mother and father during all those years. I always tried NOT to talk business with him when it was family time and wait until working hours.



Local News from 1925

Hogs Found in Rose Garden

Nine of Mr. Stegall's fine lot of hogs were impounded this week under the vagrant hog law after being found in the rose garden of Judge Betts.

Mr. Stegall states that on Saturday night his hogs were secure in their lot and had escaped on Sunday morning after someone removed a board from the fence. He claims the ordinance does not apply when the owner of the hogs does not intentionally let them run at large and has promised to fight his case in court. Judge Betts is expected to preside.

No Gasoline Sales on Sunday

At yesterday's meeting of the city fathers, a resolution forbidding the sale of gasoline on Sundays was overwhelmingly adopted.

Speaking in support of the ordinance were local pastors who decried the Sunday sale of gasoline by stating it permitted joyriding and encouraged people to engage in frivolous pursuits rather than attending church.

The pastors supported their arguments by presenting figures showing how most people lived within walking distance of a church. The measure is also expected to put a dent in the speak-easy business.

Sheriff Evicts 9 Mill Families

Officials at Lincoln Mills called the sheriff yesterday to have 9 families evicted from Mill homes. Mill authorities said the families had violated their rent agreement by allowing people not employed by Lincoln Mill to stay with them. Other evictions are expected to follow.

Dilworth Announces Purchase for Country Club

W. R. Dilworth, President of the Greater Huntsville Country Club, announced today the purchase of

the Moss home on Pulaski Pike, along with 225 acres, as the site of the Huntsville Country Club. The company was recently incorporated with \$40,000 capital stock. The club is expected to have the only golf course in North Alabama.

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**"After 10 years of intense
therapy, my doctor said
something that brought
tears to my eyes.
He said, 'No hablo ingles.'"**

Jonnie Haygood, Athens

Heard On the Street

by Cathey Carney



Well we had a winner for our hidden magnifying glass. **Jean Layne** of Gurley, Al was the first correct caller and she found it on p. 37 in the May issue. It's left bottom of the picture you see there - find it now? I made it larger than normal and had lots more calls. Congratulations to Jean, who was a beloved cafeteria worker for 25 years at Madison County High School in Gurley. She's retired now but loved her years working.

And we had a few callers to try to identify the photo in the May issue but no one is correct yet - we'll leave it open for a few weeks.

Ole Dad's BBQ in Hazel Green just off Hwy. 231 has been the go-to spot for delicious BBQ for years. Did you know that on June 10th Ole Dad's will be celebrating its 30th anniversary? That is amazing for a small business, and owner **Rosemary Leatherwood** says they could not have had those years without great community, family and friends. She appreciates you for all the support these last 30 years and says they have been truly blessed. To help celebrate they will be giving away cupcakes and prizes on Saturday June 14th, at their location 14163

Highway 231 in Hazel Green. Come celebrate!

Rosemary also wishes her sisters **Lynn Green** and **Dorothy Branch** happy June Birthdays as well as her son-in-law **Allen Woods**. Family is so important!

Our old marble **City Hall** (built in the sixties) stood for years downtown and most of you conducted business there or attended city council meetings over the years. It was made of beautiful white marble and recently was torn down because of structural issues. Many oldtimers (**Jackie Reed**) hated to see it torn down and wanted a piece of it to remember.

The city erected a very impressive new City Hall and plans to use much of the land vacated by the marble building for an extension of East Big Spring Park.

City Councilman Bill Kling was contacted by many who asked about getting a piece of the building when it was demolished, and he now has some available to give to you. He asks only that you get it for yourself, limit one, and that you don't sell it. To get your piece of history just email him at Bkling11@comcast.net.

While watching YouTube recently an older lady was discussing how to freshen up the air in your home. You know how it can smell musty with old food, pets,

etc. Here are some of her simple ideas:

- Open a window or door daily and get at least 30 minutes of fresh air into your home - whether it's freezing outside or super hot.

- Make up a mixture of white vinegar and water, half and half in a spray bottle and wipe down your sinks/counters every night before bed. Use this in bathrooms, bedrooms, where ever you wipe anything down and it'll be so clean. Floors too. It cheap and it works.

- If you're going to burn a candle, just do it for 1 hour, not 6.

- Clean out your garbage cans weekly - drips and food can get in the bottom, then they're just covered with a new bag - clean them too.

- Get your carpets deep cleaned every 6 months - whether by you or a company that does that.

- Burn a little potpourri in your kitchen some mornings. Use a small pot, fill with water, add lemon/orange peels, cinnamon sticks, cloves and bring to simmer. You can add orange juice to it or apples, rosemary, whatever you want. I keep mine on the stove for a week or so and it works every day before you have to put it in your compost pile.

- Finally get some small boxes of baking soda, open them and put them in areas around your

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home that need it - near garage, pet areas, litter boxes, etc.

Your home will be smelling so fresh!

I'll try to find her name because she had some other really good ideas but it's all stuff we have around the house!

The Arts Council and the City of Huntsville's Department of Parks and Recreation collaborate to host **Concerts in the Park**. The Concerts, which are held every summer for ten weeks Monday evenings, begin the first Monday in June and conclude the first Monday in August.

The series showcases a mix of musical genres from rock and roll, pop and top 40 to swing, country, bluegrass, Celtic and jazz. The Concerts take place in downtown Huntsville on the Huntsville Museum of Art outdoor stage in Big Spring International Park from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. The series is free to the public; concert goers should bring their own seating and leashed pets are welcome.

Get you some pickle juice to drink, and here's why. It helps with bad leg and muscle cramps almost immediately, it aids in digestion and makes your gut much sweeter, it helps with blood pressure control and people are losing weight with it. Publix downtown has it now in the pickle department! It doesn't take much - maybe a few ounces a day - but check first with your doctor if you have to restrict your salt.

Because of this miracle drink I will be hiding a tiny cucumber somewhere in the pages of this issue. IF you find it, and you WON'T - be the first to call and you win a \$50 subscription to Old Huntsville magazine!

MISSED CONNECTIONS!

A sweet out-of-town friend came up with an interesting idea. He said often people try to reconnect with people from their past and for some reason are not on any social media like Facebook. But it's important to them to try to catch up with these people. He suggested we have a column called Missed Connections and just maybe, one of our readers will have information on them or even

be the person who someone is looking for.

So **Lee Lanier** said he would start. "I'm trying to get in touch with my two oldest friends who are married. Their names are **David** and **Pat Cobb** and the last I heard, they were living in Huntsville, then moved to Meridianville. I lost contact with them 55 years ago and would love to connect again. My email is leelanierjr@yahoo.com and I'm hoping you're out there and will get in touch!"

Happy birthday to **Bonnie Travis** of Brownsboro, AL She had a May 14th birthday and is a beautiful lady inside and out! Also a very happy birthday to **Debbie Rutledge** of Fayetteville from her sweet brother **Doug**!

We love it when people visit Huntsville from out of state and can't believe how beautiful it is here. We are located at the foothills of the Appalachians and it is hilly and lush, we have Monte Sano Mountain that has so many good stories associated with it. Recently we had visitors from West Virginia - **Danny and Carla Cleek** - who were here to see their cousin **Linda Drake** of Huntsville. They visited Old Town Historic District and toured the area with Linda and really said this place feels very special. We know they'll be back for more visits and send love to them.

If you have not yet visited the **U.S. Veterans Memorial Museum** just off Airport Rd. and west of Memorial Parkway, you've got to go! You will be amazed at the amount of treasured old military items that are located there. It's like stepping back in time. And the best news is they have announced plans for expansion in the same area they're in now, to become a 27,000 sq. ft. display area, a 3,000 administrative area, 11 new pieces of equipment including helicopters, jeeps. The expanded displays will include Civil War, Vietnam and Aviation.

Ground breaking will be in the fall this year, with soft opening in winter of 2026 and grand opening spring of 2027. Very exciting news for Huntsville!

Happy Father's Day to the Dads who love their families. Both the ones with us and the ones who are watching over us.

Thank you!



Old Huntsville Magazine keeps on going thanks to our Readers, Writers and Advertisers. Have we said Thank You lately? We appreciate you more than you know.



Southern Heirlooms

Senate Bean Soup

2 lbs. navy beans
1-1/2 lbs. smoked ham hocks

1 onion, chopped
Salt and pepper to taste

Wash beans and run through hot water. Add beans to a kettle with 4 quarts hot water and the ham hocks.

Boil slowly for 4 hours, covered. Braise chopped onion in butter and when light brown add to soup.

When beans are tender, season with salt and pepper and serve. Really good with fresh cooked greens.

Cheesy Hash Browns

2 lbs. hash brown potatoes
1/2 c. melted butter
1 onion, chopped
1 c. cheddar cheese, grated
1 can cream of chicken soup
1/2 pint sour cream

Mix together all ingredi-

ents, saving part of the cheese for topping. Salt and pepper to taste.

Grease a 9x13" pan, put the mixture into the pan and bake 1 hour at 325 degrees. Sprinkle the remaining cheese on top the last 30 minutes.

Zucchini Casserole

2 lbs. (6 c.) sliced zucchini
1 can cream of chicken soup
1 stick melted butter
1 c. sour cream OR 1 c. small curd cottage cheese
1 c. shredded carrots
1/2 c. chopped onion
1/2 pkg. Pepperidge Farm stuffing mix

Salt and pepper, as needed

Slice zucchini and cook in boiling salted water for 5 minutes. Drain well and combine with soup, sour cream or cottage cheese, carrots and chopped onion. Add melted butter to stuffing mix and place half of the crumbs into bottom

of 12 x 1/2" pan. Place squash over dressing before topping with the rest of the crumbs. Bake for 30 minutes at 350°.

Chicken with Almond Sauce

4 chicken breasts, skinless and bone in

1T. Crisco
1 T. all-purpose flour
2 c. heavy cream
1 T. fresh parsley, chopped
1 c. almonds, chopped

Heat Crisco in skillet and fry chicken til golden brown and done. Put it on hot platter while you make the sauce. Thicken the grease in the skillet with the flour, stir til smooth.

Add the cream and parsley, add salt and pepper. Stir well, add the almonds. Let boil for 5 minutes, stirring constantly. Add water, or more cream if it gets too thick.

Pour the sauce over the chicken and serve.

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Mother's Meat Loaf

1 lb. ground beef
1/4 lb. ground sausage
1 t. Worcestershire sauce
1/2 onion, chopped
1/4 c. milk
1 c. bread crumbs
1 egg, beaten
1/2 c. ketchup

Mix all ingredients well in large bowl. Salt & pepper to taste. Form into loaf shape and place in baking pan with small amount of water. Spread Ketchup on top, bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes.

Chocolate Truffles

2 packages chocolate chips
1 Eagle Brand Condensed milk, 15 oz.
1 t. vanilla
1 c. chopped nuts

Melt chips over hot water in double boiler, when melted remove from heat and add remaining ingredients. If you're good at melting the chocolate chips in the microwave do that instead of the double boiler.

Chill until firm on a buttered plate.

Shape into balls and roll in nuts, cocoa or coconut. These will go fast!

Sugared Grapes

1 egg white, beaten
1 c. sugar
1 lb. seedless green or red grapes

Separate grapes into small bunches. Wash and drain. Place sugar on a flat dish. Dip the grapes into egg white and roll in sugar. Place grapes on the sugared plate to dry before chilling. Use as a decorative, edible garnish.

Vinegar Pie

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

Mix together all ingredients and pour in a fresh open pie crust. Bake in moderate oven (350 degrees) til the center is done. Very old recipe.

Fried Apples

5 tart cooking apples
2 T. butter
1 c. sugar
Red hots

Cut the apples into 1/4 inch slices, do not peel. Melt the butter in a skillet and add the apples. Sprinkle sugar over the apples and add 3/4 cup of water.

Cover and cook for a few minutes until the sugar is dissolved. Remove lid and cook til done. Stir only enough to keep apples from burning. Add more water if necessary to keep them from becoming dry. Add a few red hots for even more flavor.

Apple Pandawdy

1/2 loaf stale brown bread
2 T. butter
8 tart apples
Sugar
1/2 t. cinnamon
Dash Salt

Cut the bread in thin slices and pare off crusts. Butter each slice. Lay them in a buttered baking dish so that it is neatly lined. Top with the pared and sliced apples. Sprinkle with a thick layer of sugar. Add the cinnamon and a dusting of salt. Pour 1 cup cold water over all.

Top with buttered bread crumbs. Bake slowly at 325 degrees for an hour. Serve hot with hard sauce if desired.

June is getting Hot. Find out what are the best heat-tolerant plants to get for your garden. Our experienced staff is here to help you with any landscaping questions or needs!



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NEWS FROM 1911

Husband Carved Wife's Outline on her Mattress - Mobile, AL

According to the story of Julia Forst, who is suing for a divorce, her husband John G. Forst used her as a model for his experiments in sculpture, but his methods were very objectionable to her. "My husband was in the habit of sleeping with a razor under his pillow," she said. "One night he came in late, took the razor and with it cut the outline of my figure out of the mattress and left me lying on an island of excelsior with only a tiny margin about me. I woke up during the procedure and he told me that if I moved he would cut my throat."

Girl 5 Years Old Chews Tobacco in Court - Birmingham

Grace Murphy, a five year old child, while sitting on the lap of her father in the criminal court, where she is on trial for the killing of J.T. Myrick, in the western part of the county several months ago, startled spectators by taking a big chew of tobacco, which was offered her by her parents.

The mother of the child, who was sitting just to the rear of the husband and father in the courtroom, with all five children of the pair, admitted that her little daughter was used to chewing tobacco and did not think anything of it. The little girl herself laughed when she heard inquiry being made about her chewing.

The father took the big chunk of tobacco out of his pocket and deliberately handed it to the little girl, who bit off a piece and began chewing on it.

A False Publication

To the Editor of the Daily Times

In the evening Mercury-Banner there appeared a news item to the effect that our daughter Edna is to be married this evening to Mr. Bundo of Chicago.

We desire that you allow us space in your paper to make a statement that this is absolutely false. We knew nothing of the item going to the paper and there is no marriage contemplated.

We are sorry the Mercury-Banner saw fit to publish such an item without first giving us an opportunity to verify the truthfulness of the statement in our name. We think it is very discourteous as a newspaper to publish a statement of this kind to the detriment of our daughter without first getting in communication with us and knowing whether or not we desired such a statement made.

Hoping you will grant us space for this office and thanking you for same, we are Yours very respectfully, J.B. and Laura Lines

Mother Saves Babe at Risk of Her own Life Gadsden, AL

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

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

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

Compelled to get out of Bed at the Point of a Pistol and Follow the Intruder around the House in the Light Only of a Dim Lantern, Mrs. W. H. Whisitt was then Felled by a Blow from a Burglars Fist.

Dothan, AL

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

Ad run in Old Huntsville magazine in 1994, issue 43



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Life with a Strict Dad



by Ernestine Moody

My father was born in Syracuse, Italy in 1893. He came to the United States at the age of fifteen on the ship, the San Giovanni. He often spoke of how his mom, with his thirteen-month old baby brother in arms, endured the hardship of traveling in the lower deck of the packed ship. Many people were seasick and of course, the heat was almost unbearable.

Fast forwarding, upon arrival, he begged for work and sat each day outside of the entrance of a cotton mill. Finally, his request for employment was granted. After diligently saving his money, he opened a small grocery store. Around 1937, he was the entrepreneur of the largest grocery store in Savannah, GA. However, there can be no comparison with our small family store and today's giants, like Walmart, Target, Sam's, etc.

Dad married my sixteen-year old mom. Together they raised my brother and myself.

"Before you marry a person you should first make them use a computer with slow internet to see who they really are."

Will Ferrell

Now, to my dad, the most important asset a father needed from his family was respect. It was instilled in us that "Kids were seen and not heard!" Never were we allowed to even hint that we were considering interrupting an adult conversation. We were to address all adults with the prefix Mr., Mrs., or Ms. Never were we to address them by their first name.

The adults at a big family dinner were seated at the BIG table, and the youngsters were placed at a smaller table, usually in another room.

If dad came home tired, we were told to be quiet as dad had had a stressful day. Mom often supplied him with his request for water or food. She would travel from the kitchen to his side without one harsh word.

We were told to never, never question an adult decision. However, I have to admit on this rule we sometimes failed (after all we were human).

Today our papa would no longer be the chief maker of our household rules. Adults often cease their conversation to hear what a little one is thinking. Small kids address us by our first or nickname. Some kids receive their food first and are often the primary speaker at the family dinner table.

If a dad has experienced a "hard day," many fathers will try and hide it from their families so they will not feel as badly as perhaps he might be feeling. There is usually not a great deal of worry if dad might be needing water, or food, and as for accepting decisions, I think the word, "Why" is very much in a kid's vocabulary.

Perhaps on rereading this article I realize that there was some merit to a dad being a strict disciplinarian, but there is also benefit in today's dad being more understanding, and a listener of his little one's wants and needs.

Dads are a big part in the families' foundation. If they work with moms to maintain a balance they can help make any house a home.

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Setting the Record Straight - Part 4

THE TRUTH ABOUT RUSSEL ERSKINE

by David Bowser

I submit to you a continued look into Mr. Erskine's life after the end of the 1st World War. Included will be a list of his achievements and the people he knew to give you a better idea of his interests, and that being the President of the Studebaker Corporation was no small matter. We will get to his involvement with the Huntsville Hotel Co. Trust me.

At the end of World War I he resumed construction of his mansion in South Bend, Ind. Here are some things I hope you'll find interesting about his house. It had 30+ rooms. Russel had an innovative mind and had all utilities run underground. There were 2 escape tunnels in the basement!

Then, as now there were people out to harm "well to do people". There was a secret passage way from upstairs, passing thru the first floor, and down to the basement. Later in the mansion's life, it was used as a Catholic girls school and one of those former students verified to Prof. Parent that they were indeed there. There were small railroad like tracks in the basement. For a push-pull type cart to move supplies? I have actually seen a small section of them. Cool air vents at the bottom of the windows for cool air ventilation. A flusher button on the floor in front of the toilets.

* Although not a Catholic, he was President of the board of lay trustees for Notre Dame.

* He was Director of Chicago Federal Reserve Board.

In 1921, a serious recession hit the U.S. and as a whole the auto industry lost 45% But Studebaker saw a gain of 29% under Erskine's leadership. Economists wondered how this was possible. It was because Erskine knew and understood every facet and function of his outfit.

* He was the founder of the Albert Russel Erskine Bureau for traffic research at Harvard U. Said to be the

forerunner of A.A.A.

* Founder of the Russel Erskine Award for the best college football team, picked by the country's top sports writers. A large cup was given to the teams coach. Several years ago this cup was sold at auction for 30 thousand dollars.

* In 1924 he attended the Paris Auto show and came up with the idea for a smaller, well built car for Studebaker. The Erskine car was introduced in 1926 but was dropped in 1930. This little snippet, along with other paper work was sent to me by Professor Joe Parent of South Bend

Thank you to our Postal Workers, our UPS/FEDEX and delivery people, our mail men and ladies for all the hard work you do everyday. You do the hard work that most of us wouldn't do and we appreciate you every day!



who now lives in the former Erskine mansion. This comes from what appears to be The South Bend Tribune. I can't find the author. Speaking of Mr. Erskine." His generosity and his love of boys was exemplified on the occasion of this carrier gathering for when he appeared he was accompanied by his son and two candy store clerks with a dozen half gallon jars of hard candy. He enjoyed the evening as much as any of the carriers."

* Russel was the chairman for raising funds for local hospitals and the Y.M.C.A.

* Director of the National Automobile Chamber of Commerce. How many of you knew any of this about Mr. Erskine?

Yes, he cared about people, and seems to have been a man of passionate emotions, but was not a push-over in any way. From reports I've read he had a strong temper. You didn't want to cross him as one advertising executive found out. Later, this man attended Russel's by invitation-only funeral. Perhaps things were patched up.

Mr. Erskine got to know some well known people. Henry Ford gave a celebration party for his friend Thomas Edison honoring Edison's 50th year of his patent of a working, dependable light bulb. Mr. Erskine was invited and attended. Randy and Judy Erskine sent me a picture of Mr. Erskine clearly shown at that event. He was also a friend of the Firestones, Sr. and Jr. You know, the guys that made tires? Studebaker put Firestone tires on new Studebakers. And Mr. Erskine built a white marble house next door to the Firestones in Miami Beach, Florida.

A little of Mr. Erskine's personality showed through here because he wanted the cars they made to be durable and he liked power and speed. In the later 1920's Studebaker had built some cars that were setting endurance and speed records. Many were set. In October, 1927 at the Atlantic City race track (a wood track with a few broken planks), Studebaker entered 3 Commanders with the Big Six engine; 1 sedan and 2 Sport Roadsters. The only "special equipment" was an extra gas tank. The clock kept ticking for pit stops. The cars covered 25,000 miles in 23,000 minutes, with an average speed a little over 60 MPH, but right at 80 during parts of the run. This was said to be a record at the time. One of the roadsters turned in the best time. These cars were very early 1928's. Your author has a very late 1927

Sport Roadster, same body and Big Six engine. The engine casting number in my car engine and the engine casting number in the winning roadster show that they were cast only 12 days apart. That won't get you a cup of coffee anywhere, but some of you may think it's neat.

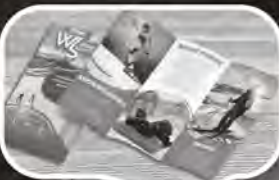
I've talked with and read what some Huntsville historians have passed along about Russel Erskine and in some cases they have missed the target big time, especially in regards to his money dealings with the Huntsville Hotel Co. Kind of like "He said, she said". In some cases these historians have done well with other aspects of his life. The aim of this series of articles was never about the amount of money he invested with H.H.Co., but the fact that he did. There were other investors who gave more, but remember, his family moved away from Huntsville when he was only 16 years old. If only someone had dug deeper years ago!

I hope this article gives you a more favorable picture of Mr. Erskine. Next month's issue brings us closer to the facts and figures article. See you then.



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The Original Wedding Crashers

by Elizabeth Wharry

Back in 1975, I was a junior in high school, and I was dating an alumni. I was class of 1976, and Michael was class of 1974. We loved to dance together, and Michael was an amazing dancer.

On Saturday nights, we would get dressed up and drive around looking for wedding receptions. We always had a congratulatory card with some cash in it. We would sign the card, "Best wishes, love Michael and Elizabeth". Let them puzzle THAT one out!

Both of us were too young to go to a disco, so for 20 or 25 dollars and the price of a card, we would have dinner, drinks and dancing. We would wait til the reception was underway before slipping in. We usually joined the end of the buffet line, and sat in the back.

Did we ever get caught? A couple of times. Usually, we were asked to leave, and we would do so quietly. There was one time we tried to crash a society wedding. Unbeknownst to us, we needed the reception card in hand. The security guard was checking guest names against the cards. When we approached the guard, he asked for our names and the card.

Michael gave him a look, and said very boldly, "I am Michael!" The guard just laughed and told us to beat it, and we did.

Another time, we were having a grand old time, and the newlyweds approached. Uh oh! I quickly explained that I was a distant cousin to the groom's father. The groom was a bit puzzled, and I said his father's mother and my mother were both mothers.

Since they were both buzzed, they just chuckled and wandered off.

It's been 50 years since that summer. I still occasionally wonder if those couples are still married, and has the statute of limitations has expired.

To all my readers, I wish you many wonderful years!

City Traffic Lights - 1925

In a highly controversial move, the city of Huntsville has installed traffic lights at the corners of Jefferson and Clinton, Holmes and Washington, Washington and Clinton and Randolph, Greene and Holmes.

Merchants are outraged at the novel experiment and have vowed to form a coalition to remove them. Their anger comes from the fear that drivers will spend less time looking at the window displays of the various stores.

"The streets will be filled with Zombies." Mr. L.D. Carruthers said, "waiting in lines and staring at the lights."

A citizens group has joined in the merchants protest claiming that red and green lights will be confusing to everyone.

Among the various proposals the city considered before deciding on the lights were whistles, electric gates and crossing police.

The majority of people seemed to be in favor of crossing police but the cost seemed to be prohibitive for Huntsville, a city already deeply in debt.

The first accident was reported yesterday while the lights were still being installed. Mr. Orville Roberts of New Hope lost control of his car and ran into the ladder of a workman installing the light on Clinton and Jefferson.

"I never saw a green light before," Mr. Roberts said later.

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To My Irreplaceable Friends

by Jack Burwell



Dear Irreplaceable Friends,

None of us planned from early childhood to go to Huntsville High in the 1960s. It just happened. Our parents or other family members dropped us at the door and then we walked in. And there you were and there I was. There were a few familiar faces from second grade and junior high.

The next thing I knew was that a young lady was saying, "What's your name?" I said, "Jack" and she said, "Nancy" and then began a friendship that has now lasted sixty years or more.

I would worry about how to get to Latin class on the second floor on time, what books would I need, would any girl want to go to a dance with me if I called? Did I write down her name and phone number? I think I lost it.

Is it important to know the name of my teachers? They will

be calling on me, not me on them.

What's really important about high school? Grades were important if you wanted to go to college. I would worry about that later. That seemed like a lifetime away when I was a sophomore. Top priority was learning names and making friends. For most of us, we have known each other for sixty years; for a few, seventy years. There were the girls in second grade that I had a crush on. Would there be new loves in high school?

I was living in a scary world where a turn of the head and a smile meant everything or perhaps nothing. At some point I would want to have a wife, when I had some money. When would I ever have any money? It would be a long time away.

At least there is one thing I know. Each of you are irreplaceable. Over the years, you have become my brothers and sisters. One of my favorite writers once said, "But how could you live and have no stories to tell." I know some of your stories but I want to hear many more.

Your annoying brother, Jack

PS For those who are not annoyed by me, thank you.



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Back of all the activities of the Ford Motor Company is this Universal idea — a whole-hearted belief that riding on the people's highway should be within easy reach of all the people.

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It is this thought that has been the stimulus and inspiration to the Ford organization's growth, that has been incentive in developing inexhaustible resources, boundless facilities and an industrial organization which is the greatest the world has ever known.

In accomplishing its aims the Ford institute has never been daunted by the size or difficulty of any task. It has spared no toil in finding the way of doing each task best. It has dared to try out the untried with conspicuous success.

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

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

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"When I get in an elevator the operator takes one look and says, 'Basement?'"

Rodney Dangerfield



CAR OF DREAMS

by M. D. Smith IV

Randy Jenkins, age fifty, lived the kind of life people didn't write stories about. He sold office supplies out of a small showroom in the back corner of a strip mall just outside Corpus Christi. He wore beige. Ate microwave dinners. And spent more time talking to his cat, General Whiskers, than to people. It was 1987.

But in his dreams — oh, in his dreams — he was twenty again, and behind the wheel of his cherry red and ivory topped 1957 Chevrolet Bel Air. The one his parents gave him for acing his pre-med prep. His first new car that replaced the '49 clunker. He called this new beauty Marilyn, after you-know-who. The car that roared with pride. That sparkled under the Texas sun. Summer break was just beginning, and he had Martha Jo Hansen.

God, she was something. Blonde curls that caught the wind like streamers, a laugh that danced in the heat, and the softest Southern voice that could hush a storm. That summer, Martha Jo and Marilyn were his universe. But he'd been young and stupid — too busy buffing chrome and racing down back roads to notice her pulling away. By September, she was gone. Off to college in Dallas. He never followed. Flunked out of pre-med. Spent the next thirty years floating through a lukewarm life.

Until the day he saw her again.

Not Martha Jo. But Marilyn.

Or at least, her rusted twin.

The same red and ivory. Same tailfins. Hidden behind a fence in a yard filled with rusting relics. "Bud's Salvage & Repair. We Fix the Past".

Randy stared, heart pounding. It had to be fate.

"Looks like she's seen better days," said

an old man with oil-stained coveralls and a straw hat, appearing like smoke from a back door.

"She's just like mine of thirty years ago. I loved that car," Randy said, voice cracking.

"She'll need more than money. You gotta put love in a car like that."

Randy handed over every

last dollar in his wallet.

"It's asking more," the sly old man said. "But I 'blive this car is for you. Take it, son." He handed him the set of keys. Randy got in. The old man — vanished.

And so began the resurrection of a car with 120,000 miles on the odometer. Coughing black smoke, she shook like a soda can full of rocks. She barely made it home. The odometer, oddly, had ticked backward faster than actual forward miles.

But Randy scrubbed her every night after work. Sanded her edges. Whispered to her in his brother's garage — Marilyn, just like old times.

Marilyn started humming again. Not just running. Humming.

118,000 miles it showed.

He drove to the next town.

It ticked back again.

At 110,000 miles, the leather smelled less musty. At 100,000, the radio crackled back to life with Elvis. And Randy — well, his knees hurt less, and his back straightened up without him noticing.

On a hunch, Randy found his old keepsake pa-

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pers—a black and white photo of him in front of Marilyn the day they bought it. A gym clip held the window sticker and details he'd kept all those years. It had the serial number. He ran out to Marilyn.

They matched. Astounded, he'd found his original car.

After a two-hundred-mile joyride, Marilyn gleamed like a pin-up in chrome. Her engine purred like she was flirting. Paint looked new. And at the next gas station, the newspaper in the rack said April 1982.

He wasn't just feeling younger.

He was younger and so was Marilyn.

He went home long enough to stuff his pants with money for gas. He gave Whiskers, now a kitten, to his delighted neighbor. He drove all night—his heart pounding, his hands tight on the wheel. Every ten actual miles he drove, ticked the odometer back a thousand, and time peeled away like cheap paint in the sun.

Old signs turned fresh. Neon blinked again. Fast-food joints disappeared and became diners. He passed a gas station he swore wasn't there yesterday.

By dawn, Randy rolled into his old hometown. The clock on the bank said June 14, 77 degrees.

Three boys in pressed white shirts and paper hats rushed from the Standard Oil gas station like it was the Indy 500.

"Check the oil? Fill 'er up?"

"Please," Randy said, stunned. "What year is it?"

"Fifty-seven, mister. Ain't it a beaut' of a mornin'?"

Young Randy laughed out loud. "I'm here."

He peeled out and turned onto Main Street, where the buildings looked like they'd just been painted yesterday. Maybe so. He drove straight to where he remembered Martha Jo's house was—blue with white trim, swing on the porch.

And there she was.

Martha Jo.

In a pink poodle skirt. White socks. Saddle shoes. Her hair pulled back in a ribbon. She turned at the sound of Marilyn's engine and squealed. Ran. Leaped into the car like she'd never left.

"Randy!" she shouted, hugging his neck and covering his cheek in kisses. "Where you been, Alligator? You look... cool, different."

He cupped her face, drinking her in—the best thing he'd ever lost.

"I've just got one thing to do, Martha Jo," he said.

Puzzled. "What's that?"

He leaned under the dash, found the wire to the odometer, unscrewed and yanked it free.

A pop.

No more ticking backward.

The future is now.

Just her.

"We're going to have a wonderful summer together," he said, "and then I'm going to convince you not to go off to college, but stay here and go to the medical university with me."

"Randy Jenkins, are you serious?"

He grinned. "Dead serious. I've seen what life's like without you. And it's not worth living."

"Aww..." she laughed, teary-eyed, then leaned in to kiss him again.

And just like that, with one hand on the wheel and arm around her shoulder, Randy Jenkins drove into the past he thought he'd lost—finally ready to live it right.

Marilyn softly purred.

"Being a grandmother is great. One minute you're just a mom, the next you are all-wise and prehistoric."

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HELLFIGHTERS

by David M. Stephens



I was born and raised in Huntsville, but my first true love was the fresh air of the country.

My grandfathers owned farms in Hazel Green, where I loved to spend my time.

Pawpaw Thomason had a sixty-six-acre farm with a house, well house, smokehouse, a huge barn, and a combination corn crib and equipment shed. This corn crib was at least sixty feet long and sixteen feet wide. It had a wooden plank floor and a ceiling at least ten feet tall.

My grandfather was in his seventies by this time, had given up farming himself, and was renting his cropland to Everett Jones and his sons. He also rented his corn crib to

Roger Jones, one of Everett's sons, for his corn crop.

My parents and I were at my grandparents' house one crisp winter day. While the "old folks" were inside visiting, I decided to go outside and find some way to entertain myself. I brought a large pack of Black Cat firecrackers to shoot. I didn't have a lighter, so I borrowed a box of wooden strike-anywhere matches from my grandmother.

As I walked through the dried grass, I struck a match, lit my firecracker, and then threw it down before it burned my fingers. One time, I threw the firecracker and watched it explode, and when I looked down, I realized the match had caught the grass on fire. Instead of stomping out the blaze, I threw a firecracker into the middle of it. When the firecracker exploded, it blew out the fire. I thought, wow, just like John Wayne. I had just seen a John Wayne movie called "Hellfighters" a few days earlier. In the film, John Wayne's character owned a company that specialized in putting out oil well fires. They accomplished this by placing large amounts of explosives on the end of a boom, rolling it into the fire, and then setting off the explosives. The Shockwave from the explosion starves the fire of oxygen and puts it out.

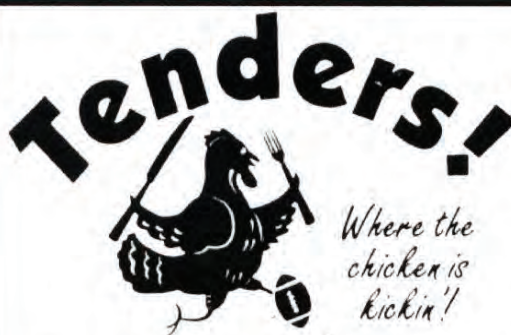
I was excited about my discovery and quit using the matches to light the firecrackers. Instead, I would strike a match and throw it into the dry grass until it began to blaze up. I would then throw a firecracker into the fire and watch the explosion extinguish the fire.

After that became boring, I began to twist the fuses of two or more firecrackers together so I could use them to put out an even bigger fire. I kept looking for taller, thicker grass to light on fire, leading me down to the side of the corn crib. The grass beside it was over a foot tall and perfect for a larger fire.

I took as many firecrackers as I could and twisted the fuses together. I had so many that the fuses were not long enough to bind them together, but I decided to try it anyway. I struck a match on the box and threw it in the tall grass. As it blazed up, I tossed all those firecrackers into the middle of the flame. The problem was they did not stay together. When they separated, they began to explode. The separation caused them to go off individually, so instead of a large boom, I got a pop-pop-pop-

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

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pop instead. With each pop, the fire was spreading a little further.

When I finally realized my little plan would not work, I had a huge fire. It was racing along the bottom of the corn crib, which was filled to the top with Roger Jones' corn. I knew I was in trouble, so I learned how to clog dance. I might even have been the first one to do the River Dance. I began stomping as fast as my chubby legs would stomp, and the more I stomped, the more the fire spread. When I realized the boards on the side of the corn crib were burning, I knew it was all over.

I turned and ran to the house as fast as my legs would carry me. The porch was three feet tall, and I jumped on it like an Olympian athlete. I jerked the door open while screaming at the top of my lungs.... "The barns on fire! The barns on fire!"

My grandfather raised up in his chair and looked out the window. He then turned to my parents to ask them to see what they could do, but by then, they were both headed through the house and out the back door.

As we passed through the utility room, we each grabbed a metal dishpan. Thank goodness a wet weather stream was running by the other side of the corn crib and all three of us began dipping our dishpans in the stream and racing around the crib to throw the water on the fire.

Somehow, we got ahead of the fire and could extinguish it. However, the damage had been done. Several of the old wide boards on the side were burned completely, and the corn was beginning to burn in the shucks. I knew I was in the biggest trouble I had ever been in.

Well, I had to stand there and take a major chewing from my father, but the worse part was when he finished scolding me, he told me to go to the house and tell my grandfather what I had done and how much damage there was.

My Pawpaw Thomason was the gentlest and most laid-back man I had ever known. I had never known him to reprimand any of us grandkids for anything. But I can tell you, that was the longest walk of my life. I was fighting tears all the way to the house.

When I walked in the front door, Pawpaw motioned for me to come to him. As I walked over to his recliner, he asked me about the damage. I tried to explain what had happened as best I could.

When I finished, he just looked at me and said, "Son, I don't mind you shooting fireworks, but this time of year, you need to stay out on the road where nothing can catch on fire. Okay?" I nodded and said "Yes sir."

Then he patted me on the arm, and that was it.

Most people would say that was not much of a reprimand; however, just knowing I had disappointed my grandfather hurt me more than a razor strap.

It was at this very moment in my life that I decided to forevermore leave the Hellfighting to John Wayne.

One final note. Roger Jones was the District 1 Commissioner for twenty years in Madison County. Roger, I want you to know that this may not make up for the burned corn, but I did vote for you at every election.

"I make my practices really hard because if a player is a quitter, I want him to quit in practice, not in a game."

Coach Bear Bryant, Univ. of Alabama

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After 36 years of research, I have discovered how cancers are started or developed in your nerves axons "very small" ion neuron cells. My results are published and are extensive.

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Round-up weed killer (unsafe on any plate) is frequently used and gets to our fresh foods, then into our bodies.

Benzene is a chemical in many of our drugs we take and can cause many types of cancer, including brain cancer.

The herbicide Paraquat is sprayed nationwide on crops to kill pests. It gets into our systems when we eat these foods.

Caffeine gets metabolized by our livers, which eventually produces 3 molecules in our body, one of them toxic. Soft drinks that are caffeinated are not good for us.

It is a highly complicated issue and you can read for yourself the very serious health risks to you that many of these chemicals present that are used on crops and food items you use everyday.

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Delbert Parkinson



The Future of Huntsville's U.S. Veterans Memorial Museum

by Iolanda Hicks

A few years ago, while volunteering at the U.S. Veterans Memorial Museum here in Huntsville, I heard that the museum was some day going to expand which would allow the display area to be increased. Talking with some of the Veterans and the Museum Director, I found out that excess historical artifacts, vehicles, weaponry and much more were not displayed because of lack of space and were stored in different locations off site. I happened to see some of the plans about a year ago of how the finished expansion would look. When the museum opened 2 months after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001, it had an area of 1,200 square feet for open displays plus 3,000 square feet for office space and archives. The present museum resides in an airplane hangar left over from the former Huntsville Airport site.

In April of this year, the Huntsville Planning Commission approved plans to go forward with the long awaited expansion of the museum. A sixteen-month construction time period has been given for the expansion, once a bid is received and accepted for the project, within the set 90-day bidding period. The museum's

addition will be located north of the present building. The additional square footage will increase the museum's capacity to approximately 27,500 square feet with a parking area to include a section for outdoor events.

Opening bids for construction is anticipated to start by the fall of this year, with completion, of this project, by Spring of 2027.

There are presently 12 restored military vehicles/items waiting for a place to be displayed. If all goes as planned, the construction should be completed within that time frame and those items, plus many more, will finally find a home.

Huntsville is a good place to call home. My two sisters, my son and my three grandchildren are native Huntsvillians and I was fortunate to adopt this city as my home on July 4th, 1950. Watching a small town grow slowly over the years into the metropolitan city that it is today, has been such an amazing transformation to watch! There is so much to do here, along with all the history that surrounds us, for miles and miles throughout the county.

The U. S. Veterans Memorial Museum has a wealth of information in humanity's fight for freedom for all of us here and those throughout the world. See some of that history in Huntsville at the museum which is open Wednesday through Saturday, 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM, except for Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter. It is one of many unique places that you can explore and enjoy in Huntsville, Alabama.

"When a man brings his wife flowers for no reason, there's a reason."

Molly McGee

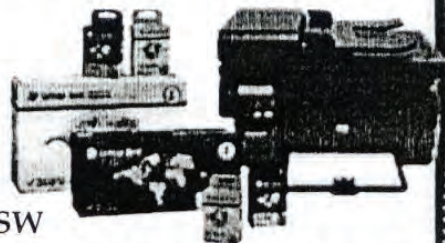
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Memories

by Herman H. Hunt

I was born in Elon, Alabama in 1919. Most people don't know where that is - it is between Hobbs Island and Bugg Chapel. The population was 100 people or less. Frank Colburne had a grocery store and Charles Watson was the County Commissioner with the shed at Elon. Bush Cemetery at Elon is where my people are buried.

I have some really good memories of those days. My Uncle Erskine told everyone that Guntersville dam was going to burst. My cousin crawled under the floor and attached a wire to the radio. He said, "Attention, folks, the Dam has broken, head for the mountain." It caused quite a stir, but wasn't true.

We had a sink hole on our land. Someone placed a dummy in the hole with shoes sticking straight out. Nearly everyone in Elon went down there to look at the "body." Uncle Erskine said, "You ladies stand back." He pulled at the shoes and found out that it was just a joke.

I remember our school bus had to have the front wheel jacked up to be cranked and Mr. Ikard carrying his daughter to school in a covered wagon.

"Once you lick the frosting off a cupcake you're left with just a muffin, and that's a diet food."

Betty Satterfield, Athens

I went to the Yellow Bank 2-room schoolhouse at Yellow Bank next to Bugg Chapel.

My teachers were Clara Payne and Lucille Rice. They both boarded at Walter Brannum's across from the school. Back then, you couldn't be married and teach. Mr. Hill, our principal, oftentimes had to use a boat to Yellow Bank school when the water would flood and get over the road.

New Hope played Bugg Chapel in baseball. They sent Bugg Chapel a box of cigars, saying "How dead is Bugg Chapel!"

They sent New Hope a box saying how crooked New Hope was.

I saw the St. Louis Cardinals World Champions play at what is now Big Spring in the early 30's. They loaned us Dizzy Dean, but we still lost really bad. Gabby Street was the St. Louis manager. He called my father a "Jay Bird" one day and that resulted in a big fight between the two. Good memories.

*We're so grateful for all of our
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active and Vets. Thank you for
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keep us free.*



*With special greetings to the
Huntsville High Class of 1966*

OSCAR LLERENA



The Rock Cliff Service Station, Part III

by David L. Bacchus

When Aunt Goob did finally retire in January 1977 at age 62, she had faithfully operated the store for almost 23 years. During all that time, however, the appearance of the store, inside and out, had changed very little. The old coal-burning pot-bellied stove used for heating was still there, as was the well-worn cash register that had rung up many a sale. The most noticeable difference, at least on the outside, was that originally there was a wooden porch on the eastern side of the structure. This was torn down most likely in the early 1950s, or at least prior to Goob taking over as store manager, and never replaced.

In addition, ultimately two more-modern gasoline pumps had been installed out front, replacing the vintage single pump of the 1930s and '40s. There were also a few minor changes in the signage above and in front of the store, but that was about it.

It was this period of time, the Goob Parton years, that Sandra Butler (my wife of 61 years) remembers the most. Aunt Goob became an integral part of her early life and a person she would endear forever. The

store was almost like a home away from home, she said, with friends and family often gathering there for nothing more than socializing.

Sandra's primary memory growing up is going to the store each morning to catch the bus to school, initially to Central Junior High (which also had elementary level classes) and later Madison County "Gurley" High School. During her Central Junior High years, Judy Parton would join Sandra and they would ride the school bus together. A fond daily ritual for Sandra upon their returning would be grabbing a soft drink from the store and either chips or candy to snack on. Judy did the same and recalls that the candy was purchased wholesale from Allison Candy and that sometimes their driver would let her go with him in

the truck to get the store's candy order. Sandra says she never had to pay for any of her purchases, but simply told Aunt Goob to "put it on the tab." Goob, as her usual custom, would make a hand-written note of the purchase in her book, and Sandra assumes that eventually Wessie or her mother, Lyndall, would settle things up.

But Sandra and Judy aren't the only ones who remember the store mostly as a candy store. Judy's daughter, Tammy, remembers what seemed to her at the time to be an endless supply of free candy and cokes. She says she spent a lot of time there with Buddy Wessie, starting each day with him eating a box of Cracker Jack caramel coated popcorn so that she could have the prize. Afterwards, Wessie would declare that Tammy loved him more than anyone in the world, which she would vehemently deny.

Banter between the two would immediately follow, with the contention eventually narrowing to her loving him more than anyone in the car. Mark Jones has some memories of Buddy Wessie as well, when he was spending almost every weekend at the store. He says Buddy Wessie would stay with them every night until the store closed.

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Judy thinks that growing up she probably spent more time at the store than she did at home. Her mother (Goob) often cooked pinto beans on the cook stove there and cut bologna from a long stick to make bologna sandwiches for both themselves and the customers. Tammy remembers the bologna sandwiches as well, and eating many fried eggs there that her Ma and Pa (her name for her grandparents, Goob and France) would make. She says Pa would use an ice pick to make a hole in the top of the coke cap so that she would have her sippy cup. Aunt Goob was also noted for cooking lunch for everyone picking cotton each year in Uncle France's or Hick's field.

Cotton picking was a big chore and a busy time, and every member of the family had to pitch in. County schools, in fact, opened in mid-summer and closed for a six-to-seven week cotton picking vacation each fall so kids could help get the job done. This practice would continue in Madison County until 1960 when modern machinery began taking over the job once requiring strictly manual labor.

In the years before that, though, Judy says that Sandra's mother, Lyndall, was one of the best pickers and always beat everyone at the scales when the cotton was weighed in.

Another of Sandra's fond memories is of Uncle France loading up kids in the back of his pickup truck and taking them about 2 1/2 miles east on Highway 72 to the Flint River, at a place called Seger's Bluff to swim. Of course hauling kids this way would definitely be unacceptable today, but in the 1940s and 50s this was a

common every-day practice.

The Flint River, incidentally, is where Sandra and probably a lot of other kids in the area learned to swim. There was no alternative, in truth, as the river was basically the only place readily available. There was a rope swing, Sandra remembers, tied to an overhanging tree branch that many of the kids loved to use, but it was far too scary for her.

As for the store, a near tragic event occurred in 1959 when an automobile careened off Highway 72 after colliding with another car and struck the gasoline pumps out front. Fortunately, the impact did not rupture any of the gas lines and thus no fire or explosion resulted. The incident did make the Huntsville Times with a photo on page 2 of the October 5 issue of that year.

After the small grocery/service station closed its doors for good in 1977, the building would sit vacant for some sixteen years until 1993 when Eddie Neely formed the Rockcliff (choosing the name as a single word) Tire Company. This resulted in his renting or leasing not only the empty store, which he used for storage purposes, but the prior Martin residence next door as well, this becoming his place of business.

Although it is currently unknown how long the one-man Rockcliff Tire Company remained in business (it apparently lasted at least until the early 2000s), it is known that by the late 2010s all three of the rock structures were gone. What had once been the Rock Cliff Service Station was the last to go, demolished in 2019 when the intersection of Dug Hill Road and Highway 72 was reworked for safety reasons. Some time before that, Sandra's former home, which fortunately was vacant at the time, had been destroyed by fire from an unknown origin. The house once occupied by the Martin family had been the first to be demolished, but the exact date that occurred is likewise currently unknown.

Sadly, all of those who once had a hand in the Rock Cliff Service Station have passed on. Bessie Miller was the first, dying in 1958, followed by John five years later. Their son Hick died in 1982 and daughter Goob in 2009. Goob's husband, France, passed in 1984, and Hick's wife, Wilma, the last surviving prior store operator, succumbed in 2022.

Though they all are currently interred in the Shiloh Cemetery in Ryland, memories of the good times at the store still linger in the minds of those left behind. Hopefully, these memories will be passed down for generations to come.



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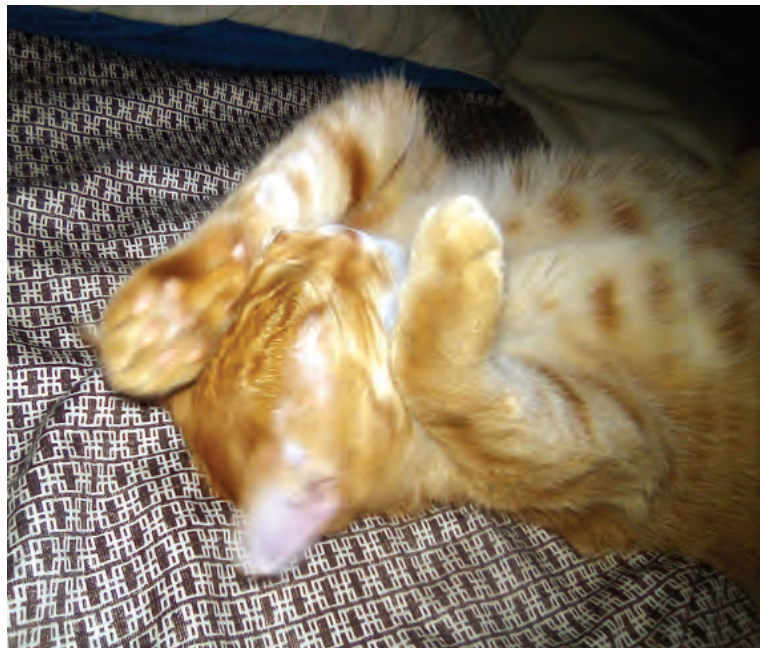
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The Rescue of Thankful Thomas



by John Michael Hampton

John Robert liked his mom taking him to ride around Gurley, Alabama, in the minivan late in the afternoon each day. He could see wildlife, and it helped him get ready for bed after a long day at school. He loved animals, just like his mom and dad did, and taking care of cats also helped him with his ADHD.

On a beautiful September afternoon, they were in the minivan, and mom was driving on the highway between Huntsville and Gurley. Mom saw the flash of orange fur in the swampy area along the side of the road first. "Look, John Robert! It's a fox!"

As John Robert tried to look, mom slowed the minivan down. "That's not a fox, John Robert! That's a kitty!"

Mom turned the minivan around, and they stopped on the shoulder of the road near the

In 1908 most women washed their hair once a month, and used Borax or egg yolks for shampoo.

"Marriage is a wonderful invention: then again, so is the bicycle repair kit."

Billy Connolly



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swamp. John Robert jumped out of the minivan as soon as it stopped, and he quickly walked toward the swamp, hoping to catch the small, scared kitten in the tall grass at the edge of the road next to the swamp.

At first, the kitten acted like it was going to run away. But, it stopped in time to see the fast moving cars on the highway, and the even faster moving freight trains on the railroad tracks beyond the highway. So, it stood there, letting John Robert pick it up and take it back to the minivan.

"Mom, can we keep it?" John Robert asked as he held the soft ball of orange fur. "He would be purr-fect, mom!"

Mom answered, "We need to check in with the vet first, just to make sure no one else is looking for him, and also check to see if they have room to keep him." They drove the two miles to Gurley and stopped at the Gurley Animal Hospital. After taking a look at the beautiful orange tabby, they stated that no one that used their vet clinic was missing a cat, and they did not have space to take in any extra cats.

Once they were back in the car, mom told John Robert, "Well, there is only one challenge left. We have to tell dad about the new family member."

John Robert smiled. He knew that he would have a new orange cat at home. He paused for a moment, remembering the first cat the family had – an orange tabby named Junior. Unfortunately, Junior had passed away back in 2011, when John Robert was just in Kindergarten.

September 2018 had been rough for John Robert. He was dealing with bullies at school on a daily basis, and was having trouble keeping up with the teachers. This new orange cat might be just what he needed to make things all better.

As soon as they got back home, John Robert asked mom to call dad. Mom told dad, "While we were out driving tonight, we found an orange kitten in the swamp between Huntsville and Gurley. The vet did not have a place to keep it, and no one was missing a kitten. John Robert wants to know if we can keep it?"

Dad assured John Robert that the kitten would become part of the family. Later, after dad got home, he picked up the little kitten for the first time and was instantly in love with the little darling critter.

John Robert was given the task of naming the new kitten. "Well, I am thankful to God that we found him before he ran across the highway and possibly the railroad tracks. He is also thankful that he found us, and that we are taking him in. Since we found him along the railroad tracks, that reminds me of my favorite train, Thomas the Tank Engine. Why don't we name him Thankful Thomas?"

Mom and dad agreed that it was a perfect name – or should we say, a purr-fect name – for the awesome little orange tabby. As he began to get bigger, John Robert was glad he picked the name Thomas for, just like the train engine in the cartoon, Thankful Thomas was just a little

mischievous. He would occasionally fight the other cats, and he always seemed to get into trouble. But, he was a sweet little cat, and as he grew, a little white began to show up in the orange fur as an accent to his beautiful color.

Everywhere John Robert went in the house, Thankful Thomas would follow. More than once, mom and dad agreed that it seemed that John Robert and Thankful Thomas were the best of companions.

They played together well, and it seemed that having the cat was making John Robert feel better, as well.

John Robert was thankful to the Lord for his little orange cat. For, Thankful Thomas was truly blessed to have a family that loved him, after he had been found in the swamp alone, next to a busy highway and railroad track.

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NINETEEN PUPPIES

from 2016 Newspaper

On December 5, 2015, the world got a little bit sweeter. That's the day that Velma, a 4-year-old Great Dane from Alabama, stunned her owners Josh and Terri. You see, Velma was pregnant and they expected her to give birth to a litter of 10. But imagine their surprise

when they learned Velma was pregnant with a whopping 19 puppies!

Averaging a delivery of one puppy per hour, the entire birthing process took about 19 hours in total. Incredibly, all of the puppies are healthy, happy and just adorable.

Velma's brood is nearly unprecedented — it officially ties with the largest known litter of goofy Great Danes!

Keeping one baby fed is difficult enough, let alone a pack of 19 plump and hungry Great Danes, which is said to be the largest dog breed.

Terri and Josh were stunned when the puppies "just kept coming," after a 19-hour-long birthing process. Expecting 10 puppies is a whole lot different when you see 9 more that weren't expected!

Even the vet wasn't prepared. All of the puppies are healthy and happy, and Terri says each one is precious and unique. Velma is also doing great. She was, understandably, extremely worn out after the delivery but as she was healthy to start with, there were no issues later.

However, nursing the brood is a whole other story. Great Danes grow rapidly and so do their food needs.

Velma has proved to be a wonderful mom, but she simply cannot nurse all of the puppies at once without it looking like an adorable yet chaotic game of musical chairs.

So, Terri and Josh have stepped in to help feed the puppies every 3-4 hours. Velma's milk supply is supplemented with goat milk and Esbilac formula. Half comes from Velma and half comes from the formula.

A very busy new family!

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PET TIPS FROM ANGEL

Summer Cats



1. Make sure your cat always has plenty of fresh water.

2. Ensure there's a shaded garden spot if you have an outdoor cat. If there are no naturally occurring shady spots in your garden, create one by placing some cloth or cardboard over an area to keep the sun out. Also, make sure you check outdoor buildings like sheds and greenhouses before shutting them as cats often get locked in accidentally overnight.

3. Brush your cat daily - Most cats begin shedding in the spring but continue through the summer and a brushing feels really good. If you make it a regular event you and your cat could look forward to it. Matted hair traps heat so give them a thorough groom if possible. This is especially important for long-haired cats.

4. Keep them out of conservatories and greenhouses - These areas can get dangerously hot even when the weather just feels warm. Bear in mind that they both exclude cooling breezes and magnify the heat.

5. Use damp towels to cool down your cat - The warmest parts of a cat's body is their tummies, the pads of their paws, their armpits, under their chin and on the outside of their ears. Although most cats hate getting wet, try dampening a cloth with cold water and gently stroking your cat with it from their head and down their back.

6. Keep your cat calm - A very active cat that is running around on a hot day will quickly become exhausted and dehydrated. Encourage your cat to relax when outside temperatures are soaring.

7. Create a retreat - Cats are very clever when it comes to comfort and they will seek out places such as the bath or sink as these often stay cool even when it's hot outside. You could also try creating a cool and darkened indoor retreat for them to sleep in and feel safe. A good tip is to place a cardboard box on its side and position it somewhere cool and quiet in the house, such as behind a chair or on a cool surface like a wooden floor. Line it with a breathable natural fabric such as a cotton towel.

8. Keep outdoor cats indoors - If temperatures really soar, then it's worth considering keeping your cat inside during the hottest hours of the day.

9. Encourage cool play - Ice cubes are a great way

for cats to play and keep cool at the same time. Put a few on the floor so they can chase them as they scatter around the floor. Perhaps even consider flavouring the ice with a hint of chicken stock to encourage their interest.

10. Close the curtains - Things that keep you cool will also benefit your cat — keeping curtains or blinds closed will keep the sun out.

11. Watch out for signs of heat stroke - Although this generally only occurs on really hot days, it's worth being aware of. Symptoms of heat stroke can include agitation, stretching out and breathing

rapidly, extreme distress, skin hot to the touch, glazed eyes, vomiting and drooling. If you're at all worried about your cat, contact your vet immediately.

12. Circulate cool air - Open the windows, turn on a box fan or keep air conditioning at a reasonable temperature. Your cat will appreciate having a cool place to relax indoors if it's scorching outside.

13. Cats and hot weather could mean sunburn. Don't forget cats are susceptible to sunburn, particularly those with white ears and noses. This can lead to painful blistering and sores, and long-term exposure can lead to skin cancers. It is possible to buy pet sunscreen to apply to the hairless areas on the end of the ears and nose. It's also advisable to keep white-faced cats indoors during the heat of the afternoon.

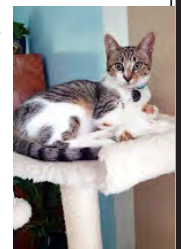
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From the Desk of Tom Carney

A Yankee Confederate

by Tom Carney

Of all the Civil War veterans who called Huntsville home, Maj. S. F. Sweinhart must have been the most unusual.

Major Sweinhart was a member of an Ohio volunteer regiment and had participated in some of the bloodiest fighting of the war. While stationed in Alabama, he was captivated by the warm climate and the natural beauty of the Tennessee Valley.

When the war was finally over and the soldiers had stacked arms for the last time, Major Sweinhart moved to Huntsville, determined to make it his home. Feelings were running high at the end of the war, so it is not surprising that he was greeted with scowls and bitterness.

"Damn Yankee," the Huntsville natives would say as they passed him on the streets. "Damn Rebels," the Major would mutter under his breath, while looking straight ahead.

But time has a way of healing all wounds and as the Major grew into old age, he began taking his place on the old Courthouse bench, reliving and re-fighting the battles of his youth. An old Yankee officer and old Confederate veterans, with nothing in common except the blood spilled on battlefields years before.

Slowly the town began to accept the old soldier and the scowls he used to encounter on the streets turned to smiles. Sweinhart became involved in community affairs and became active in veterans affairs. Of course the only other veterans in Huntsville were ex-Confederates.

In 1927 Maj. Sweinhart was awarded the highest accolade ever given to a Yankee by Confederate veterans. The story can best be told by a newspaper article of the day.

"Maj. Sweinhart was invited this week to attend a dinner given by the Daughters of the Confederacy to members of the Egbert Jones Camp of Confederate Veterans at the home of Robert A. Moore, acting Adjutant for the Third Brigade, Alabama Division. He was welcomed with hand clasps and smiles." After dinner, the old veterans invited him to attend their business meeting.



When discussions lagged a little, Maj. Sweinhart, who had remained in a corner deep in thought, rose and stood at attention. "Men," he said, with a shake in his voice, "I've lived down here so long I feel like I belong here." His voice quivered again as he added, "And by golly, I want to belong to you." The Confederate veterans gave a hearty cheer, and one of them proposed Maj. Sweinhart for membership. The proposal was accepted immediately and "the major" was accepted as a member of the camp by unanimous vote.

"He now belongs to the Egbert Jones Camp of Confederate veterans and is believed to be the only Union soldier in the country who has experienced such a transformation."

When Major Sweinhart died, an honor guard consisting of Confederate veterans stood guard during the funeral ceremony.

His body is buried in Maple Hill Cemetery, next to the other veterans he had grown to love.

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\$\$ Money Saving Tips

- Want to find the freshest and cheapest produce? Visit a local farmers market. The produce tends to be fresher, treated with fewer chemicals, and cheaper than the grocery store.

- To stretch your liquid hand soap and dish soap, when the container is half full, fill the rest with water. Shake gently to mix. Works just as well, and your soap will last twice as long!

- Don't spend your money on expensive deodorant cat litter. Instead, when you change the litter box, sprinkle the bottom with baking soda, then add the litter. When the cat scratches it will mix the baking soda in and alleviate the odor. Sprinkle more on top as needed.

- Instead of using expensive paper towels to clean up messes in your kitchen, buy a bunch of cheap washcloths and keep those in a drawer in your kitchen. You can throw them in the wash and use them over and over. Buy them in a color that matches your kitchen so they don't get mixed in with your bath ones.

- For economic and stylish gift-wrapping use raffia instead of ribbons or bows. It's much cheaper and it looks great, too!

- You can completely do away with the need for paper napkins, aluminum foil, plastic bags, plastic food wrap, etc. by using cloth napkins for all meals

and Tupperware for all food storage instead. What a great savings over the years!

- Crockpots can be a pain to clean. To avoid that, place a Reynolds cooking bag into the pot, fill it with your recipe, cover and cook as usual. To store leftovers, just pull the bag out of the pot, close it and toss into the fridge. By not having to scrub the pot, you will save time, water and soap!

- For savings using your dishwasher, fill only the main cup with detergent, not the pre-wash cup, and set it on light wash instead of regular wash. You'll find the dishes are just as clean! Also, before putting dishes in your dishwasher, try rinsing them in cold water instead of hot. It has no bearing on the cleaning process and saves money on your utility bill.

- When cleaning the garden in fall, don't throw away unripened tomatoes. Just pull the tomato plant out, roots and all,

shake off the dirt and hang the plants upside down, in either the basement or the garage. The green tomatoes will ripen "on the vine" and you'll enjoy fresh tomatoes for months!

- To rejuvenate worn denim garments, buy denim dye and use it in an entire washload of denim items. They come out looking brand new.

- Have lots of flat sheets, but need fitted ones? Convert a flat sheet to a fitted one by tying a knot in each corner and when making the bed, just tuck each knot under the corners of the mattress.

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Lee Judge

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"The car: Designed by computers, built by robots, driven by morons."

Joe Taylor, Huntsville



ALL ABOUT MY CARS

by Jim Vann

My dad was in the car business a long time. He started out as a mechanic's helper and ended up being the Sales Manager at the Stockton Buick and GMC dealership where he worked for 37 years.

He was a very trusted employee and was given a great deal of tasks because of that trust.

I was about 12 years old when my Dad came home from work early one day because he was sick. We lived on Beirne Avenue at that time. We had a small garage in back of the house where my Dad always made sure "our" car was stored every night. This garage was just wide enough to get a Buick through the opening when the doors were opened wide. There was about 8 inches of clearance on both sides.

Dad had a couple of water pipes cut to the appropriate length so that when those doors were wide open, we would place those pipes against the doors to keep them wide open just in case the wind was blowing.

Just before dark that evening, he called me into his bedroom and told me to go put the car in the garage. I explained that I had never driven a car before and he said something to the effect that I had been raised in a car. So, I took the key, went out to the garage,

opened the doors as wide as they would go and put those pipes in place. I drove that Buick through those doors and stopped exactly where I was supposed to so that the doors would close just behind the back bumper. Thankfully it had an automatic transmission.

Of course that turned out to be a huge mistake on my Dad's part because I bugged him to let me drive from that day on.

I had an uncle who was also in the car business. He had a car hauler and would make trips up North where he would buy enough vehicles to fully load the hauler. When I was about to turn sixteen, my dad asked his brother to be on the lookout for a car that was cheap enough for me to buy. I was working at the City Swimming Pool making somewhere around 35 cents an hour. I had no real expenses so I was able to save most all the money I had earned that entire summer.

Around late August my uncle returned from one of his trips up North and on the hauler was a Pea Green, 1950 model, "two door", Ford Sedan that had a six cylinder engine and a straight shift three speed transmission. This was probably what my Dad had encouraged my uncle to find for me. Not exactly a "powerhouse".

I had saved exactly \$275 that summer and my uncle said he would take \$275 for that Pea Green Ford. I actually got my first car a few days before my 16th birthday. I made a few modifications to that car by adding "fender skirts" and a new muffler that was just a little louder than the factory one. Now I'm Mr. Cool in my 50 model Ford.

I sailed right through the Driver's License test. I remember during that test, I had to stop on a hill and then restart going up the hill. I also had to Parallel Park over near Maple Hill Cemetery. I saved up enough money to buy an AM radio that fit in the dashboard perfectly.

I was a sophomore at Huntsville High and for some reason I was going home at the same time as all the other students. (I usually

had some sort of athletic practice after school.) A fellow that was a year or so older than me was exiting the parking lot at the same time. I was stuck at the end of one lane waiting on the traffic ahead of me. This fellow was turned around talking to someone in the back seat of his car. With his car inching along, he slowly drove into my cars driver side door. I wasn't hurt and all it did was put a sizeable dent in my driver side door. His insurance paid the bill and my Dad had my car fixed at Stockton's. In addition, I got a couple of small places that had some slight rust under the door repaired also. Now I've got a totally repaired 50 model Ford.

There were three girls in my neighborhood that I gave a ride to Huntsville High every morning. They were Patsy Malone, Melba Grubbs and Linda McAnally. They each paid me \$1.00 per week for the ride so I always had a full tank of gas (it was about 20 cents a gallon at the time). Ken Sanders also rode with us.

I think it was a couple of years later that my Dad took a 1954 Chevrolet, 2 door, 6 cylinder, straight shift car in on a trade. It was a very nice car. He paid the difference between what he got for my Ford and that Chevy. A couple of years later he took in another trade that was a 1956 Chevrolet, 2 tone, Black and White 2 door sedan that had a 3 speed straight shift transmission and a small V8 engine. Because of the colors this car got nicknamed "the Skunk". I drove the "skunk" through 4 years of college.

When I went to Fort Jackson, South Carolina, for my Army Basic Training, my Dad gave the "skunk" to my sister Helen. In 1962, I finished Basic Training and my Primary MOS training. I came home to Huntsville from Fort Belvoir Virginia. As most fellows just getting out of the Army would do, I went directly to the Redstone Federal Credit Union to purchase the first new car I ever owned.

I met my future bride that day but that's another story. We got married in August of 1963. My uncle that supplied me with the 50 model Ford was now working at Woody Anderson's Ford dealership as a salesman.

I priced a 1962 Galaxy 500 XL Ford from that dealership and a Super Sport Chevy from the Hill Chevrolet dealership that was located on Green Street. The price of both cars was exactly the same down to the penny. I ended up buying the Galaxy 500 XL because I couldn't get some of the equipment that I wanted on the Chevy.

My wife and I drove that Ford for several years. She would go to the beauty shop almost every Saturday so I decided to buy us a second car. That turned out to be a 1948 Chevy Fleetmaster, 4 door sedan, 6 cylinders, with a 3 speed vacuum assist straight shift transmission. It turned out to be exactly what we needed for a second car.

It was interesting because you could open a back door and hardly bend over and walk through to the other side of the car. Another thing that interested me was the fact that the car's heater was under the passenger seat which allowed it to warm both the front and back of the car at the same time.

I flunked out of the Mechanical Engineering School at the University of Tennessee. To this day, I still don't completely understand "enthalpy and entropy" from thermodynamics.

I decided that if I wanted to get ahead in Huntsville, I needed to get my college degree so I enrolled at Athens College and started night classes. Every Monday evening I had my Army Reserve meeting to attend. I drove that Fleetmaster to Athens College 3 nights a week until I graduated with a Bachelors degree in both Math and Physics in 1967. I would get home from work about 4:30, eat supper and head for Athens about 5:15.

We still laugh about the fact that when I finally finished college, I got up from the dinner table and our daughter that was about 2 years old said: "Bye Daddy". That was the routine to which she had become accustomed. When I finally finished those degrees, I gave myself a graduation present. I bought a 1964 MG convertible and sold the 1948 Chevy. After graduation I took a job in Georgia in an effort to get my salary up a notch or two.

We only lived there about 1 year when the company I worked

for wanted me to transfer to Washington D.C. Having been stationed at Fort Belvoir which is just outside of D.C., we decided to move back to Huntsville.

After a couple of years back in Huntsville, I had been repairing and painting cars, I investigated getting a Used Car Dealers license and starting my own trip into the car business.

I knew several of the car dealers in town and could get them to sell me some of their wholesale vehicles that usually needed some kind of work. During this time, I learned a lot more about repairing and reworking a lot of different makes of cars. My first trial at selling a car that I had "fixed up" came when I purchased a Plymouth Station Wagon from the Lee Bentley dealership. I had it sparkling and my uncle volunteered to take it through the Dealers Auction that was located on Jordan Lane here in Huntsville.

I never will forget the fellow that bought that car and a comment he made when they "dropped the hammer" on that sale. His name was Charlie Cowart and his comment was that "he wasn't through bidding yet". He owned a used car lot on what is now Governors Drive across the street from Huntsville Hospital.

I bought and repaired quite a few cars in the next several years, never making a lot of money but enjoyed doing what I was doing and picking up a few dollars each month.

Jerry Damson is a good friend and he would sell me some of his wholesale cars. I would visit him at his lot on Meridian Street. One day I was in his office and he said "Jim, I have an opportunity to get a dealership". I asked what kind of dealership it would be and he said "a Honda dealership".

I said "Jerry, what is a Honda". I think there was one Honda in Huntsville at the time. Most of you know the rest of that story.

I have always enjoyed working with my hands so I now have an "Antique Restoration" business in the 5 Points area. I enjoy doing hand caning of chair bottoms and do some woodworking that's required in doing some of the repairs.

I don't do cars anymore.



KONA

Hello, my name is Kona! The people here at the Ark Animal Shelter think I am a Boxer/Plot Hound mix. I am a big boy who just loves to play! I am about 2 years old and have brindle and white coloring. I have been neutered and have had all my shots and have been micro-chipped. I was abandoned here at the shelter one day so the volunteers who take care of me don't know where I came from. But they have learned that I love everyone I meet including other dogs and children. Because of my size I am looking for a big yard to run and play in with my new adoptive family. If you are looking for a young and energetic dog with a gentle personality and that will be your friend for life won't you consider coming to see me at the Ark Animal Shelter? I will be so glad to see you and your family! Ask to see Kona, that's me.

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The Ark

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Thiokol Chemical Corporation - Huntsville Division

The People

"Luke's Calculations"

by Odysseus

Luke M worked on the Line at Thiokol and became legendary for his habit of appearing at the right place at the right time with the right solution. It is unknown if Luke possessed extraordinary abilities, or if this was simply a matter of personal style. Perhaps Luke operated in an understated manner and continually surprised his co-workers with quiet competence. Or maybe Luke had been charmed by fate in some manner. It had to be more than

luck, but observers were never quite sure how Luke was able to do it. Luke's methods were more puzzling than his outcomes were surprising. At any rate, Luke had the knack, became the subject of admiration, or envy, and grew into a mythical figure.

Roofing shingles are bought and installed with an odd unit of measure called a "square". A square is a unit of shingle coverage equal to 100 square feet, or a square 10 feet by 10 feet. Many methods exist to measure, calculate, or estimate the squares of shingles needed for a particular roof. As a minimum, the length and width of the roof must be measured or determined by some means. The most accurate methods include the use of geometry and calculations of steepness or pitch of the roof sections. The calculations become more complex, and the quantity of shingles grows with allowances for dormers, bay windows, and hip ends versus gable ends. Further increases must be made for roof valleys and the additional shingles needed to cover the ridge tops.

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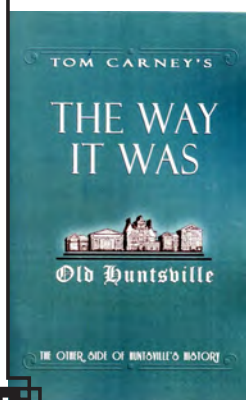
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"THE WAY IT WAS," THE OTHER SIDE OF HUNTSVILLE'S HISTORY

BY TOM CARNEY



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While loading an experimental rocket motor on the Line at Thiokol, "Bob L", a senior Research Chemist, was present to advise and assist if any unforeseen technical difficulties arose. Bob was known to be precise and thorough in his work, a scientist, a man of letters, and was highly respected. The following exchange took place over a few minutes of idle time during a lull in the solid rocket motor loading process.

Bob was planning to re-roof his house and had already made the measurements, worked out the geometric relationships, and performed the calculations described above. But Bob needed a second opinion, a reality check on his number. When roofing a house, you always want to finish the job with shingles left over. You don't want to underestimate, buy too few, and then run out.

Making small talk, Bob casually mentioned his home shingle project to the Thiokol crew at Line 1. Luke asked, "How many bedrooms?" Bob replied "Three."

Luke wrote the number 3 on a scrap of paper.

Then Luke asked, "How many windows?" Bob seemed puzzled, but thought for a moment, and replied "Thirteen."

Luke wrote down the number 13.

Luke asked, "One-car garage or two?" Bob started to say something but didn't, paused, then finally replied "Two."

Luke wrote down the number 2. Bob and the rest of the crew watched as Luke worked his pencil on the scrap of paper. Using the notation of a fraction, Luke put the big number on top of the little number and squinted.

Then Luke put the middle-size number above the big number and squinted again. Finally, Luke wrote all three numbers in a row together in ascending order -- 2, 3, 13 -- and studied them.

After a pause of ten or fifteen seconds, Luke announced "Twenty-one squares of shingles."

Bob was dumbfounded.

As Luke, the Foreman, and the other Operators looked on, Bob opened his notebook and revealed several pages of hand calculations with his answer at the bottom: 21 squares of shingles.

How did Luke do it?

$$\begin{array}{r}
 3 \quad 13 \quad 2 \\
 \\
 \frac{13}{2} \\
 \\
 \frac{3}{13} \\
 \\
 2 \quad 3 \quad 13 \\
 \\
 = 21
 \end{array}$$

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*Created by Deane Dayton, who has been working on
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www.huntsvillehistorycollection.org

The Huntsville History Collection: A Portal to Huntsville's Past

The Collection now includes all issues of Old Huntsville Magazine through 2020, as well as:

- The Southpaw postcard, Harvie Jones, and other Huntsville collections.
- Information about notable people and families of Huntsville plus the work of local historians and artists.
- Huntsville's historic buildings, districts, markers and cemeteries with pictures, maps, and links to digital walking tours.
- The Huntsville Historical Review, the Historic Huntsville Quarterly, Valley Leaves and the Madison County Bicentennial Bookshelf.
- Audio and other stories by some of Huntsville's best storytellers.

Historical Probate, court, deed, tax, and mill records.

OLD VIOLIN (1964)

by Bill Alkire



HERMAN "FROSTY" JONES

We all have a favorite cousin, a favorite nephew, a favorite aunt, a favorite teacher... you get the point. Sometimes an object can be significant as a catalyst, principal player, or a main character.

You have heard me mention Herman "Frosty" Jones. Frosty, next to God had the most influence in my life both then and now. I never understood how Frosty became such an influence in my life. God works in mysterious ways - I do not question God! I simply refer what happens as God Winks.

I am going to tell you a brief story. Frosty's family considered me a family member - or they made me feel that way. I was truly blessed! Frosty loved his wife and two daughters Sue and Debbie - so did I and still do. My one regret in life has been not attending Frosty's and Emma Jean's funeral. They knew I loved them...I needed to tell them!

Back to the story, Frosty's violin, which was too soon put away, never to be played again. Frosty would make his signature soup and play his violin - he referred to her as his fiddle. Foot stomping traditional, hillbilly, bluegrass, and country music would come from that fiddle. When I hear a fiddle, a tear comes to my eye thinking about Frosty.

Frosty could make that fiddle happy or sad; he could make it laugh or cry. Frosty and that

fiddle were magic. Having been exposed to concert piano and violin, along with voice lessons at Mrs. Gothrup's, and the music studio she had in her house -- Frosty's fiddle playing was totally different, like night and day. I can see that old violin being put away too soon, never to be played again.

When Frosty picked up that old fiddle something magic happened; I cannot explain it. When the rosined bow cut across the strings at first the instrument would make an evil hissing sound, like it had been awakened from a nightmare or was angry.

The sweetness of the "Orange Blossom Special" warmed the air, and "Angels" would dance on violin's bridge to "Guardian Angel". You could sense a covey of quail shoot up from a field as Frosty played the "Great Speckled Bird". Butterflies would flap their wings as they cooled down when "Red Wing" would penetrate the atmosphere. One could feel the energy being released along with "Old Joe Clark", "Do Lord", and "In the Garden".

Mr. Melvin Wine was known as the greatest West Virginia fiddler. However, Frosty Jones was in my mind's eye the greatest. I still have a vision of that violin being put away too soon, not to be played again. I am still moved today to the sound of Bluegrass Gospel and the Appalachian sound of an old-time fiddle, a Dobro, or a Mandolin being played. I can sense Frosty's fiddle crying, being put away too soon, and never to be played again.

That old violin and I are much alike. We give all to something or someone, and soon, way too soon, we will give our life also. Sometimes late at night I wake up to a hissing sound, and wonder is that Frosty rosining up his bow? No! You cannot change the truth. I know Frosty is playing in heaven, because I have heard the older the violin, the sweeter the music.

"Sweet like the first dew fall on the first grass." (from The Hymn, Morning is Broken" sung by Cat Stevens).



Quietly Resting - 2025

*When I left the journey ended,
I traveled that last quick mile.
Forget a time I may have frowned
Remember only my sweet smile.*

*Forget any negative words spoken,
Remember the good I have done.
Forget any time I was upset,
Remember I was a lot of fun.*

*Forget that I may have stumbled,
And perhaps fell on the way.
I fought a hard battle and won,
With victories at the end of day.*

*Forget grieving for my leaving,
Don't you be sad for a day.
Gather flowers that I cared for,
Remember the place where I lay.*

*Come in the quiet of evening,
When the sun paints the sky west.
Spend moments quietly beside me,
Remember only the best.*

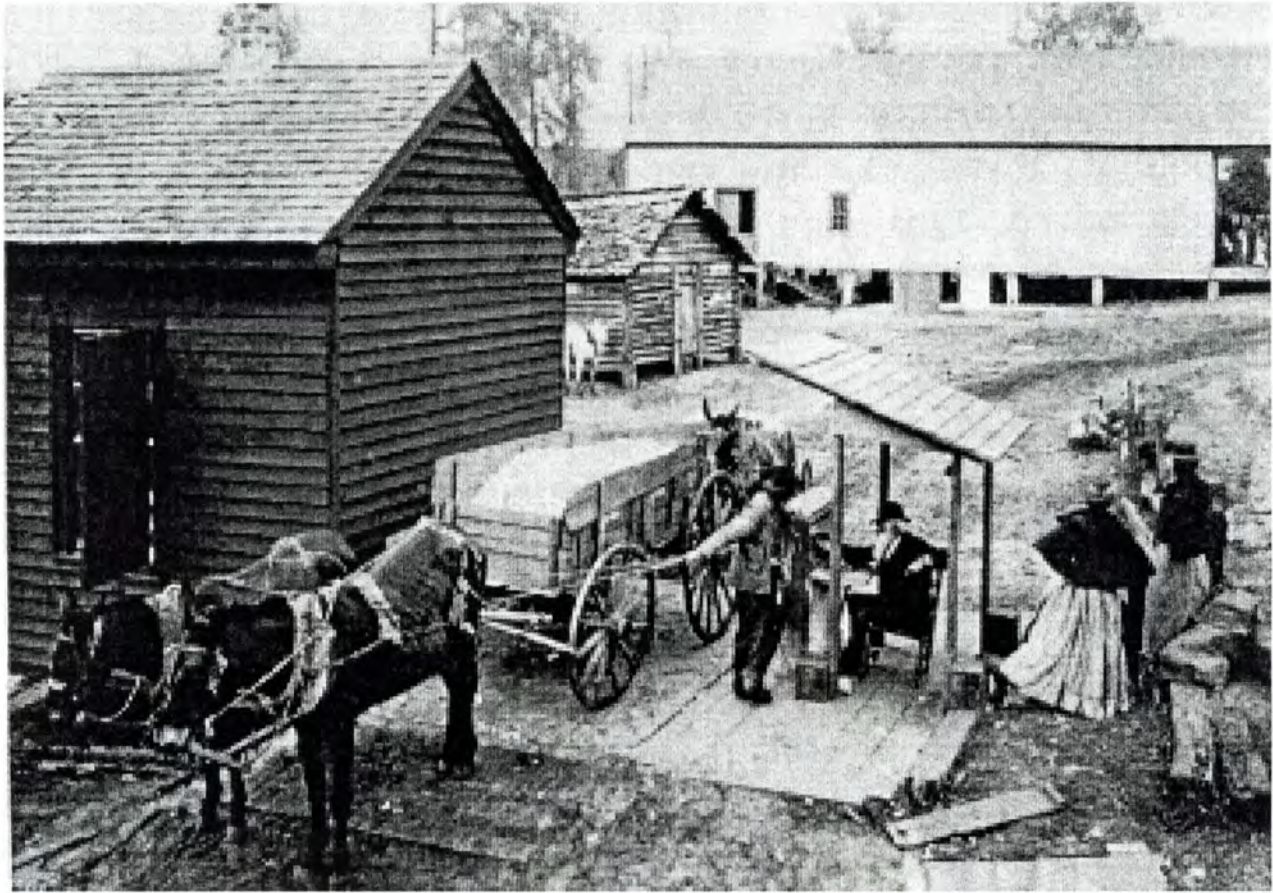


**This poem was written for the
fond memories I have for
Mrs. Emma Jean Simon Jones.
Her favorite bird was a
Cardinal. Every time I see a
Cardinal I am reminded of
her love and kindness to me
throughout my life.
Her memory will never be
forgotten.**

Bill Alkire



HUNTSVILLE HISTORY THROUGHOUT THE YEARS



In 1903, this cotton gin near Madison was a popular place as people eagerly waited to see how much their cotton would sell for. That same year Dallas Mills employed nearly two thousand people and it was announced that a wagon factory was moving to Huntsville. Grant Younger caught a 116 pound catfish below Ditto Landing, while nearly 10,000,000 pounds of cedar used to make pencils were shipped from Paint Rock, Alabama.

*Old
Town*

Huntsville's Historic Districts are beautiful this time of year and you need to walk through them. Bring your bikes, walk the dogs, just get fresh air and enjoy being here.