



No. 389

July 2025



Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

A BOY'S LONG TRIP TO FLORIDA IN 1947



Also in this issue: Tragedy on the Flint River; Glory Over There;
Lee Marshall - Making a Difference; Tale of Two Sisters;
Glenwood Cemetery; Jenkins Produce; News in 1911; Sweet Recipes,
Pet Tips and much much more!

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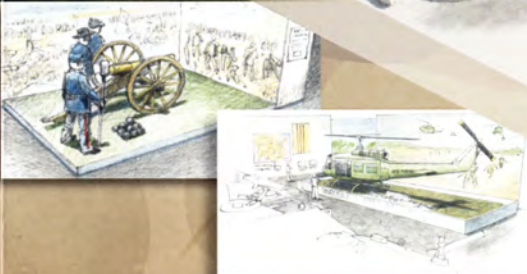
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A Boy's Long Trip to Florida - 1947

by M. D. Smith IV

Saturday, June 3, 1947, 8:00 a.m., I was six and our family finished packing for one of our summer trips from Birmingham to Ft. Walton Beach, Florida. With the war over, my father bought a brand new 1947 Buick Roadmaster with an innovative external sun shield that could be raised or lowered from a lever inside.

Traveling in cars on hot sunny days meant driving with all four windows down to have the breeze cool the perspiring body. Stopping at lights in towns was miserable. My mother had dressed me for summer with a short-sleeved white shirt, brown elastic-waist shorts and leather sandals—no socks.

It's slow going, with two-lane traffic the entire way, all

the windows down for breeze cooling, winding roads and trying to find a passing area. Passing through every little town and settlement heading out of Birmingham like Vestavia, Hoover, Pelham, Helena, Alabaster, Saginaw and finally Calera—only halfway to Montgomery. There was no I-65 in those days.

Traveling in those times, you did things like naming the car brand going the other direction, or reading the Burma-Shave signs along the road in many places. I remember one, "The place to pass—on curves—you know—is only at—a beauty show—Burma-Shave." I found a set of them for sale recently on Ebay that say: "His style was smooth—his chin was not—he's the guy—the gals forgot—Burma Shave."

By 11 a.m., somewhere south of Luverne, I had to "take a leak," and we didn't need to stop for gas, so my father simply stopped on a straight stretch of road and let me hop out.

"Run behind that tree, son, and make it as quick."

The area was sandy clay, and I jumped out without my sandals. Ran barefoot behind a gigantic oak and relaxed. The ground was very soft and cushioned. That was because I was standing in the middle of a gi-

"If aliens saw us walking our dogs and picking up their poop, who would they think is in charge?"

Unknown



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ant ant mound, and when I looked down they were on my feet and legs by the hundreds. I jumped away from the tree, spraying pee while slapping and hopping to the car, screaming "Ants are biting my legs!"

It felt like a thousand needle-pricks on my skin. My mother and father both jumped out, her with a towel she was resting her head on, and we flailed and swatted until they were all gone and me safely back inside. But the pain from all the tiny bites remained.

My father, the wanna-be doctor, went to his suitcase and retrieved a bottle of Campho-Phenique that he carried everywhere and used for various purposes like cuts, stings, and bites. The oily liquid was soothing, I relaxed, and soon we were on our way again. I was a wiser kid about ant mounds.

We headed toward Opp. Before we got there, I complained I was hungry, and my mother agreed it was about time for lunch and to look for a shade tree to pull over to stop and eat the sandwiches and drink the lemonade she made in the big Thermos — still had ice cubes jiggling inside.

We found a giant oak tree, a cleared dirt area with wooden picnic table under the large tree. A wooden house nearby. We pulled to the side, unloaded the basket with paper plates, cups, napkins, and the sandwiches. While we were setting up, an old white-bearded black man came from the house and walked over.

"I hope it's okay to eat here," my father said.

"Oh yass-sir. I built that table for travelin' folks like you to stop, rest and eat a bite if'n they're a mind to. Just hep you-sef." He walked down into a pasture area, put a bridle on a mule, and led him out a gate near us. Then, led the mule down a dirt road to hitch to a wagon to haul some hay.

We enjoyed the lunch, and I ate every

bit, glad my legs weren't stinging much anymore.

On through Opp, Spanish moss on the trees — a sign of getting close to Florida. The next town on the Alabama-Florida line is Florala. Lots of moss on the trees there. Heading south of town, there's a big lake surrounded by mossy trees. In a large clearing near the road, and nice gravel entrance into a picnic area, was and still is one of America's first jet airplanes — a Lockheed P- 80 Shooting Star, complete with wing-tip tanks. That airplane was still there. My kids remember that from when they were little. We always stopped. A great thrill to go up and touch a real jet airplane, on public display. We arrived in Ft. Walton at 5:00 p.m.

The next morning, I was out on the dock in my bathing suit trying to catch shiners with bread balls. Later, we headed to Tower Beach over the Ft. Walton drawbridge to Santa Rosa Island. We'd park in the hard sand facing the wooden boardwalk and pavilion with a few stores and nickel slot machines. I don't remember my losses, but one this visit, Daddy gave



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"Middle age is when you go to bed at night and hope you feel better in the morning. Old age is when you go to bed at night and hope you wake up in the morning."

Groucho Marx

me a quarter that I changed for five nickels. "When they're gone, you're finished," he said.

He also said, "If you get ahead, stop, take your winnings and leave."

I dropped three nickels. Nothing. Two left. My fun would be over soon. The fourth, and ding, ding, ding—three cherries and 40 nickels clinked out into a tray. Wow! Yep, I packed up my winnings, filling both side pockets of my shorts and enjoyed spending them later.

Like many weathered all wood structures, fire's always a danger. One started in a store and destroyed the entire pavilion and boardwalk area. It was not the first time. Then, the city fathers and county got together and in two years, built the giant Tower Beach Shell Dome of concrete, steel, plaster, and other materials. This new dome had everything - inside, away from the weather, never caught fire and lasted until they tore it down for giant hotels thirty years later.

I played in the sand and surf. Lunchtime at the hotel, then swimming in the pool for several hours before dinner. Back in the motel room, I felt hot—really hot. My mother looked at my red face and chest, then gasped when she looked at my back. She said there were already tiny little blisters forming.

We went to dinner and I wore a loose-fitting shirt and couldn't lean back in the chair. Afterwards, I felt hot and sick—and had eaten little. When my folks saw my back again, they looked worried.

My father said, "My God, Son, you're blistered to pieces."

I felt my shoulder and the size of some of the water-filled

blisters. The babies had merged into much bigger dime size whelps.

My mother felt my head. "He's got a fever, too."

Mother looked at the glass thermometer she took from my mouth—over 101. They told me later I was delirious during the night, had strange dreams and moaned in my half-sleep. I took a lot of aspirin. It was a long, painful night.

I stayed in bed, lying face down on my stomach all the next day. They used cooling gels on my back for several days. Near the end of our vacation, I could briefly swim in the pool with a t-shirt on to keep me out of the sun and wearing one of my mother's straw hats.

With the worst sunburn blisters of my life, the itchy skin peeling that followed, and the ant bites on my legs, I guess that was the trip from hell for me. Rest assured, my mother made me wear long-sleeved shirts and a straw hat in the sun after that, as you can see from me fishing with them later that summer. Great fish, huh?



MD and his fish



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The Forgotten Homework

by *Iolanda Hicks*

When I was in the 6th grade at 5th Avenue, I loved my teacher, Miss Weatherly, and got along with everyone in my class. I don't ever remember walking or riding my bike to school during my last year in grade school, even though we lived a couple of miles away in Mayfair. I felt like I had the best bike in town! It was blue, with a comfortable seat, a flat seat over the back tire for a rider and a great basket up front. I was able to ride all over my neighborhood but during my 17th summer, to my sadness, my bike disappeared. That's another story!

One day after school, my Mom had one of her bad headaches. Dad had come home early from work to see if he could take her to the doctor. I wanted to help too and knew Mom would chew gum when she got one of those nasty headaches. My Dad asked me to ride over to Tipton's small grocery on Bob Wallace and get some gum. I can remember my own head swelling 'with pride', realizing Dad trusted me to ride my bike to Tipton's! It was at least 4 or 5 blocks away from our house on Hastings. Dad gave me 2 dollars and told me I could pick out something for myself too.

That day, I can remember peddling pretty fast because it was already about 4 o'clock in the afternoon and I was not sure when it was going to get dark. I didn't have a light on my bike and couldn't ride in the dark. When the grocery store came in sight, I remember giggling, because I had made it in record time!

"Hey there young lady. What can I help you with?"

"Well", I said, "I need to buy some gum for my Mom. She has a terrible headache and my Dad says chewing gum will help her. Do you know what kind would be best for me to get?"

It must have been Mr. Tipton, himself, helping me that day, because he cleared his throat and turned around to pick out the perfect gum from one of the shelves behind the register. As he set a pack of gum on the counter, he smiled and said, "That will be 5 cents, little lady."

I thought a minute and looked at the smiling man. With all seriousness I said, "I believe I need a couple of those tiny Kool Aid wax bottles for myself and one of those candied lipsticks for my sister. She would feel bad if I didn't bring her something too. Oh, and a piece of that chocolate candy for my Dad!"

I can remember that nice man chuckling and looking at me, with another smile on his face, saying, "That will be 30 cents today and I have a bag for you to carry all your purchases back home." I paid the 30 cents, said thank you and



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got back on my bike with the bag in my basket. Lordy! I can remember feeling like I could do anything at that moment!!

The ride home was uneventful and by the time I got there, Mom was feeling a little better. I gave her the gum and told Dad I splurged. "I got all of us a surprise."

As I gave Dad his change, he smiled and told me thank you for bringing the surprises, "that it was a nice thing to do". The rest of the evening went by fast and before I knew it, it was morning. I was getting ready for school. My sister Dianne was in the second grade at 5th Avenue so she and I rode the school bus together. That morning flew by and THEN it happened!

Miss Weatherly got up from her desk and came to the front of the class and said, "Alright children. Please open your notebooks and take your homework out. Pass your work to the front please."

I immediately opened my notebook and looked for my homework. "Oh no! I don't have it!" I thought to myself. "I have never done anything like this ever!" I raised my hand.

"Yes?" Miss Weatherly said.

"Miss Weatherly, I forgot to do my homework. My Mom was sick last night. I had to go to the grocery for her and just forgot to do it."

I wanted to cry but didn't.

"Well, I am sorry your Mom was sick, but we must do our homework. You will have to stay after school today and complete that assignment before you go home."

I then asked Miss Weatherly if I could go tell my sister Dianne to let Mom know I was staying after school. She said I could. I left the classroom to go tell my sister. As I walked down the halls, I fought back my tears.

Finally getting to her room, the door was closed and the room looked dark through the

small window on the door. The class was watching a film but I had to tell my sister so I knocked on the door. Her teacher opened it and I asked for my sister to come out into the hall, that I had an important message for her.

As soon as Dianne came out, I couldn't hold back those tears anymore. Niagara Falls was not even close to the water I let loose on that afternoon! I remember Dianne hugging me, telling me it would be OK and she would let Mom know.

The rest of the afternoon was so long and I dreaded my punishment! I had never had to stay after school.

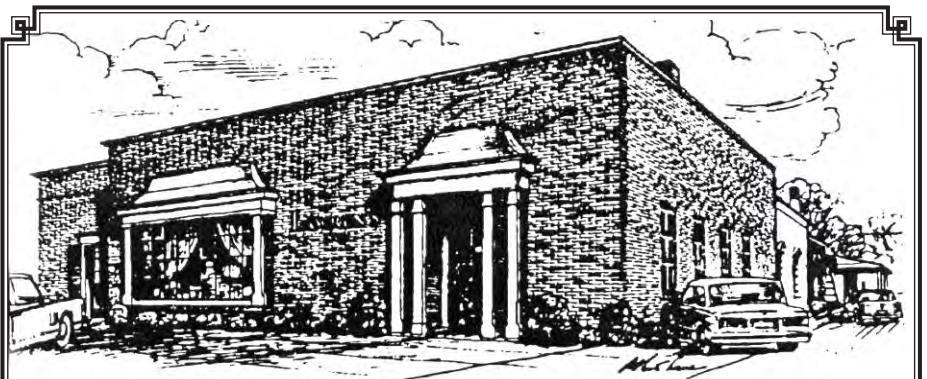
I did complete my "forgotten homework" that afternoon and knew I would never forget to do homework again. When it was time to go, Miss Weatherly

looked at me.

"I want you to know that you are one of my best students. You have to remember to do those things that are important, no matter what. You have responsibilities and homework is one of those responsibilities. If we don't learn to do the things that we are supposed to do, we will not do well in life. I think you will remember from now on, to do your homework."

I looked at Miss Weatherly and nodded. At least, I knew that Miss Weatherly was not mad at me. I knew I could do better and knew I would never forget to do what I was supposed to do again.

With that thought in mind, I got my books and began my long walk home. It was going to be OK, after all!



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TALE OF TWO SISTERS: MARY MARGARET AND RUTH CHASE NAUGHER

by Kate Hopkins



Have you ever wondered how some of the roads in our area got their names? Of course, it goes without saying that the names honor prominent residents but what are their "back stories"? Here's an interesting one for Naugher Road which is in the Riverton area of N.E. Madison County. My search started when Mr. Hampton of Huntsville Revisited shared pictures and a report card that was signed by Mrs. Tom Naugher. Later I talked with a man from Huntsville Botanical Gardens who told me that the government had used the process of eminent domain to build a road through the Naugher's Nursery property.

My quest for the back story took an interesting turn when I noticed that baby Ruth's middle name was Chase.

The Chase Nursery was a very large, well-known com-

pany, and a whole community developed around it in the area where the current A & M Agribition Center is located. It was similar to a southern mill town that employed hundreds of workers.

Tom Naugher was a valued employee for many years until he started his own nursery six miles northeast of Huntsville. Today you will still find Chase Pharmacy, Chase Veterinary, Chase Industrial Park, Chase Dentistry, Chase Park Church of Christ, and Chase Bank.

Ruth Chase "Rudye" was born in Chase, Alabama in 1926. She was the baby of the family, and her parents were Tom and Pauline Naugher. Her older sister was Mary Margaret and even though there was a 6-year age difference they remained lifelong/best friends.

Mary Margaret graduated from Riverton High School and then went on to college at Abilene Christian College in Texas. At age sixteen Rudye moved to Texas to join her sister who was newly married to Robert Reeves. After completing high school, she also attended Abilene Christian College and received a degree in mathematics in 1946.

Two years later Rudye met and

married Walter Daniel Cabe while working in Abilene. They moved back to Huntsville in 1952 to help their parents who had created a large and thriving commercial nursery business. Tom and Pauline wanted their daughters to take over the family-owned operations.

Both sisters built their homes on Winchester Road which became the hub of their family and business lives. Ruth joined her sister as a teacher at Chapman Elementary and Chapman Junior High School. They both had teaching careers that lasted for over twenty years.

In addition to being teachers both sisters were very active members of the Central Church of Christ in Huntsville. Also, the sisters donated the initial 10 acres on Winchester Road to help build the Chase Park Church of Christ.

Rudye's life was sustained by her church family, and she was blessed by the numerous Chase Park volunteers who helped care for both sisters in their later years.

The sisters had long, happy, productive lives and they both lived into their nineties.

Mary Margaret died in 2017, and Ruth died peacefully at age 93 in 2020.

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Turn to the experts

Oh, What a Night!

(2014)

by William Goodson

Elise and I were in our bedroom. Cindy and Willa were visiting for a few days. Dorothy was having a wedding for Emily and Brad the next weekend.

Out of the blue, Elise said, "Bill, get on your dark suit and tie. Be ready in 30 minutes." That was all she said.

As expected, I replied, "Why? Where are we going?" I was thinking I had forgotten some event.

"Just get ready," she said. About that time, Cindy and Willa showed up at the door, repeating what Elise had asked (demanded). They wouldn't say why, either. Elise just said, "Trust me."

At this point, we demonstrated the importance of trust within a family. That is, I did as they asked. I later learned that Elise wanted the children there in case I got stubborn and refused.

Cindy drove us down Whitesburg Drive to Governors Drive, took a left, and turned left again on Harvard Street, which I knew ended at the Huntsville High School parking area.

"We're going to Huntsville High," I said. "For what?" I asked, knowing by this time I wouldn't get an answer.

Cindy dropped us off near the school, then went to park. Lots of cars, parents, and students were arriving and headed for the auditorium.

I was still in the dark. I recalled that some 30 years or so ago, the school picked ten graduates to recognize for contributions to the community, and I was one of them. So I thought this might be something like that.

The families of the senior class members were milling around the lobby, while the students gathered in another building getting ready to process in. Also in the lobby were several folks I knew, like both of my sisters, Mary Lou and Pat, and a few friends. None of them would tell me what this was about.

Soon we were escorted down to the front row for reserved seats. I said I needed to go to the restroom before I sat down. Willa escorted me, perhaps to see to it that I didn't flee the place.

When we returned to the lobby and turned up the ramp to the seats, I saw onstage a banner emblazoned with "National Honor Society." Only then did I realize what this was about - the induction of junior class members into the NHS, AND

I WAS BEING INDUCTED, TOO. I was tearful at that point.

I refer you to the earlier story I have written in my memoirs titled "Getting Caught" to understand the significance of this event. I had often told family and friends that it would please me if I knew that I would be granted posthumous honorary membership in the NHS.

They didn't wait until I died.

My sister, Pat, Elise, and classmate Topper Birney had arranged this. Pat seems to have shouldered most of the details, and somehow all of the people who knew about it managed to keep it a secret from me. She had much support from the principal, Mark Mincher, as well as Amy Bishop, faculty sponsor of the NHS.

I was the first to be inducted in the ceremony that evening. The student president of the NHS recounted my NHS story about cutting class along with two other classmates, and hence being denied induction and also my various accolades as a student and afterwards in my life. The attendees rose to give me a standing ovation as I walked to the stage. I received an engraved plaque.

As Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons would have sung, "Oh what a night!"

We had recently seen the musical, *Godspell*, in that same HHS theater. The president of NHS (Kurt Delay) had played the role of Jesus.

"Very appropriate," I was thinking. "I just got baptized by Jesus".



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Glory Over There

by M. D. Smith IV

"The Great War" it was called and started in 1914 with the Austria-Hungary Empire declaring war on Serbia. One month later Austria-Hungary allied with Germany against Russia, France, Serbia, and later Great Britain. In April 1917, President Wilson, supported by Congress, signed America into the war.

In May, Frank Parsons stood shoulder to shoulder with thousands of young men, the weight of his rifle slung across his back and a grin on his face. The decks of the troop ship groaned beneath the boots of America's Expeditionary Forces, every inch packed with fresh recruits eager to prove themselves. Above the din, the men raised their voices in song—George M. Cohan's brand-new anthem was on everyone's lips:

"Over there, over there,

"Send the word, send the word over there..."

The tune was bright, catchy and full of confidence. Flags waved from the docks as mothers, sweethearts, and siblings shouted and wept from below. Frank joined the final chorus with all the others, "...and we won't come back till it's over, over there!"

As the gangplank retracted and the ship churned slowly out to sea, cheers erupted from both the deck and the shore. Frank's chest swelled. This was his moment. A farm boy from Ohio turned soldier—he would make glorious history.

But history, as he would learn, has a taste for irony.

Within days, seasickness stole the enthusiasm of many of the young men. The glamor of war tarnished quickly when their cramped quarters reeked of vomit, sweat, and fear. Still, Frank held tight to the image of being a hero. It'll be over in a month, they said.

It wasn't.

The trenches reeked worse than the ship ever had. Rotting feet. Mud waist-deep. Mustard gas that turned lungs into raw meat. The screams of boys too young to shave who died calling for their mothers. Frank stopped singing.

Then came the grenade.

He barely saw it land beside him—just a dull thump in the mud. Instinct took over. He snatched it and threw. The world exploded mid-air. Later, in a haze of pain, he realized his right hand was gone, fingers shredded, bone crushed. The surgeon took the remains off at the wrist, left the shrapnel in his chest.

Months later, in February 1918, he rode a hospital train through the French countryside, bound for home. Bandaged and changed, with an ache he couldn't name. He looked out the window as another train passed on the neighboring track—one packed with fresh-faced soldiers heading toward the front.

He heard it again—loud and gloriously proud. "...and we won't come back till it's over, over there..."

Frank didn't sing along this tune. He turned his head, looked out across the endless gray fields and thought, if they only knew.



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Area News from 1894



- Patrons of the public market are warned that shoes must be worn at all times. Failure to do so can result in a fine.

- John L. Rison, Druggist, handles mail orders promptly. We carry drugs pure and fresh, toilet articles, flavoring extracts of all kinds, Syringes, Face powders, Patent Medicines, Difficult prescriptions carefully compounded. Located on Bank Row

- One of the most entertaining of the "oldest inhabitants" of Decatur, Ala. is Capt. J. M. Todd, now 88 years of age, who steamboated on the Tennessee river from 1832 to 1875.

- Mr. W. W. Wilson brought a 15-month old pig and a bale of cotton to Huntsville to the market today. Each weighed in at 450 pounds. The cotton brought \$19.05 and the pig, \$22.50. Mr. Wilson says the cotton cost him twice as much to raise and market as did the pig.

- Capt. Jos. Glover closed a trade Tuesday with Mrs. J. P. Williams, of Scottsboro, by which he becomes the purchaser of the Boyd place next door to Capt. Rieves in Guntersville. The dwelling and a large yard and garden were sold at nine hundred dollars.

- An Athens boy, who experienced great difficulty in swallowing, had an operation performed on his throat which brought to light a large pearl. It is thought he swallowed it in an oyster.

- Do not pay \$1 when you can buy our J & C Corset for 50 cents. Modeled after the best French strip corsets, in white, drab and ecru with silk flossing. A. R. Campbell & Sons, Huntsville, Ala.

- "I take pleasure in stating in the public that Sam M. York of Union Grove, Ala. has cured a cancer of twenty years standing for me. I have never known him to fail curing cancers." Jesse Miller, Marshall, Ala.

- Declared Insane

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

If you think you are too small to make a difference, you haven't spent a night with a mosquito.



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Happy Fourth of July. Let's celebrate this special day by flying the U.S. flag coupled with good food enjoyed with friends and family. The All-American hamburger and hot dog are perfect for outdoors gathering and picnics. And don't forget a bowl and bottle of water for the family dog if they are coming along for an outing.

If you do leave your pets indoors at home, leave some relaxing music playing near where they nap. They can get anxious when you leave, and this helps take the edge off them missing you. We have more thunderstorms in the summer. If you can't isolate them from the rumblings and lightning cracks, give them a crate or cardboard box on its side for them to curl up into. They feel safer like that. Ditto on the night of the Fourth when fireworks abound.

This seems to be shaping up to be one of our hotter summers. A cool dip in a lake, river, or pool is a great way to cool off and get a little swimming exercise too. You know, Grandma taught swimming lessons to children, some not even a year old. Over twenty-three years, she taught hundreds to swim, or at least not drown if they fell in the water by accident. She also taught adults in a special adult-only class and, of course, they learned quickly. She had ways to help them overcome any fear of the water, if that was also an issue.



Fireworks

Ditto Landing usually has a display before the 4th, but I can't confirm the date. Free fireworks at Point Mallard, and at the baseball game if they are in town that night.

If you have not checked out Signals museum yet, you must go by. They are located on Pratt just before the Parkway overpass. They have every kind of old radios, photograph consoles, old speakers, recording and playback devices back to the days of Edison, and a large display of old tube-type ham radio equipment, including a working amateur radio station using old Collins S-Line gear.

A visit will bring back old memories of your childhood as the family gathered around the radio set to listen to tales of The Shadow, CBS Radio Mystery Theater, Abbott and Costello and Amos 'n Andy.

Burritt on Monte Sano has more summer activities than ever this year. Give them a call for outdoor activities for kids and adults. Wednesdays from 5:00 to 8:00 they feature "Cocktails with a View."

If you really want to get in the mood for the Fourth, break out the John Phillip Sousa music and really 'strike up the band' and enjoy "The Stars and Stripes Forever."

Gibson's Books

We have stocked our shop with a general line of used and rare books and ephemera as well as other antiques. Our specialties include Local History, Southern History, Southern Cookbooks and Southern Fiction. We also have postcards, sheet music, advertising, photographs and other ephemera.

We will be happy to answer any questions you have by either email or phone. Our open shop West Station Antiques is in Downtown Historic Owens Cross Roads in Northern Alabama.

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walk. The incident is in my memory only because of the repeated telling by my mother and grandmother. Apparently, the trauma of the event completely erased it from my conscious memory.

Every Monday, Mama Weaver would come over to our house to help Mother with the wash. In our washroom two #3 galvanized wash tubs sat on a bench beside the wringer washing machine. When the clothes had been sufficiently sloshed about and agitated in the machine, they would be taken out of the washer, one-by-one, put thru the wringer and dropped into a tub of clean water for the first rinse. Then the wringer head would be swung around to the other tub and the clothes would be put thru the wringer and into the other tub for the second rinse. Lastly, the clothes would be put thru the wringer one last time and into a basket for carrying outside where they would be hung on the clothes lines to dry.

Occasionally, as the garments were fed into the wringer, one of them would fail to drop into the tub and continue around one of the wringer rollers. It only took a couple of extra turns for the thickness to build up and cause the safety mechanism to pop the

two rollers apart and stop the wringing action. After some tugging and prying, the tangled garment would be removed, the mechanism re-engaged and the wringing of clothes resumed.

One wash day I played and watched as the ladies did the wash. My sister, Nancy, was helping by guiding the clothes into the rinse tubs. However, no one was watching the little boy when he reached up to examine the pretty pink rubber rollers. My screams

The Wringer

by Willie Weaver

Even after all these years of association with the space program, I am still amazed at the progress of technology during my lifetime, especially the progression from tube type electronics to micro-circuitry that has made such great changes in our ability to communicate and handle data. I have observed that every new technology development comes with fears that it may be misused or present some sort of hazard to the populous.

My first encounter with new technology and its danger came when our family abandoned the wash-pot and scrub-board and acquired an electric wringer-washing machine. That washing machine precipitated an incident that physically scarred me for life. It happened about the time I was just starting to



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and the "clunk" of the rollers popping apart quickly got their attention.

My left arm was stuck between the rollers up to the elbow as I hung suspended a few inches off the floor. For a moment everyone else joined me in screaming. As Mother held me, somehow Mama Weaver managed to extract my arm, now red and swollen, from the wringer.

Wash day came to a halt as the priority became to get me to the doctor for they were sure that my arm was crushed. They wrapped my arm in one of the freshly washed towels from the basket and since Mama Weaver did not drive she held me in her arms as we sped the nine miles to the doctor's office. My cries soon subsided to an occasional sob or whimper but Nancy cried most of the way about her little brother's broken arm.

After an examination, the doctor assured them that my arm was not crushed but it was badly bruised and I had a deep wound on the underside of my forearm where all the layers of skin had been scraped away by the turning action of the rubber roller. The healing process took a long time and many bandage changes and left me with a permanent scar about half the width of my forearm.

A follow-up to my wringer encounter: In 2008, about seventy years after the original incident, I was attending a church conference where the featured speaker was the president of our denomination. During one of the sessions, he mentioned that as a young man he worked for a company that manufactured washing machines and that one of his duties was to test the wringers on the washing machines. I have to admit that I do not remember the biblical point he was illustrating with the wringers but I wanted to share my story with him.

After the session was over, I made my way to him and introduced myself. As we talked, I rolled up my left sleeve and turned my scared arm so he could see it. He looked and immediately asked, "How old were you when the wringer grabbed you?" Apparently, such incidents were not uncommon.

I am still enjoying reading the stories each month,

"One minute you are young and wild, the next you are researching the cost of Air Fryers."

Mary Scott, Gurley

"I married for love but the obvious side benefit of having someone around to find my glasses cannot be ignored."

Cameron Esposito



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Setting the Record Straight

Part 5

by David Bowser



Hello, Old Huntsville Magazine readers. Now we'll get into the "Nitty Gritty" of Russel Erskine's financial involvement with the Huntsville Hotel Co. aka, The Russel Erskine Hotel. My research was not about the amount he invested, but did he, or did he not invest with them?

It was suggested that I contact Ms. Margaret Goldsmith because her family had been heavily involved in the formation of the H.H.C and in the running of it. She told me that the Goldsmith-Schiffman families had donated several boxes of material to the archives department of the U.A.H. library. Over a period of about 2 years I found much of what I was looking for. I'm not fast, but steady. Thank you Ms. Goldsmith, your help has been very beneficial.

The following explanation of stock purchases might be boring to some, but to set the record straight, a factual look at the records in black and white is the only way to do this. To those of you that have a keen interest in

Huntsville's history, please take note. This author is reporting only what was found and it may be different than what you have read or heard, so please keep an open mind. I have no axe to grind. Included in those boxes were found the records of the Huntsville Hotel Co.

* Original stock certificates bought by Mr. Erskine and marked "Paid in full"

* Both Mr. and Mrs. Erskines last will and testaments describing the distribution of their assets

* 3 leather bound books of H.H.Co. minutes of meetings. Included in there was a list of H.H.C. stock holders and the number of shares each member bought.

* Also, included are letters from attorneys listing the amount and type of stock Mr. Erskine bought and it's ownership being passed thru wills, to its very end in 1948. Bear in mind, these items are in black and white, not hearsay, rumors or gossip. The Erskine grand children and I have copies of all this.

Trying to put this in order was like trying to un-scramble scrambled eggs. You, Old Huntsville Mag. readers are a very smart bunch and I know that you would have caught on quicker, so here we go.

On April 19, 1928 the first stock holders meeting was in the office of attorney R.E. Smith. Mr. Erskine was listed with 100 shares of stock. This was recorded in the H.H.C. minutes of meetings. We have copies of this too. But hang in there with me now, because a little after this is when the eggs start getting scrambled. Your author has promised you the truth

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and it will be told. Now then, made out on May 1, 1928 these certificates of stock were found. Stock certificate # 17 for 50 shares of Common stock. And another certificate #17 for 100 shares of Preferred stock. Now on the left side of these certificates was added a piece of paper with hand written notations.

Listen to me now. On the certificate #17 for 50 shares of Common stock it reads on that left side, barely legible, and I quote as best I can read it, hand written, "This certificate cancelled stamps on new certificate # 68."

Now, about half way down from there is "see new certificate # 68 took 25 shares other 25 shares for issue when building is 3/4 complete." And, on the other stock certificate #17 for 100 shares of Preferred stock it reads on the left side "stock canceled see #68 for stamps." Confusing? Yes, at first, but please note this: These 2 stock certificates never show up any where as being bought or sold. They were canceled and ignored, put away. And we have copies of these.

Remember the TV show "Drag Net"? One of the detectives always told the witness "Just the facts ma'am, just the facts." All this has to be shown in order to give you the facts.

Concerning the May 1, 1928 stock purchases. What caused Mr. Erskine to abruptly change his mind about stock certificates #17? This is very curious. Could it have been something some one said or did? Someone there at that moment knew. We'll probably never know. Then, on the same day he turned around and bought the amount and types of stock listed on both certificates #68.

Check this out. This is what happened on that same day. A very busy day. May 1, 1928 and shown in the legal records throughout, that Mr. Erskine bought on stock certificate #68, 25 shares of Common stock, and on another certificate #68, 50 shares of Preferred stock. A total of 75 shares of H.H.C. stock bought that day. However, the ledger book of minutes of meetings list's him with 100 shares. This author has no idea why this is. Just human error?

Then a little over a year later, on June 21, 1929 Mr. Erskine purchased 25 shares of Common stock on certificate # 85. And at the same time he bought 50 shares of Preferred stock on certifi-

cate # 104. The end total of all this was 150 shares. These 4 stock certificates are legally traced from beginning to their end.

Faithful readers, thank you for sticking with me thru this. Not complaining nor bragging, but this taxed my brain. Oh boy, my head hurts.

The Great Depression was devastating to American business and our Russel Erskine Hotel was bleeding red ink. The officers of the hotel made personal sacrifices to keep it afloat.

On Feb. 22, 1933 the H.H.C. officers voted to devalue their stock to 10 Cents on the Dollar. That meant that the stock that had been selling for \$100.00 a share, was now only worth \$10.00 if it was cashed in. No blame here. The Depression hit car companys hard too and Studebaker was one of them. At this time Mr. Erskine was feeling heat from all this, as well as some life situations that none us of would want to go thru.

We will get into that later and through paper work found, we will follow the path his stock took after his tragic death. Again, not through gossip, supposition, or rumors, but in black and white print.

Adios amigos; Till the next issue of Old Huntsville Magazine.

"There is not the slightest indication that nuclear energy will ever be obtainable. It would mean that the atom would have to be shattered at will."

Albert Einstein, 1932

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Heard On the Street

by Cathey Carney



We had lots of correct calls for the hidden cucumber in the June issue. It was on page 29, in the C&A Printing ad, but only the first caller wins! And that would be none other than **Jim Putnam**, who served on Huntsville City Council District 5 from 1988 - 1996! He often was the lone vote for a project but he stood up for the people of Huntsville and was/is highly respected. Congratulations to you Jim!

In this issue you'll read a really inspiring story about **Lee Marshall**, written by **John Tate**. Most Huntsvillians remember Lee from her days as anchor at both Channel 48 and Channel 31. She then moved on to establish **Kids to Love**, which has really grown over the years and offered help to so many deserving young folks. Well we heard from one of our readers recently, **Gale Nichols** of Athens, who has decided to leave everything she has to Kids to Love. Gale worked with Lee back in the TV days and thinks the world of her. Gale has no family and knows the good that Kids to Love has done for young girls. She wants to remind readers that when we write our wills out to not forget non-profits such as Kids to Love

who give everything to make lives better for deserving youngsters.

There are so many important anniversaries happening this year. One of them is the **Downtown Rescue Mission**. They got their start in the early 1970s with a few helpers passing out sandwiches from the back of a car to a 17-acre campus that now serves nearly 400 men, women and kids each day. This is their 50th year! They now operate 6 thrift stores that help the programs of DRM as well as outreach efforts in our community.

Keith Overholt is the President and CEO and says his proudest moments are watching the progress and success of men and women, once at rock bottom with addiction and poverty. When these people graduate from DRM programs, they have their lives in front of them. We're so proud of Downtown Rescue Mission and what they've accomplished in 5 decades!

Sure couldn't forget wishing a very Happy Birthday to **Ken Owens** on July 31 - my handsome brother and talented drummer. Got to celebrate that event for sure!

SO very happy to see that **Harmony Sound** has re-opened. As you know Bill Graviett, the owner, had passed away a couple of months ago and the store was closed. But it is under new

ownership now and has re-opened at same location - 820 Wellman Avenue in Five Points.

Happy belated June 8 wedding anniversary to **M.D. and Judy Smith**! This is their 64th year with 8 kids and grandkids and great grandkids - 22 and counting - the family keeps growing! M.D. and Judy both write for Old Huntsville magazine and have for so many years! Hope you partied for days!

Felicia Meshke has a birthday on July 15th and we want to be sure and wish her a happy birthday. She is the daughter of our senior editor **Cheryl Tribble** and they live in Utah now. We hope you celebrate in style with your sweet family.

The U.S. Army celebrating 250 years is just amazing. We are so fortunate in our area with Redstone Arsenal and Huntsville to be home to so many active and retired military men and women. We thank each of you for your service to our country and the celebration has just begun!

I have hidden a **tiny walking cane** somewhere in the pages of this issue. It will be incredibly small so don't expect to find it. But if you do, and are the first to call with the correct page #, you win a \$50 gift subscription for a year of Old Huntsville magazine!

Having just gone through a

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bout with **Vertigo**, it occurred to me that feeling just normal again would be a goal. But what is "normal"? So I wrote this, for what it's worth.

When it comes to ourselves, we take a lot for granted. We just assume we can take care of ourselves and go about our normal activities, until one day we can't. Then, really quickly, you become unable to do your normal activities. I had a bad case of vertigo recently, that just came on one morning while trying to get out of bed, and all of a sudden you can't walk. You can't bend over to pet your cat. You can't drive. You can't stand up to prepare meals. You can't walk without a cane or a walker. Just yesterday you were fine - what happened? Why did you think you would always be ok?

When did just feeling "normal" be a real goal? Won't we be normal always? No.

Be grateful for every minute of good health. Of being able to get up out of a chair and walk. Being able to clean out the litterbox. Being able to walk your dog. As they say, tomorrow is not promised. Really take advantage of this very minute you have right now. Appreciate and take care of your body - it's the only one you'll ever have. And really hug those who love you - tomorrow you might not get another chance.

Many of our residents have noticed the newly asphalted roads in and around Huntsville. The Huntsville **city workers** are so appreciated even though we don't tell them that every day.

Thank you to **Stuart Currie** of Owens Cross Roads for his recent note to us. He loves the stories and history of this area and wanted to let us know!

Huntsville has more activities and events that you could ever do in one season. All of the below events are re-curring at least weekly so check them out!

Harrison Brothers Hardware Featured Exhibition: Justice for the Johnsons 02/28/2025 -12/31/2025 Monday - Saturday 10 AM to 5 PM - - Recurring weekly on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thurs-

day, Friday, Saturday until 12/31/2025 - located 124 South Side Square, Huntsville, AL 35801

U.S. Space & Rocket Center - Dare to Explore: Frontiers of Space (Times may vary). Visit website for more details. Recurring every week day. One Tranquility Base, Huntsville, AL 35805.

Concerts In The Park 06/02/2025 - 08/04/2025 Recurring weekly every Monday until 08/04/2025 Big Spring International Park - 200 Church Street, Huntsville, AL 35801

Burritt on the Mountain - Summer 2025 Nature Rangers Camps 06/02/2025 - 07/25/2025 From: 09:00 AM to 02:00 PM (Extended day options available) located 3101 Burritt Drive, Huntsville, AL

Greene Street Markets - Thursdays 4-8 through October, downtown on Greene Street just north of Williams Avenue.

The Electric Belle - Coast Swing Dance Lesson in The Electric Belle! Recurring weekly on Tuesday - 3414 Governors Drive, Huntsville, AL 35805

EarlyWorks Children's Museum - PAW Patrol: Adventure Play through 08/31/2025 Recurring weekly on Sunday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday until 08/31/2025 - 404 Madison Street, Huntsville, AL 35801

Burritt on the Mountain - Burritt Backpack Explorers through 08/31/2025 Tues - Sat: 9 am - 5 pm Sun: 12 pm - 5 pm Recurring weekly on Sunday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday until 08/31/2025 - 3101 Burritt Drive, Huntsville, AL 35801

Ditto Landing Summer Sunset Concert Series at Ditto Landing 05/13/2025 - 08/12/2025. From: 06:00 PM to 08:00 PM - 293 Ditto Landing Road, Huntsville, AL 35803

Burritt on the Mountain - Cocktails at The View 04/02/2025 -10/29/2025 From: 05:00 PM to 08:00 PM - Recurring weekly on Wednesday until 10/29/2025 - 3101 Burritt Drive, Huntsville, AL 35801

For more information on these events and many others (including great farmers markets) just Google Huntsville Visitors and Conventions Bureau or www.huntsville.org/events.

Happy Fourth of July to all and be safe!

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.



“May It Please the Palate”

Marvelous Appetizer

2 - 8 oz. pkg. cream cheese
1 lb. Jimmy Dean Sausage
1 can Rotel tomatoes

Brown & drain sausage. While warm add the cream cheese and can of Rotel with all the liquid. Serve with Scoops corn chips.

Camille Cook, Esq.

Pickled Eggs

(an old Auburn Univ. delicacy)

Pickling Juice:

1-3/4 c. white vinegar

3/4 c. water

1/2 t. salt

1/4 t. garlic salt

5 peppercorns - whole

A few dill, coriander, and mustard seeds

Sprinkle of dried red pepper and celery salt

18 hard-boiled eggs

Put pickling juice over eggs in appropriate glass jar or container. Let eggs pickle for at least 7 days in fridge.

Eat with salt, pepper and Louisiana Hot sauce. Note: Pickled eggs taste alot better than they smell!

Judge William K. Bell

Ann Pollard's Famous Basting Sauce for Ribs and Chicken

1/4 c. oil

3/4 c. onion - chopped

1 clove garlic - minced

1 c. honey

1 c. catsup

1 c. red wine vinegar

1/2 c. Worcestershire sauce

1 T. dry mustard

1-1/2 t. salt

1 t. oregano

1 t. black pepper

1/2 t. thyme

Saute onions in oil til they

are clear. Add everything else and cook on low heat 15 to 20 minutes. Stir a little while cooking.

Baste ribs or chicken often while cooking so a layer of the sauce builds up on the surface.

Toby Sewell has great results with ribs by using pork baby back bone ribs and baking them at 400 degrees for 40 minutes before putting them on the grill.

After 20 minutes or so of being basted on the grill they are perfect.

Try adding 1/4 to 1/2 cup of brown sugar if you like a sweeter sauce.

Note: Although this takes a little time to prepare, it's absolutely the best recipe in North Alabama by one of the South's finest gourmet cooks.

Compiled by R. T. McWhorter, Jr., Esq.

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Brown Almond Rice

- 1 10-1/2 oz. can Campbells beef consomme soup
- 1 10-1/2 oz. can Campbells French Onion soup
- 1/2 stick butter, melted
- 1/2 t. salt
- 1/2 c. slivered almonds
- 1 c. white rice

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Put all ingredients in a 1-1/2 quart casserole dish. Bake at 350 for 1 hour. Stir once in about thirty minutes.

Bob Robertson, Esq.

Bourbon Roast

- 1 rump or sirloin tip roast
- 5 oz. soy sauce
- 1/4 c. bourbon
- 1/4 c. water
- 3 T. lemon juice
- 3 T. Worcestershire sauce
- 3 T. cooking oil

Mix soy sauce, bourbon, water, lemon juice, Worcestershire sauce and oil together. Pour over roast. Marinate the meat for 2 hours in sauce in fridge.

Place roast, still in the sauce, in oven and cook at 350 degrees for 2-3 hours, covered.

Jack Livingston, Esq.

Caramel Crunch Squares

- 1 c. plain flour
- 1/4 c. quick cooking oats
- 1/4 c. brown sugar
- 1/4 c. butter
- 1/2 c. pecans, chopped
- 1 qt. vanilla ice cream
- 1 jar caramel sauce
- Pecans, toasted

Combine first 5 ingredients until crumbly and pat onto a cookie sheet, spreading it thin. Bake at 400 degrees for 15 minutes.

Stir to crumble while hot. Let cool completely. Spray a 9x9" pan with vegetable spray and spread half of the crumb mixture in the bottom. Drizzle half of the caramel sauce over the crumbs. Spread one quart of the vanilla ice cream over the crumbs. Add rest of the crumb topping and finish with the caramel sauce. Top with toasted pecans and keep frozen.

Trisha Ezell, wife of E. Mark Ezell, Esq.

German Chocolate Chess Squares

- 1 box German chocolate cake mix with pudding
- 1 lrg. egg - lightly beaten

- 1/2 c. butter, melted
- 1 c. pecans, chopped
- 1 8 oz. pkg. cream cheese
- 2 lrg. eggs
- 16 oz. pkg. powdered sugar,

Combine the first 4 ingredients in a large bowl, stirring til dry ingredients are moistened. Press into bottom of a greased 9x13x2" pan; set aside. Combine cream cheese, 2 eggs, and 1 cup powdered sugar; beat at medium speed with an electric mixer til blended.

Gradually add remaining powdered sugar, beating after each addition. Pour over chocolate layer, spreading evenly. Bake at 350 degrees for 40 minutes. Cool and cut.

Lee Ann Parker, Esq.

Tom's Pralines

- 1 c. white sugar
- 1 c. brown sugar
- 2 T. butter
- 1/2 c. half and half
- 1-1/2 t. vanilla
- 1 c. pecans

Cook first 4 ingredients on medium heat to soft ball stage 235°. Add vanilla and pecans. Beat 30 seconds and quickly drop onto waxed paper.

Bett DeLong (From "Cooking with the Choir")

July is here already! Are you looking for some unusual and eye-catching perennials? Do you have shade or sun? Find out what are the best high quality plants to get for your garden. Our experienced staff is here to help you with any landscaping questions or needs!

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William Jackson Thomason

1897 - 1972

My Maternal Grandfather

by David M. Stephens



All of our adult family and all of his friends called him Bill. His five grandkids called him Paw Paw.

He was born in Langston, AL into a family of farmers and at 24 years of age, he married a farmer's daughter. I know that for his time, he was a big man. He stood six feet and one inch tall and topped the scales at over 200 pounds. He was a fun-loving and hard-working young man who also liked to pull a cork on a bottle of moonshine. He was always easy-going and loved a good prank and a laugh; I never saw him angry or even have a cross word with anyone.

I have heard only a few stories about the first twenty years of his life, but these few stories described the persona of the grandfather I adored.

When Paw Paw and Maw Maw were dating, there was a community dance one week-

end. Maw Maw told me Paw Paw loved to dance, and as she said it, "He could really cut a rug!" She was looking forward to cutting a rug with him that weekend; however, he never asked her to the dance. She decided that, even though her feelings were hurt, she

would not sit home alone.

On the night of the dance, she got all gussied up and walked herself to the dance. When she entered the room, there was Paw Paw in the middle of the dance floor, cutting the rug with another young maiden. She would never tell me exactly what happened, but she did say that he never did that again.

The Army drafted Pawpaw during World War I. While he was in basic training, he said the drill sergeant would come around every morning before Reveille and recruit men to do KP duty in the mess hall. He said he cut a slit in the back of his tent, so that whenever he heard the drill sergeant coming he could slip out the back of the tent and hide. After the drill sergeant passed by, he would slip back into his cot and go back to sleep.

I suppose that was the greatest danger he ever faced, because as soon as he finished basic training, the war ended. There must not have been a need for more soldiers because they sent him home and that was the extent of his military career.

After returning home from the Army, he decided to go to Texas. I heard he went for a while, and I assumed it was to find work. If I remember correctly, my mother told me he went to Texas to pick cotton. Well, one day, I was snooping through a box of Maw Maw's old photographs and I found several black and white photos of my grandfather with some ladies I didn't know. I asked Maw Maw who the ladies were and she said they were just some ladies my grandfather knew. I should have let it go at that, but being the nosey kid I was, I pushed on. I asked, "Where did he meet them?" She responded, "Texas." So I continued, "What was he doing in Texas with those ladies?"

She turned to look straight at me and then snapped, "Try-



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ing to sow his wild oats, I reckon!!" I finally wised up and decided not to ask any more questions about the Texas ladies.

My grandparents were married in the summer of 1921 and began their lives together. Maw Maw was a homemaker and Paw Paw was a farmer and a master carpenter. His true love was farming, however, he was blessed with daughters whom he loved dearly, but unfortunately, they could not do as much of the heavy labor the farm required. So, he farmed what he could and then worked as a master carpenter.

He only had a fourth or sixth-grade education, but to teach himself geometry, he borrowed geometry books from the library and taught himself how to calculate the angles needed to cut rafters for the houses he was building. Many years later, an older lady I met in the community told me back in the forties, neighbors would begin building their homes, and when they got the walls raised, they would stop and wait for my grandfather to finish planting his crops so they could hire him to cut the rafters and put the roof on their houses.

My grandfather built many houses in Hazel Green and Huntsville over the years. In fact, a doctor in Huntsville hired him to build his house and told him to gather his crew; he would pay everyone \$2.50 a day. Paw Paw said that was the easiest money he ever made!

As the Guntersville dam was being built, TVA began purchasing the land the lake would flood, which included my grandfather's farm in Langston. In 1938, he purchased 66 acres in Hazel Green and relocated his family to start a new life in a different area.

As I said before, Paw Paw was a hard-working man who provided for his family, but he still liked to kick up his heels now and then. He had a taste for PGA (pure grain alcohol) and he arrived home from work a little intoxicated quite a few times over the years. Well, one night, he came stumbling in, and my grandmother, who was short in stature but tall in temper, had had enough. She exploded and was really "giving him down the road" about his drinking. Paw Paw, in his intoxicated state, blurted out, "Well, why don't you just spank me like a child!"

That was a bad choice of words. Maw Maw grabbed a belt and began flailing away at him. He was too intoxicated to fight back, so she wore him out with the

belt. As it ended up, that beating was a good thing. Something clicked with Paw Paw, and he never came home intoxicated again.

Now, I won't say he never drank again because every summer, when my family went to Florida on vacation, my father would stop on the way home and buy my grandfather a pint of pure grain alcohol. He would sit in his recliner, twist the top off of the bottle and take a sip. Then, he would sit it on the floor beside his chair. He would leave it there and just sip on it for several days. I never saw him intoxicated.

In 1951, when Paw Paw was fifty-four years old, he surrendered his life to Christ and was baptized at the Concord Cumberland Presbyterian Church, where he later became a deacon and even taught Sunday School.

One night, when I was very young and staying with my grandparents, I was going to bed and I noticed Paw Paw sitting on the side of his bed. He was wearing his usual sleeping outfit, boxer shorts and a wife beater t-shirt. He was just silting there and hanging his head. It seemed to me that something was wrong. When my grandmother came to tuck me in, I asked her if he was okay because he was sitting there with his head hanging. She laughed and said, "He is fine. He is just saying his evening prayers."

Paw Paw was the first man I ever saw pray, and that image is still with me today.

During my childhood, my grandparents' farm was where I wanted to spend all of my time. I have always had an overactive imagination and this farm gave me a place to explore, pretend and dream. So have a seat and strap in because I have many stories yet to tell about my grandparents and my escapades on their farm.



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Lee Marshall

Ten Toes Down: Generational Disruptor

by John H. Tate



Many Huntsvillians remember Lee Marshall as the striking TV news anchor on WHNT Channel 19 (CBS Affiliate) or WAFF Channel 48 (NBC Affiliate). However in recent years, she has gained national recognition as the founder and Director of the Kids To Love Foundation.

It is amazing to watch Lee's eyes light up as she describes the foundation and its mission. You can hear her smiling in her words, "The Kids To Love Foundation turned 21 years old in January of this year. We are a nonprofit organization, and our mission is to serve children in foster care. We work to find every child a Forever Family."

"We strive to meet their immediate needs while they are in the necessary heartbreak of foster care. Our foundation office is here in Madison, AL. However, we serve children statewide, across many programs and even across the Southeast."

Lee takes a moment to consider the question of how she came to be the founder of such a worthwhile organization. She reflects with some pride as she says, "This journey started as a simple effort to do backpacks in my garage with my dad, over twenty years ago. It's grown into a movement to support children in foster care with excellence. That has not always been part of the narrative."

To be clear, this isn't your typical nonprofit. Kids To Love is a licensed child placement agency in Alabama. They also do foster care, and private adoption in Alabama and Tennessee. In the last two years they have successfully privatized foster care in Alabama. As Lee puts it, "We feel this is a different and better approach to foster care."

A new light shines across her face when she is asked about their workforce training. She shares, "K-Tech is our workforce training initiative, where we teach in-demand job skills to those who need them."

"The foundation for this initiative is based on statistics that show 75 to 80% of the juvenile justice system, or prison system are made up of foster children. Poverty is the main way kids come in to foster care. The way we change their trajectory and help them navigate successfully to their independence is to give them the education they need. Education breaks the cycle of generational poverty."

"Many times, the generations we are working with are the generation-disrupters in their family-line and that is something I am passionate about."

Where does that passion come from? Why is Lee so driven and determined to make sure that education is available to the kids in foster care? Hold on to your heart, her response will pull on that old string.

"My adoptive dad was one of six kids in his family, and he was the first to graduate from high school. I am the first to graduate from college in our family. So, getting a bachelor's degree in journalism, and a master's in social work was important to me because I broke the generational education barrier."

"Because it was important for me, I get excited when we can help other young people who started on a similar path I did, to achieve greatness."

Lee was born into the foster care system at the Baptist Children's Home in Memphis, Tennessee. She tells it with such passion. "I was placed with my foster parents at the age of six weeks old, and they adopted me at age two."

"I grew up in a small town in West Tennessee, and I am very appreciative of that upbringing. My dad was a blue-collar worker at Goodyear, and my mom stayed home - her job was raising us. I am appreciative of such humble beginnings. I was aware that I was adopted while growing up. I felt it was part of the journey God had for me."

One of the toughest challenges Kids To Love, and other foster care programs, have to face is Aging Out at the age of 20. Kids To Love have found a way to serve foster care girls in a special way. Once again, Lee's eyes light up as she talks about the Davison Farm.

"Davison Farm is here in Madison County, and it is a 10,000 square-foot home. It serves as a Group Home, which means we can serve girls 7 to 19 in the main house. That was a gift that the late Dorothy Davison gave us, to be able to purchase the home and 10 acres."

"When the girls turn 20 they have to leave the main house, that is a licensure requirement for being a licensed Group Home. So, we have put in our first five cottages (mini houses) where the girls live independently. They have a studio one bedroom home, with full kitchen, washer/dryer, about 320 square feet. They remain on campus and can visit the main house for meals or support."

"There is a mentor who oversees and supports those young ladies. We teach them budgeting, help them with their grocery list and take them shopping. We endeavor to teach them the life skills that our parents taught us. We have a consistent presence in the cottages, and they are not allowed any cohabitation."

"The mentor helps them with their grocery list, takes them shopping. Teaching them life skills that our parents taught us."

"To our knowledge, our five cottages are the first aging out of foster care solution of its kind in the country. Our plan is to add five more next year. We have room to add a total of twenty."

What more could Kids To Love do to help these kids to adjust and make positive advances in their lives? How about a mental health animal, maybe one just a little too big to go on a plane trip with you?

Lee explains, "We have Equine Therapy at Davison Farms, which is a barn and our horses. The horses have an amazing healing effect when a child has been physically or sexually abused, and they don't trust people."

"The horses are big and robust. Jenny, our Equine Therapist, and Abigale, the Equine Specialist run that division are trained and certified. We set up the arena, and the horses wander around the arena and often choose the child. The horses are drawn to different kids. I had one young lady who was in a teen pregnancy, and it was not ideal. One of our horses, her name was Cher, she passed away recently; Cher sensed the grief and the hurt in this child. Cher goes over and takes her head and lays it on this teenager's stomach. There wasn't a dry eye in the place."

Lee also spoke of a non-verbal girl who would talk to the horses, but not people.

With all the good work Lee is doing, and the public recognition she is receiving, the question does come up regarding any political desires.

"I have too much to do, when I made that conscious choice of stepping away from media, it was my declaration that it is not about me, and none of this has ever been about me. It's about the role God gave me to speak up for foster children."

"That's why the name of our organization is Kids To Love, it's not Lee Marshall - it's all about the kids. As an example of getting things done, we did champion the legislation for Safe-Haven Baby Boxes in the State of Alabama - to add them to firehouses. Our organization is the one that took it on and made that happen. There have been three babies placed in a Safe Haven Box in Madison already."

In 2023 Lee had a very public disagreement with DHR (Department of Human Resources) the department that has charge over the Alabama Foster Care system. That is when children in the care of Kids To Love, the volunteers, supporters, and donors saw Lee stand Ten Toes Down, and not only defend the organization, but also advance it to even greater heights.

As we bring our visit with Lee to an end, she wanted to leave these last words for the Old Huntsville Magazine readers. "I would like for you to evaluate the legacy you are going to leave in our community. It is all of our jobs to leave a strong positive legacy, and if you have not figured out what yours will be, we would love to talk to you about Legacy."

"Yesterday was class twenty-two of our K-Tech graduation. Dr. Dorothy Davison was a great mentor to me, and she is the reason we have the equipment in the main lab. When we met, and I cast the vision about education and breaking the cycle of poverty - she was all about it."

Thank you Lee for being a Generational Disrupter of poverty, standing Ten Toes Down to protect Kids To Love and to challenge the rest of us to think about our Legacy.




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Jenkins Produce - Delivering Healthy Foods in Madison County for 25 Years

by *Tanjie Kling*



Jenkins Produce Long Time Employee and Brother-in-Law, Leonard Merrell

If you lived in Madison County between the years of 1946 to 1971, and enjoyed fresh fruits and vegetables from neighborhood grocery stores, local restaurants, or your school cafeteria, there is a high probability that those products were made available through Jenkins Produce Company.

The company enjoyed a 25 year history of business in the area, and prided itself in supplying healthy and fresh produce to its customers throughout the city and rural Madison County. It was owned by three brothers at different times.

Jenkins Produce company had its beginnings in the rural Harvest - Monrovia community during the mid 1940s. It was originally founded by Mr. Bartholomew "Bolly" Jenkins. He began his career as a farmer in New Hope, Alabama, working with his father-in-law, William Benton Mann, directly after his marriage to Mr. Mann's daughter in 1935. Bolly, his wife, Vera, and his in-laws moved to the Harvest community in late 1940, and farmed there. By 1945, Bolly and his wife had moved to Jeff Road. In 1946, he bought a Dodge truck and began a peddling business. He grew

that into a wholesale produce business, and enlisted his brothers Matthew and John to work with him, delivering produce throughout Huntsville and rural Madison County. John was considerably younger than his brothers and was a go-getter. In addition to delivering produce, John farmed in the New Hope community in 1950, as a 20 year old.

During 1950, the Korean War began and John signed up for the draft. He was deferred from military service during the first year. The next two years, he waited anxiously for a letter of notification to report for duty. The letter never came. While the fighting in Korea ended in 1953, US military operations continued in the region in order to support South Korea's defense. Since John had not been called for military duty during the height of the Korean conflict, he was placed on standby for future deployment due to peacekeeping operations and the increased tensions of the Cold War in Europe.

In the early 1950s, Bolly sold his business to his brother Matthew, and moved to the Westlawn community in Huntsville, where he established a neighborhood store, Jenkins Grocery. Around 1955, Matthew followed suit and opened his own grocery store, at the northeast corner of Pulaski Pike and Oakwood Avenue. While Matthew still owned the produce business, the day to day operations were handed to his brother, John, and his brother-in-law, Leonard Merrell. They delivered produce to grocery stores, restaurants, and schools, with John driving routes in rural Madison County, and Leonard delivering produce to Huntsville

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schools and businesses.

Finally, in 1956, the US Army sent John to Wurzburg, Germany to participate in the Cold War defense of Europe. He served his country for 18 months. Upon completing his duty, John returned to Madison County and continued working for his brother. He was given the opportunity to purchase Jenkins Produce from Matthew, and did so on August 1, 1958.

John's first priority was to establish a permanent place of business in central Huntsville and hire 4 employees. His brother-in-law, Leonard Merrell, was an experienced produce salesman with great connections and stayed with the company. In 1959, John rented a warehouse that provided a walk-in cooler in the 5 Points neighborhood, behind Lanza's Food Market. The warehouse was located at 743 Pratt Avenue, across from Star Market. A rental agreement was negotiated with the building owner, and the men shook hands to seal the deal. During 1960, the owner of the property died, and soon after his demise, John was given 10 days by the deceased owner's widow to vacate the premises. Shortly thereafter, an announcement of a \$45,000 renovation of 3 connected businesses in 5 Points was made, with Walgreens set to move into the space. This action displaced Jenkins Produce, Lanza's Food Market, and half of the Brownie Drug Company's former quarters.

This predicament caused John to construct his own warehouse at 1301 Hundley Drive. Fortunately, one of John's friends made a cold storage facility available for use during the time the business was displaced.

In late October 1960, Jenkins Produce moved into its own new 3,150 square foot, \$20,000 facility.

**"If a man washes a dish
and no woman is around
to see it, did it happen?"**

Bill Kling, Huntsville



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The new location afforded the business with extra room to accommodate the delivery trucks, and improved logistics that made the business more conducive to growth.

To provide healthy fresh fruits and vegetables to residents of Huntsville and rural Madison County, Jenkins Produce ran 2 routes with 50 stops each day, twice a week. The routes were run on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. On Saturdays, Andrew Lyon, my father and also John's brother-in-law, maintained and repaired the delivery trucks. On Sundays and Wednesdays, the trucks traveled to the Alabama Farmer's Market in Birmingham to pick up loads of fresh produce from wholesale vendors.

While city customers preferred phone calls for placing their orders, most store owners and schools in the rural areas preferred to personally select the produce they wanted from the truck. John typically sold



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

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and delivered in rural Madison County and his brother-in-law Leonard, sold and delivered to customers in Huntsville.

John ran his Harvest-Monrovia route on Tuesdays and Fridays, delivering fresh produce to places such as Holder's Grocery, Schrimsher's Grocery, Monrovia School, Bridges', Drakes', Blankenship's, Tucker's, and Charles Ennis' store. On Mondays and Thursdays, John delivered produce to the New Hope - Owens Cross Roads area to places such as Self's Grocery at Buggs Chapel, Maples' Grocery, Dot's Dairy Den, Bernard's Grocery, Ed Rich's store, Joe Howard's store, Cooper's Cafe, Butler Brothers, Butler's store, and Leonard Taylor's store which was located north of the current day Publix at Hampton Cove.

He also made twice weekly deliveries to New Market and Hazel Green; to places such as Madison Cross Roads School, New Sharon School, Buckhorn School, Hazel Green School, New Market School, Riverton School and numerous rural grocers in those communities.

John expanded his business in 1967 and ventured into long haul trucking; hiring drivers that worked in teams of two, and dispatching the drivers. John did a lot of business with chicken plants in Blountsville, Albertville and Trussville, Alabama; transporting fresh and frozen chickens to California. While in California, the drivers would pick up a load of produce and transport it back to Huntsville for sale. Both the produce and trucking businesses were run together, and out of the facility on Hundley Drive.

Throughout the years that John owned Jenkins Produce, he hired his brother-in-laws, nephews, and other family members to help him maintain and grow the business. One dedicated employee that was not a relative, Wade Hargrove, stayed with the company from the time John bought the produce business in 1958 until he closed it in 1971.

John's children were young when he owned the produce company, and have memories of their experiences growing up in the business. His daughter, June, accompanied him frequently on Sunday trips to pick up produce in Birmingham.

She recalls a most unforgettable day: Sunday, September 15, 1963.

Around 10:20 am that day, she recalls that her dad and she were in Birmingham, traveling on 1st Avenue between 13th Street and 14th Street. They heard a loud boom and the ground shook. Her father told her to get down on the floor of the truck. They had no idea what was happening.

All of a sudden, hundreds of people immediately ran towards the explosion. That was the morning of the 16th Street Baptist Church bombing that claimed the lives of 4 young girls, injured 14 to 22 people, and devastated the church building.

When John and his daughter arrived in Huntsville, John's nephew remarked that their truck looked as if it had been in a war zone. It was badly damaged, even though it was half a mile away from the church.

Another time, when John's son, Tim, was about 8 years old, he and his cousin, Steven, were playing in the back of one of the big trucks. They were startled to hear the truck's engine start and feel the truck move. Tim yelled to Steven, "Oh, no! We are going to California!" They unzipped the partition between them and the driver and touched the driver on the shoulder. The driver, believing he was alone, screamed with shock that a hand grabbed him. The boys were able to get out of the truck before it left the parking lot.

In 1971, John retired from the produce business and sold his warehouse on Hundley Drive. He moved his family and his trucking business to rural Blount County, Alabama where he began cattle farming. By 1975, John retired from the trucking business and began focusing his full attention to cattle farming.

He still actively manages his cattle farm today, at the age of nearly 95 years, alongside his children. John can be found in the early morning hours every day, driving his 4-wheeler to check on his livestock.

He especially looks forward to the perfect time this year when he can climb on his tractor and start cutting and baling hay.



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* New four room cottage, corner, 6th Street and Pratt Avenue for rent cheap. Apply to J. E. Pierce

* Almer Johnson, a prominent young man of Tracy, Minn. is here on a visit to his sisters, Mrs. J. DeStefano and Miss Johnson at their home on Greene Street. Mr. Johnson is a welcome visitor and an interesting and noticeable feature about him is the fact that he is perhaps the tallest figure in Huntsville, being 6 feet 11 inches high, weighing 220 pounds and is only 17 years old. He will likely make this his future home.

* Temperature here ranged from 2 to 14 this morning - Last night was one of the coldest that has passed here in many years, but it was not as cold as it was when the soldiers were here. At 3 o'clock this morning the thermometer stood 2 above at Merrimack; a little later in the day it stood 3 above; from 6 to 8 o'clock throughout the city the temperature registered from 5 to 14 above. The coal dealers were taxed to their capacity today, supplying people with fuel. There was a great deal of suffering among the poor.

* Robbers Poison all Dogs - In a community close to Huntsville last week nearly every dog in the place was poisoned and the residents came to the conclusion that a band of robbers were preparing to raid the town. Everybody put additional bolts upon their doors and windows and took other precautions and

then waited. The robbers came early today. After attempting to hold up Strickland McCay, a wealthy citizen of the town, they broke into the railroad station. The robbers blew open the safe but before they could get much booty they were frightened off. The station agent had taken the precaution of keeping but little money in the place - since the dogs were poisoned.

* Fire on Steele - The fire laddies made a run early today to the home of Bettie Penney on Steele Street between Holmes and Clinton. The roof was burned and the household effects slightly damaged by water.

* Lost - an amethyst ring on Randolph Street, between Butlers School and Grahams Pharmacy. Finder return to this office and receive an award.

* Senator Spragins Ill - The friends of Senator Robt. E. Spragins will regret to learn that he continues to be quite ill at his home on Echols Hill. It is feared the Senator will be confined to his home for several weeks yet.

* 50 year old woman arrested for bigamy - Deputy Sheriff Pierce today arrested Mrs. Josephine Shaw, aged 50, charged with bigamy. She was placed in jail and was released on \$500 bail today. Her husband C. L. Shaw of the Big Cove had her arrested for marrying a W. L. Barnett who lives near the Fairgrounds.

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Delbert Parkinson

MOUNTAIN SHINE



by David C. Glover

During my childhood and young adult life, I spent a lot of time in the deep woods of Keel Mountain. Behind our family home was hundreds of acres of secluded land and I explored all of it. There was not a bluff, ravine, or abandoned home place that I missed visiting. Over this period, I identified the location of five old abandoned homeplaces and discovered three old moonshine stills.

The old homeplaces no longer exist due to land development projects, however, remnants of the old moonshine stills remain.

On a fall afternoon in 1975, I was small game hunting on the south side of Keel Mountain. Rain had fallen during the midday hours and damped the ground making it easier to walk quietly through the forest. The hardwood trees were dropping their leaves in the light afternoon wind making it an enjoyable afternoon to be in the woods.

While walking south along the east side of a flowing stream of water, I came across a moss-

covered bog. The bog was the water source for the stream and on the southwest side of the bog I could see several rusting metal barrels scattered about. I knew immediately it was an old abandoned moonshine still. The barrels had visible axe marks from an earlier raid by law enforcement officials.

I leaped to the west side of the stream and eagerly made my way to the still. As I approached the still my foot struck an object, and it bounced out from under the leaves. The object was an old brown pint bottle with no label. The bottle was intact and full of liquid, although it had been laying in the leaves for some time. I opened the bottle top, sniffed it, and realized it was most likely moonshine.

Keel Mountain was well known to law enforcement for illegal moonshine activities due to its isolated areas, deep ravines and limited access. A typical Keel Mountain moonshine still consisted of a steam boiler, a fermentation container, and a cooker. Metal 5-gallon containers were used by the locals because they were readily available. The moonshiners would modify the barrels to make the necessary equipment needed to produce moonshine on a very small scale.

Newspaper research confirmed that the illegal stills I observed were destroyed in the early 1950s, when the Madison County Sheriff's Department conducted several raids on the south side of Keel Mountain. In September 1950, a still of 120 gallons of mash was found and in May 1952, a still of 180 gallons of mash was discovered.

The largest raid noted in The Huntsville Times, dated Wednesday, April 11, 1951, gave the following details:

"LARGE STILL CUT DOWN BY SHERIFF"

A moonshiner's still with 1,500 gallons of live mash was cut down by Sheriff Oliver McPeters and his four deputies yesterday, the sheriff reported today. The still was located Sunday by Mr. McPeters on the south side of Keel Mountain, just north of Gurley. Sheriff McPeters said today no arrests were made. However, the still evidently had been abandoned shortly before the officers arrived, he added. Deputies assisting in the raid 'were W. S. Leslie, Willis Lanier, Elmore Dow and Ed Couch."

It seems that most moonshine raids were conducted during times that the operators were not present. Apparently, the moonshiners often had advanced notifications or alert systems to abandon operations when a planned raid occurred. During one raid, the wife of a suspected moonshiner fired two gunshots in the air to alert her husband that a raid was coming. Arrests were rare and it appears the Sheriffs focused on destroying the moonshine production equipment rather than putting some poor soul in jail.

For the found bottle, I figured a moonshiner must have covered the bottle, maybe several bottles, with leaves away from the operating still before making a quick escape from the raiders or he simply dropped it by accident.

What happened to the bottle?

I took the bottle home and handed it to my father. He opened the bottle and agreed that it was moonshine. Dad told me he would take the bottle to my uncle (a pharmacist) and see if they could determine for sure if it was drinkable.

Thinking back on this event I do not remember my dad or uncle ever mentioning the bottle again. I can imagine my uncle and father sitting at the kitchen table debating whether to drink the moonshine or not. Perhaps they tested it for impurities or flipped a coin to determine who would drink first.

Knowing the tendencies of my dad and uncle, I am sure they drank it for their amusement.

I am currently waiting for my grandchildren to become old enough to appreciate the deep woods as I have and to share the old moonshine stories with them.

THE END OF AN ERA - BREAKFAST FOR MY GRANDS



by Joyce W. Ellett

My son and daughter-in-law have to clock in at work earlier than I do.

I had the great privilege of giving my grandchildren a bowl of breakfast when they started play school, kindergarten and first grade as my son would drive by and open his window. I would hand him three bowls full, he would give me three bowls empty. These bowls were juice, fruit, Capri Sun, half a Jimmy Dean and water.

On Fridays I could take them to the park and feed the ducks, drive thru Dairy Queen and then walk them into First Meth-

odist Church and play with potato monkey, puzzles and lots of toys, this lasted until they could drive.

My Little Boots III wanted a five egg omelet; Tabory, two eggs over light with bacon or sausage; and Mary McKenzie, two scrambled eggs and bacon. As this is my last year, my Mary McKenzie now drinks coffee with caramel creamer.

As a musician I tried hard to make musicians out of them but they chose football, soft ball and golf. Little Boots is now a football coach at his alma mater, George

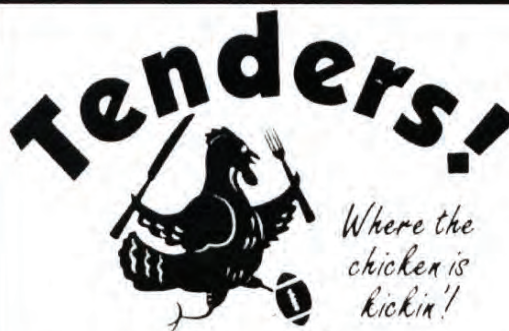
Town College, working with Tight Ends and Running Backs. Tabory will be a Senior at Alabama in the Fall and Mary McKenzie a Freshman at Alabama.

I am a lucky grandma to have experienced these twenty five school years of breakfast mornings. I just wish our Big Boots could have gotten to be a part of this. Some of his last words were, "I hate I will not be able to see them grow up."

I now have Lynne, Boots Jr. and my special daughter Suzi taking care of me.

"A good example of minority rule is a baby in the house."

Marjie Jacobs, Athens



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30 Mother's Days Without Her

**In Memory of Mama,
Lorene Hillis Bowen**

(9-23-31 to 5-12-95)

by Cathy B. Bridges

I cannot believe mama has been gone 30 years. She passed from this life to a better one on May 12, 1995. That was the Friday before Mother's Day. I will never forget it. I was working for an optometrist on the other end of town when my dad called with the bad news. Mama had died. At first, I could not believe it, even calling daddy back to make sure I heard right since he had been crying when he called. I could not get there fast enough. But it was too late.

Daddy rode in the front of the ambulance, and I talked to him briefly before it left. I knew right then that mama was gone and would not be back. I could smell it—the smell of death.

After locking up my parent's home, I headed to the hospital and met daddy in a part that I had never been to before. A nice lady placed us in a room full of tissue boxes where they come in and tell you that your loved one has passed. That is just what her doctor did, explaining that mama had a cardiac arrest that took her from us. They took us to the morgue nearby to see her one more time, which was another horrible and unforgettable experience.

We buried mama on the Monday

after Mother's Day in the navy floral dress that I had bought her, and she had never worn. Mama looked like herself, and her appearance was as if she was just asleep for a while. I remember walking around the funeral home like a zombie. I could not be still, and my nerves were on end. It was a very long day, but I hated to see it end because then it would be all over, and my precious mom's body that I loved so much would be in the ground. I knew where her soul was, but I hated to think of her being in the cold ground.

Mama had mentioned needing a new black handbag, so that is what I got her for Mother's Day, but never had a chance to give it to her. I don't recall what I did with it. Maybe I sold it on eBay because I could not bring myself to use it. It was for mama, not me.

So many Mother's Days have gone by, and all I can do is put flowers on her grave. I place a new flower arrangement in the urn that sits between her and daddy. I usually change the flowers about three times a year. That is all I can do for either one of them now and I wish I had been able to spend more time with them. Mama loved to go shopping at fabric stores. She loved to sew and did a lot of it when she was younger. Discount stores were another place Mama loved to look for bargains. She was tight with her money and always did what she felt was best.

This last Mother's Day I remembered what a wonderful mama I had and how much I miss her. She was a well-respected Southern Christian lady. She was always very friendly to all, and she did not have any enemies. I cannot think of anyone that did not like or have great respect for her. There is nothing negative to be said about her because

"Life is like a safe with a combination, but the combination is inside the safe."

Molly Jenson, Arab

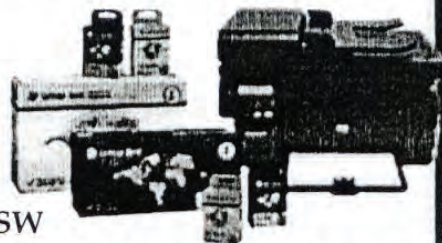
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there is none. There is no way I could ever come close to being the great person she was. I reckon it's not in me, although I have tried.

Mama loved God, her family, and her home. She enjoyed working in the garden or with her flowers and could tell you the name of every flower in the South.

Her cooking was something special also, and one reason was that she enjoyed it so much. My husband can vouch for that because mama sure did help fatten him up through the years. She could make the best turkey and cornbread dressing on Thanksgiving. Her cakes and pies would make your mouth water just thinking about them. She made a yum-yum cake that was so moist and yummy that it did not last long. Her fruit cocktail pies were great in the summertime also.

Christmas was a favorite of mamas, and she would busy herself in the kitchen baking and cooking while listening to Christmas music. It always made her so happy, and I loved seeing her smiling, enjoying herself with her family during the holidays.

When the grandkids came along, she was really in her element. Having children around again just made things perfect for her. She did not need anything else because she had everything she needed.

Mama worked at Kroger for over 30 years. After mama retired, she enjoyed it for a short time, because it was not long before she had a heart attack that resulted in irreparable damage to one side of her heart. She changed her eating habits, walked and lost some weight. They had a beautiful big back yard, and she walked around and around almost every day.

She did try to watch what she ate, but it was not easy. It is hard to change your eating habits when you grew up in the South eating all the heart-stopping deli-

cious meals such as fried chicken, fried potatoes, fried okra and squash, plus cornbread and pinto beans and maybe some turnip greens flavored with pork fatback.

One lovely May morning around 9:00, she walked as usual but did not know it would be her last. My dad was pulling weeds not too far away. Mama had done a few laps around the yard when she got close enough to tell daddy that she felt faint. He told her to come and sit down, which she did. According to daddy, mama said, "Hold me." He pulled her to him, and she was gone. She died in his arms around all her favorite colorful flowers. I believe that would have been the way she wanted it.

Mama would have turned 64 that coming September, and that is way too young to die. She is an angel in Heaven now but left us too soon. Mama was so special to her family, and I am glad to have lots of beautiful pictures and memories of her.

The Best Whipped Cream - Old Recipe:

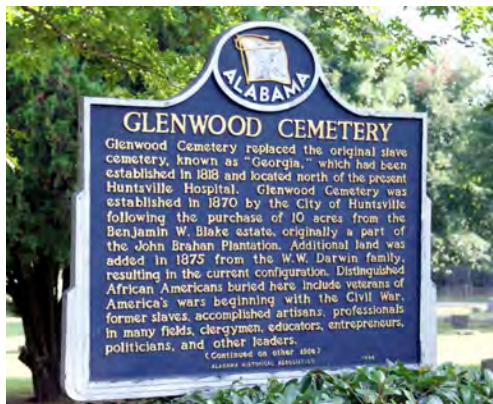
Beat 1/2 cup chilled whipping cream and 1/4 cup powdered sugar in a chilled bowl. Add any flavoring such as 1/2 teaspoon of either cinnamon or nutmeg, and the same of almond or vanilla extract.

Enjoy These Hot Summer Days with Friends and Loved Ones!



*Love to the Huntsville High Class of 1966
From Oscar Llerena, HHS class of 1966*

You may not know when you're well off, but the Internal Revenue Service does.



Glenwood Cemetery

by Penny Sumners

Have you ever heard of Glenwood Cemetery? Do you know where it is? Those who love history know about Maple Hill Cemetery but few know about this other historical treasure!

In the South, things were/some still are segregated, even graveyards as they were called in the past. Farms had family cemeteries but if you lived in the city, and if you were white you were buried in the white graveyard that was named Maple Hill in the early 1900s and if you were black, before 1870, you were buried in the cemetery referred to as Georgia. Both of these places were purchased by the city from Leroy Pope in ca. 1821. In the 1870s, the city established Glenwood Cemetery for the black citizens as "Georgia" was referred to as the slave cemetery, thus a negative for the now free citizens. Glenwood became the final resting place of many black Huntsville leaders and noted citizens like Henry C. Binford, Daniel Brandon, Dora Lowery, India Foster Herndon Dixon and 70+ others.

In the 1980s-90s Huntsville City Schools had created field trips to Maple Hill Cemetery for local history. On one of these trips an Academy of Science and Foreign Language student asked where the black people were buried. A profound question that local educators had not considered. So Mrs. Ollye Conley, principal of ASFL and her staff and students decided to research Glenwood Cemetery. Mrs. Conley, from the north Alabama area, was well aware of Glenwood Cemetery and its residents and their contributions. Like much of African American history there is little

documentation, but ASFL spent hours and found some documentation on many. The school received national recognition for their work but a document was not created from their research so most did not know of what was uncovered.

In 2018, Mrs. Conley and I renewed our friendship as former HCS administrators and discussed Glenwood. I was on the Huntsville Pilgrimage Board and worked on Maple Hill's Cemetery Stroll. Mrs. Conley was looking for funding to repair headstones at Glenwood, which is what the Stroll's donations do for Maple Hill. Through my Twickenham Town Chapter of the DAR, we were able to secure a \$10,000 grant which helped to repair some of the headstones.

By 2023, Mrs. Conley, in her mid 80s, wanted to get the information from the research to the community and we discussed the importance of this need. Remembering that under the leadership of Deane Dayton, Dr. John Severn and Lois Logan, a virtual tour of Maple Hill had been created, I suggested to Mrs. Conley that I would get my Twickenham Town Chapter to use her documentation and created a virtual tour for Glenwood and she agreed. I contacted Tara Sloan, Director of City Cemeteries and she agreed and gave full support. So under the wisdom and technical knowledge of TTC member Dr. Doria Evans who took the scripts that TTC members and others wrote from Mrs. Conley's documentation, created the virtual tour with the voices of the residents being done by the Huntsville community. What an unbelievable, outstanding and detailed job Dr. Evans did!

The Burwell Foundation generously donated financial funding for a sign with the QR code at the cemetery as well as rack cards that have been placed at the library, cemetery office, visitors center and local churches. What a collaboration of people for such an amazing project to make Huntsville and the world aware of more of the history of Huntsville and all its citizens! So much information about such amazing people that now their stories and contributions will be available for all. The voices of Glenwood are speaking...can you hear them????

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RAGING SEA!

*by Gerald Alvis
The Poet of Greenlawn*

They are called Dad speeches, and my sons still talk about enduring them. Now in their forties with teenagers of their own, their lives are going full speed ahead. So, I shared a learning experience with my eldest during a quiet moment on vacation and now with you, the reader.

There is a certain peace at sea. A mesmerizing change of color occurs from brown, brackish water to shifting shades of green, and then you understand why they call it Navy blue. There is depth off the continental shelf, a still that can usher in the flattest calm, becoming a mirror that reflects the hues of oceanic sunsets. There are also moments of time dilation where seconds feel like hours in the rage of storms that turn this highway of water, a sanctuary of the mind, into a battle as it pounds the sides of the ship and dunks the bow beneath the waves. But if anything can be gleaned from these close encounters, it is that it comes with the

understanding of what is important to you. Because in the middle of all that is vying for your attention, the mind will go to and dwell on these things.

I've crossed the Atlantic 3 times by boat. The first was on a warship, in her day, the mightiest ship afloat and ever built. As we skirted a hurricane, the boatswain would send out an alert over the ship's intercom (IMC): "Stand by for high seas and heavy rolls." We were tossed like a toy at the mercy of the waters, but I figured something out pretty quickly. At times, we were floating over depths that

were miles deep and plowing through the turbulence of the winds and sea, but after a revelation, I no longer was concerned.

Regardless of what's raging, don't allow what's out there inside the hull; it will pass, and you'll be okay.

There is only so much you can control - stop worrying, keep moving and be careful of what you let into your life!



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My Trip to Yugoslavia

by L D Rogers

I worked as parts manager for Woody Anderson Ford in Huntsville, AL. Motorcraft was part of Ford Motor Company, and they sold us fast moving parts like spark plugs and all kinds of filters. Once every year they had two trips that parts managers could win. One was a three-day trip, and the other one was a seven-day trip or what we called the big trip.

I think the year was 1979 and I had won the big trip to Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia. My wife said she didn't care to go, so I invited my brother-in-law Ron, and he gladly said yes. We got our passports ready and the big day came. We boarded the plane with about 300 other people that were affiliated with Ford, and we were on our way to Yugoslavia.

When we got to the airport in Dubrovnik there was an older couple having problems with their luggage so we asked them if we could give them a hand. They were very thankful. I thought I had seen the man before. Turned out they were owners of another dealership in town.

Our bus ride to the hotel was very interesting. We passed the harbor and saw Russian ships, soldiers and sailors. We didn't expect that. The hotel was very nice. The only thing that bothered me was they took our passports at the front desk. They said they would give them back when we left.

For the next week we toured the country, and I must say it was beautiful. On the first night we saw the couple I recognized from Huntsville sitting at a table for dinner and we joined them. I noticed that every table had two bottles of wine, one was red and the other was white. While we were waiting for our food Ron started to pour all of us a glass of wine, but our new friend said, "Don't pour us any. We don't drink, but we don't mind if you do." After dinner Ron told me, "Let's have all our meals with them!"

Most of the trip was bus tours but we had a few days to roam around the old town that dated back to 614 AD. It was something to see. We saw a pharmacy that was from the 1300s, old churches

"I know I've had a good round of golf when I didn't fall off the cart."

Buddy Hackett



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and old cathedrals. There was a wide tall wall around the old city that you could go up on and walk around.

We enjoyed getting to know our bus driver who could speak English very well. One night at a banquet they had a man playing the piano on a round stage in the middle of the dining room. I asked Ron, "Isn't that our bus driver?" And sure enough it was. When he took a break, we went over to talk to him. He told us that he was a professional concert pianist, but their government required everyone to have another job. So, he drove a bus during the day and played piano at night.

We saw a lot of things that were very different from home. They had one big department store that had everything in it from clothes to appliances and even farming equipment. But there was not much of a choice. They only had one refrigerator and one stove. We began to understand how lucky we were back in the states.

There were a lot of gypsies on the sidewalks selling different things. They sure didn't like to have their picture taken which I learned the hard way.

On one of our days there we took a trip to Mostar, a city that was mostly Muslim. There were mosques and old buildings. Before we got to Mostar one of the people we were with told us to never take a picture of a soldier or a policeman.

We went to a nice hotel for lunch. I noticed there was a round table in the middle of the dining area where some of our people were sitting. Then a man came over and told them they had to move to another table. Some men in business suits with briefcases came in and went to this table. I figured they were businessmen and had reserved that table for a lunch meeting. I didn't think about it anymore till we got on the bus. They followed us out and approached a couple in our group that had brought their son on the trip. The son had taken a picture of a policeman, and when he did one of the men in the suits went over and took his camera away from him and took the film out. His parents got upset and I thought the men were going to arrest them. They gave him his camera back, but they kept the film.

When we got back to our hotel, I asked our driver what happened. He told me the men that came in the restaurant in suits were KGB Officers and they were there to follow us through the town, and they did.

While we were in Mostar, they took us to a mosque. I was surprised that they let us go inside. It was beautiful inside with a lot of rugs on the floor. There was a balcony for the women since they couldn't be on the floor with the men. The guide told us that the rugs on the floor were Persian carpets, and they were worth over a million dollars.

There was a big cemetery beside the mosque, and I noticed that some of the gravestones had a crown on top of them. The guide explained that the ones with the crowns on top were for the people that had been to Mecca.

"We started to long for the pitter-pat of little feet. So we got a dog. Well, it's cheaper and you get more feet."

Sandy & Jim Jackson

We saw a beautiful bridge that crossed the river and ran through the middle of the town. They told the man who built the bridge that if it fell, they would execute him. As soon as he finished, he took off just in case.

One day we went to a vineyard, and I'd never seen so many grape vines in all my life. The tour of the countryside was gorgeous. There was an open-air restaurant by a fast-moving river. When we got there our bus driver got his fishing gear out and went down and started fishing. The meal we had at the restaurant was trout caught from the river, and they cooked it on an open fire. It was one of our best meals.

Finally, it was time for us to head back home, and we didn't have any problems getting our passports back. It was a great trip that Ron and I talked about for a long time.

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TALES FROM THE ROCK

by Don Stanley

The Rock was a concrete curb that separated a sidewalk from a parking lot in front of the playground of Joe Bradley School. It was across the street from what is now called Merrimack Hall.

One of my earliest memories of living in Huntsville Park was the 1951 Huntsville Manufacturing Co. strike. My Dad, O. G. Stanley, was President of the union. He was an early riser and would put his coffee on the pot belly stove in the kitchen around 4:30 AM. One of my jobs was to fill the coal scuttle before going to bed each night, that way Dad could stoke the fire while getting his coffee ready and smoking at least 2 Camel cigarettes. Dad's office was the front porch and workers would line up in the road near the gutter to come up one at a time to talk or file grievances until it was time to go to work. My Mother hated messy clutter so once or twice a week another job for me was to sweep up the cigarette butts in front of the house.

The union hall was a stark room rented above the stores on the east side of the Courthouse Square with hardwood floors that embellished the sounds. I was only 7 years old playing in the corner but I remember some of the meetings. My Dad would take me because Mother would be working. The membership was full of raised angry voices demanding to strike (benefits & wages) and the reply my dad would repeat "We don't have the money to strike"! They voted and went on strike and in a few weeks the mill broke the strike and hired all employees back except one, my dad. He bounced around until he got hired at Redstone Arsenal.

The heart breaking memory is they got nothing for the strike except to spend the union money and go into debt. I would get out of Joe Bradley school about the same time as shift change and going home I walked by the front gate of the mill. The people on strike would be several deep on both sides of the road yelling "scab" at their neighbors crossing the picket line. Scary for a 7 year old and one of the strikers was one of my brothers. Our houses were duplexes so our front porches face the next house. There were best friends who lived next door and worked together. One crossed the picket line and the other did not, never again to speak to each other.

This I will call Unpleasant Memoirs at the Rock.

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**** We will NOT be having a sale in July**

We currently have no auctions scheduled for the month of July 2025, but keep an eye on Old Huntsville Magazine, Facebook and

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Fun Facts about Pets

Fun Feline Facts

- Cats do not have sweat glands.
- A cat can jump as much as seven times its height.
- Cats have five toes on each front paw, but only four toes on each back paw.
- Cats have over one hundred vocal sounds, while dogs only have about ten.
- A pack of kittens is called a kindle, while a pack of adult cats is called a clowder.
- An adult cat can run about 12 miles per hour, and can sprint at nearly thirty miles per hour.
- A cat's tongue is scratchy because it's lined with papillae — tiny elevated backwards hooks that help to hold prey in place.
- The nose pad of each cat has ridges in a unique pattern not unlike a person's fingerprints.
- Cats' bodies are extremely flexible; the cat skeleton contains more than 230 bones (a human has about 206), and the pelvis and shoulders loosely attach to the spine. This adds to their flexibility and allows them to fit through very small spaces.
- Cats have better memories than dogs. Tests conducted by the University of Michigan concluded that while a dog's memory lasts no more than 5 minutes, a cat's can last as long as 16 hours-exceeding even that of monkeys and orangutans. *(Ed. Note - not sure I agree about dog's memory only 5 mins).*

Fun Facts About Birds and Exotic Pets

- * To survive, every bird must eat at least half its own weight in food each day.
- * A bird's heart beats 400 times per minute while they are resting.
- * Americans own more than 60 million pet birds.
- * Larger parrots such as the macaws and cockatoos live more than 75 years.
- * Many hamsters only blink one eye at a time.
- * Iguanas are able to hold their breath for up to 30 minutes.
- * A garter snake can give birth to 85 babies.
- * Ferrets are currently the third most popular pet in the US. There are an estimated eight to ten million ferrets in the United States being kept as pets.



Fun Facts About Dogs

- Dogs only sweat from the bottoms of their feet, the only way they can discharge heat is by panting.
- Dogs have about 100 different facial expressions, most of them made with the ears.
- Dogs have about 10 vocal sounds.
- Dogs do not have an appendix.
- There are more than 350 different breeds of dogs worldwide.
- Dalmatians are born spotless: at first pure white, their spots develop as they age.
- Contrary to popular belief, dogs aren't color blind; they can see shades of blue, yellow, green and gray. The color red registers on a grayscale in a dog's vision.
- Most domestic dogs are capable of reaching speeds up to about nineteen miles per hour when running at full speed.
- Using their swiveling ears like radar dishes, experiments have shown that dogs can locate the source of a sound in 6/100ths of a second.
- Domesticated for more than 10,000 years, the dog was one of the first animals domesticated by humans.



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From the Desk of Tom Carney

A 1904 Oldsmobile



by Tom Carney

The train that slowly pulled to a stop at the Huntsville Railroad Depot, that spring morning of 1904, carried a revolutionary invention that would forever change the way Huntsvillians lived.

While crowding around the boxcar, the people anxiously awaited the unloading of the freight. When it was finally manhandled off the train, the assembled throng gasped with amazement. No one had ever seen anything like it!

Sitting there in the middle of the road, gleaming in its shiny black paint and hand-rubbed leather upholstery was a 1904 Oldsmobile, the first automobile to ever arrive in Madison County.

"The average dog is much nicer than the average person."

Andy Rooney

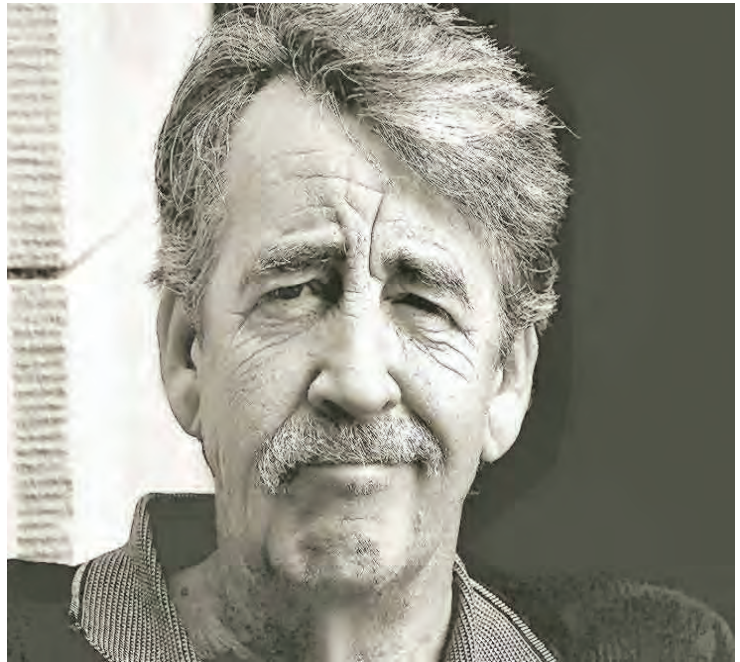
George Cooper, its proud owner, had purchased the car while on a trip to Cincinnati, Ohio, for the exorbitant sum of

almost four hundred dollars. The tool box accompanying it had cost an additional one hundred dollars and contained, among other things, a shovel, an ax, a red flag and one hundred feet of rope.

The company had offered to send an instructor with the car to teach its owner how to drive it (for only \$45 extra), but Mr. Cooper had declined the offer. Sadly to say, if Cooper had taken the Oldsmobile company up on its offer, the first automobile ride in Huntsville history would have been longer than 15 feet and would not have abruptly ended by crashing into the side of the depot.

Observers later agreed that the wreck was caused in part by the unusual placement of the brake controls. After all, whoever heard of placing brakes on the floor?

Luckily no serious damage was sustained and Cooper eventually learned to drive it before selling it two years later to Mr. Liles of Gurley, Ala.



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From the Porch on Pratt Avenue

The Fire-Eater

by Collier Bouldin
Hundley, PN

When one thinks of a fire-eater, you might envision a sketchy travelling carnival with a freakish sideshow full of spectacles such as "The Bearded Lady", "The Totally Tattooed Man" or "The Fire-Eater" who devours raging balls of flames on a sword and snuffs it out with tongue and throat.

This is not that. This is an altogether different type of "Fire-Eater". In some ethnic groups, tribes, and even religions, there are individuals who have a gift, a mystical magical method that can heal the afflicted. Catholics call them Saints, Christians recall Jesus' works and First Nation people call them shaman. My grandfather was a combination of the latter two.

Born in 1918 and soon orphaned by the Spanish Influenza that also took is only sibling, Eldridge Blackwell was passed around like Sunday's supper biscuits from relatives to relatives. I am extremely thankful for the larger families back then, He was very soft spoken, at almost a whisper. You would have to sit close to listen. I loved my grandfather deeply but, I was forced outside to play/fight my

cousins by my grandmother and never gained the knowledge and amazing gifts he had.

It was after his death that I learned of such. People knew people back then. They could name everyone in the neighborhood and from where their people came. My granddaddy was known as a Fire-Eater in that close knit community. Now, a fire-eater is a person who can be called upon to eliminate the burn from a person without modern medicine. A child was brought to him one time after receiving a sever burn from a parlor stove, to alleviate the burning and relieve the pain. Granddaddy, would take the child and wave his hand over the afflicted area, always pushing away from the heart but, never touching the skin, He would, in his softly spoken voice, almost in a mumble, whisper specific scripture. Miraculously, the pain would ease, and within hours,

the charred area would subside to red and onto a pinkish hue. The Fire-Eater had provided his gift for another,

My granddaddy lived a very long life. His healing powers I never knew until his passing and within my grieving learned his gift. Curiously, I delved into books to try and discover more. It is said that a Fire-Eater can share the "gift" to only three family related members. Those must ask of the fire-eater and if found worthy, the secrets can be revealed, thusly keeping the tradition alive. How I wished I had known to ask of this and much more from my dear grandfather.

Would he have found me worthy? Who knows but, him. The thing I know is to talk to your elders. Learn their stories, and let those stories become a part of you so that you may pass them down and along such as sharing them in Old Huntsville magazine.

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Bob Hope

TUNA AND STARS

by M. D. Smith IV



The first time Nora saw the kitten, it was huddled in a shoebox with an empty tuna can inside, near the dumpster behind Rico's Market. It trembled, eyes gummy and wet, and meowed once - ragged, desperate - and something cracked open inside her twelve-year-old chest. She named him Tuna.

Her mother didn't approve. "We can't afford to take care of some half-dead stray," she'd said, pulling open the fridge with its echoing emptiness. "You want a pet? Go take care of your report card."

But Nora snuck him food from her school lunch. Tuna fish sandwiches turned into a name, a bond. He slept curled in the crook of her arm each night, a shivering heartbeat pressed to hers. She needed him more than anyone knew. Especially after her father left. Especially when the lights got turned off.

Especially when her mother started working nights, sleeping days, and drinking, too tired to argue anymore.

For four years, Tuna was her shadow.

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Through broken leases and shelters. Through high school bullies and hand-me-down clothes.

Through birthdays celebrated with a single cupcake and candles made from crayons.

He was there when she cried over short-story rejection letters.

There when she stared into a cracked mirror and whispered, "You don't belong anywhere."

She once told him, "You're the only living thing that didn't give up on me."

He blinked slow and pressed his head into her hand.

She was nineteen when Tuna got sick.

He stopped eating. He stopped meowing. He hid under the bed and wouldn't come out.

The vet said "renal failure, likely age-related," sighed, then added, "treatment will be expensive. But I'll sell you the medicine at my cost."

Nora sat in the plastic chair, the estimate in her hands. Rent was late. Her car's engine light had been on for three months. She worked double shifts at the gas station and still barely scraped by.

She could barely afford hope.

"I can't lose him," she whispered. "He's my whole family."

The vet didn't answer, but understood.

She went home with a bottle of pills she couldn't afford and Tuna wrapped in an old towel.

She sold the car. Caught rides with coworkers. Walked in the rain.

For three weeks, she fought for Tuna's life.

She fed him by hand. Slept on the floor beside him. Whispered stories and promises and old lullabies.

But he still faded.

One morning, she woke up, and he wasn't breathing.

She held him to her chest and sobbed until her ribs ached.

She buried him under the only tree in the park where she used to do homework with him in her lap. A flat stone with "T" scraped on it, marked the spot. She didn't go back for a long time.

A year later, after a quick trip to the food store, Nora stood outside a tiny apartment of her own — the first lease with her name on it after becoming a published writer.

Inside were clean walls, a secondhand couch, a chipped mug with her name on it, and a cardboard box.

A cardboard box? She hadn't ordered anything.

She opened it cautiously — and inside, a kitten blinked up at her. Black and gray like clouds before rain.

"Well, well, who are you?"

A tiny note was tucked into the folds of the blanket.

"For the girl who gave everything to a cat. Maybe it's time one gave something back." Dr. Sarah Patel (her old vet).

Nora sat on the floor and let the kitten climb into her lap, tiny paws exploring her shirt, his purr loud and clumsy like a broken motor.

She named him Echo.

That night, she looked out her window, up at the stars.

"Thank you, Tuna," she whispered. "You got me here."

Echo curled against her shoulder and purred. And for the first time in years, she cried — happy tears. Not because she had everything she wanted.

But because she wasn't alone and had a furry companion again.



SKYE

Hello, my name is Skye! I am a spayed female mixed breed Staffordshire terrier. I am about 5 years old and have been at the Ark Animal Shelter for about 3 years. I am a very sweet girl who loves people and belly rubs but sometimes I bark at new people who come to visit. I just want them to notice me and pay some attention to me.. I am really a gentle and lovable girl who likes to take walks but I also like to lay inside in the air conditioning on my bed on those hot summer days. I am housebroken so my inside pen is always clean in the morning when the volunteers come in. I've had all my shots and am micro-chipped so I am ready for a forever home. I would be a good dog in a family where I would be the only pet so I could have all the attention. Please think about coming to see me at the Ark Animal Shelter. I will be so glad to see you. Ask to see Skye, that's me!

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Why do Good Things Happen to Bad People on Holmes Street?

by Jack Burwell

Do bad actions run in a family or do they run in all families? By the time I reached age three, I began forming memories. Erik Erikson, in his eight stages of development of a human being, says that at stage 3, which he calls "Purpose initiative vs. guilt," that the child has the ability to do things on his own such as dress himself and interact with peers, creating their own games and activities. If the child fails to develop confidence, he may believe himself a burden on others and develop guilt.

Strangely, I did start interacting with others but I didn't develop much guilt.

Actually, on a small scale, I was a one child crime wave of sorts. I stole money out of my mother's purse at least a couple of times. Also, I sometimes took Mexican toy soldiers home with me from Bruce and Don Woody's Alamo toy soldier set. Bruce and Don lived four lots down Holmes Street going east. Bruce was my age, Don was about a year younger. Don was big for his age so the three of us played well with each other.

I felt guilty about stealing their toys and would sometimes bring some of them back and would purposely leave some of my toys at their

house. But I didn't bring back the Mexican soldiers. They were too wonderful. My thinking was that it was probably okay for me to steal from my mother, but I knew I wasn't supposed to steal from my friends. I remember also I eventually would trade some of my toy soldiers with Bruce and Don for their Alamo toys.

The Mexican soldiers had such wonderful uniforms. I hoped someday to buy a complete Alamo set myself but never did. (By the time I found a full set at a store, I had stopped playing with toy soldiers.) After I obtained several of the Alamo toys by legal means, I no longer had to hide the stolen ones when Bruce and Don came over to play. That made life easier. A very basic conservative principle applies here. Life should be made difficult for criminals. When I stopped being a criminal, my life got simpler and easier.

I recently told Don about taking his toy soldiers. As other people start reading this, he's bound to hear about me stealing his Mexican toy soldiers anyway. I had rather for him to learn about my thievery directly from me first. He said he wondered where those soldiers went. He also said he was glad to hear me tell him about the soldiers. Confession is always good for the soul, he said.

My mother, I'm sure, knew I was stealing from her purse. Apparently she didn't care. She loved me, crime and all. She had her own reputation to think about. She was known in her family for being a little wild when in college. She looked a lot like Norma Shearer, a movie star from the 1930s except in my prejudiced opinion, prettier. She first went to a college in lower Mississippi. After her first year, while not being expelled, she was told not to come back for the second year. She had made her grades but apparently there were other issues. She then moved on to Livingston Teachers College. Frances Roberts of Huntsville was a roommate. Frances later taught history at the University of Alabama in Huntsville.

After attending her second college for a year, my mother went to a dance at the Livingston Country Club. She didn't know that was against the rules, at least that was her story. This time it was official. She was expelled. My Mama Mary (my grandmother) said, "That's okay, honey. We will send you to the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa. You can go to country club dances there without being expelled." It was a good thing for my brother, Dudley, and me. She met my Daddy there. They got married and then

"A well-trained dog will make no attempt to share your lunch. He will just make you feel so guilty that you can't enjoy it."

Helen Thomson

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Dudley and I joined the family.

My mother obviously knew about breaking the rules. That may be why she was so tolerant with me. At about age three and one-half, the next thing that happened is that I burned down the back yard. You will be glad to know that it was an accident according to me when the fire department report was first written up.

We had a fairly sizable yard on Holmes Street, and in 1951 chickens were still kept in the back yard. One day I was playing in the back yard where there was a fence to hold in the chickens and a small chicken house within which for them to lay eggs. However, there were no chickens in the pen at precisely the time of this story.

One morning, a small black and white dog was in the yard and was eager to play with me. I had a couple of firecrackers in my pocket and a box of matches. To liven things up, I lit the firecrackers one at a time and tossed them at the dog. He seemed to enjoy the explosions as much as I did. After I ran out of firecrackers, I started lighting the matches and throwing those at him. He was pretty fast, so I made no direct hits. However, the next thing I knew, a sizable part of the yard

was on fire. I remember running for the house, yelling, "Mama, Mama, the yard's on fire!" My mother and Annie, who helped my mama with cleaning and cooking, rushed out with large pans in hand and got the fire under control fairly quickly.

The little dog must have made a safe escape also because I didn't see him around in the yard after the fire was contained.

My mother then took me inside to give me a bath. While bathing me, she calmly said, "How did this fire get started?" I looked down and said, "Well, let me think. I had some matches in my pocket, and they must have fallen out and caught fire. You know matches can rub together and do that."

My mother smiled and said, "Is that really what happened?" "Yes," I said, "that is really what happened." I never changed my story even though I knew she didn't believe me. As long as she pretended to believe me even though I knew she didn't, she and I both knew we would get along quite well. That provided for a good relationship. Nothing more was said.

In the seventeenth century, people like John Calvin and Martin Luther wrote about the total depravity of man. Calvin

even went so far as saying that children could act like snakes. I'm convinced that Sigmund Freud was on the mark when he said that in the early stages of life, a child is primarily controlled by his libido that causes the child to seek pleasure and avoid pain. As the child progresses, he begins to absorb in his brain a super-ego that informs the "Do's and don'ts" of life so he can avoid the pain of being scolded and can learn to get along with others. The ego (or self) negotiates the tug of war between the libido and superego. By the way, I often differ with Freud on many issues, but I think he got the development of the early libido right.

As to Calvin and Luther's comments on the depravity of children as they seek their early pleasures, perhaps they were being excessively critical. When I was three and one-half, I was only a thief, liar, animal abuser and arsonist. That's not so bad, is it?

"Until further notice, the days of the week are now called Thisday, Thatday, Otherday, Someday, Yesterday, Today and Nextday."

Heard during the Covid Pandemic

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TRAGEDY ON THE FLINT RIVER

by Waymon E. Burke

Before there was Hampton Cove and McMullen Cove, there was Big Cove and Little Cove, known to Native Americans as Ko-La-Nu-Yi. The Cove is nestled between the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains where they gradually fade into the flat landscape of North Alabama. By the early 20th century, the Cove was inhabited largely by hardworking small farmers. By the late 20th century, the countryside had become a part of the thriving Huntsville metropolis.

The murky and often muddy Flint River has been a popular recreation area from ancient times when Native Americans navigated the waters until today where canoes, picnics and sports enthusiasts can be seen all along the river banks. The 66-mile waterway begins in the hills of Tennessee before winding its way through Madison County on its journey to the mighty Tennessee River.

At first glance, the Flint River is a romantic and pleasant place, but beneath it is also treacherous, deceiving and dangerous; full of holes and a riverbed that is littered with a web of fallen trees and brush waiting to capture whoever falls into its grip.

Eighty-five years ago, on a beautiful sunny day, July 4, 1928, the Meeler family - Joe, Annie and their children; my future grandmother, Lucille, Lucy, Joe Jr., Helen and Herman - joined friends to celebrate the 4th of July on the banks of the Flint between Little Cove and Big Cove, just upriver from where the Flint flows into the Tennessee. This was the era of child labor, and both Lucille and Lucy worked in the Lincoln Mill and were happy to have the day off with their family. The happy occasion would sadly end in tragedy.

Grandmother Lucille never felt comfortable talking to me about what happened that day. Before her death, my great aunt Helen, who witnessed the tragedy at age 9, painfully described the chaos, fear, praying and panic that consumed those watching from the riverbank. The story was recounted in The Huntsville Daily Times front page headlines the following day. Fifteen-year-old Lucy and a friend, Pearl Guffy, were wading in the river a short distance from the picnic area. Both girls apparently slipped and disappeared beneath the water. Aunt Helen said several men immediately dove into the river trying to find them; but the river, as today, was murky and they could not see beneath the water. They had to search by feel.

Joe found one of the girls and pulled her to safety, it was Pearl. When Lucy was found, she had

drowned, her ankle tangled in the underbrush on the riverbed.

As with any family, the tragedy had a lasting impact on those who were there and even future generations who were not yet born. My memories of my great-grandmother Annie are of a distant and rigid woman. Many of my cousins who are old enough to remember her before her death in 1957 remember her as I do.

One of my aunts says Annie apologized to her for her distant behavior before her death and confessed she was very careful not to be too close to her grandchildren and great grandchildren to minimize the pain that the loss of loved ones causes.

Lucy's father, my great grand father, Joe, was never a very religious man. Many viewed, his jovial nature and often reckless behavior as over-compensating for his loss. My most vivid remembrance of him was during a visit to the family burial plot when I was about 10 years old. Just the two of us walked to Lucy's grave and stood there. He did not speak a word, I was much too young to understand all the complexities.

Over the decades since, I have often wondered if he was seeking comfort from God or if he was cursing God internally. I have discussed this with family members who also knew him well, and they universally agree it could/have been either or perhaps, even both. After all, he was the hero who saved a young girl that day, but he could not save his daughter.

Like the loss of any young person, the toll is far greater than losing the individual, it is also the loss of the countless generations of children and grandchildren she would likely have produced, the countless cousins who would never be. Such tragedies reverberate through generations.

All who lived and experienced the pain firsthand - parents, siblings and friends - are all gone. No doubt, each of those who witnessed the tragedy took the pain with them to the afterlife. Had she lived, our great-aunt Lucy would have been 100 years old. She is buried near her sister, Lucille, in the Camp Ground Cemetery in Big Cove.



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Shocking News from 1916

Ringling Brothers Circus Goes up in Flames

Huntsville: What started as a day of merriment for people attending the Ringling Brothers Circus here quickly turned into tragedy as flames swept the compound.

Over 600 people were on the circus grounds when a fire, apparently caused by a carelessly discarded cigarette, and fueled by high winds, swept through the grounds.

The main damage was concentrated near the stock pens where immense quantities of fodder had been stowed for the livestock.

The stock handlers, who had been prepared for such an emergency, immediately began blindfolding the horses and leading them to safety.

Though there is no report of human casualties, 37 horses burned to death in the conflagration. Scores more were severely injured.

Several of Huntsville's doctors were pressed into service in an attempt to save the injured animals but in many cases it was too late. Shots rang out through the day as more of the animals were put out of their misery.

A spokesman from Ringling Brothers Circus stated the show will continue its run here in Huntsville with no interruption of scheduled shows. Agents for the circus are already in negotiations with local livestock dealers to replace the horses. The fiery blaze, and the smoke, was seen all across the county.

Citizens in New Hope, upon seeing the smoke, immediately raised a contingent of volunteers and dispatched them to Huntsville.

New Disease Discovered in Maysville

Dr. I.W. Howard has confirmed that a new and dreadful disease has been identified in Maysville.

Nettie Preston, the two year old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Will Preston, was diagnosed yesterday as having polio.

Though two other cases have been reported in other parts of the state this is the first confirmed case in North Alabama.

Judge Lawler Murdered

Huntsville: The body of W.T. Lawler, Madison County Probate Judge, was discovered by ferry man Percy Brooks yesterday near the Hambric Slough bridge on Aldridge Creek.

The body had been weighed down with heavy pieces of metal that unidentified sources have claimed came from the County Jail. First reports say that Lawler died from wounds inflicted to the head with a blunt object.

Lawler was last seen yesterday at a Chataqua on the school grounds of the East Clinton School. Sources claim that after receiving a telephone call, Lawler left the Chataqua to meet with unspecified people. He was not seen alive again.

The murder is whispered to have political connections with rumors of whiskey rings, corrupt payoffs and vote buying all being tossed about as the possible motive.

Percy Brooks has reportedly implicated C.M. Nails, Circuit Court Clerk, and David Overton, an ex-Huntsville Police Chief. Sheriff Phillips has also been mentioned as a suspect.

Overton had lost the election for Probate Judge to Lawler after a bitterly contested race in which both parties were accused of being part of a corrupt political machine. The Governor is reported to be sending three companies of National Guard to Huntsville to guard against any parties seeking retribution. An investigator from Montgomery is also expected to arrive tomorrow.

*Lots of memories made at this place. Old ad run in Old
Huntsville Magazine in the 2010s.*

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PROUD TO BE AN AMERICAN



by Elizabeth Wharry

My siblings and I all held dual citizenships with our parents' home countries. Dad was born in international waters as his parents and siblings made their way here from Ireland. Mother's parents left Hungary shortly after my mother was born.

All 4 grandparents swore their allegiance to America when our parents were still in their teens. Our parents met several years later.

In order to become a full citizen, I had to give up my dual citizenships. That meant living in Ireland and Hungary for 3 months each. I can honestly say that my relatives in Ireland showed me what "cead mile failte" meant. 100,000 welcomes. My Hungarian relatives were a bit more guarded. They were still welcoming. Despite the beautiful scenery, and the hospitality, my heart was in America.

I went overseas in the late 70s. Hungary was under communism, and there was still political unrest in Ireland.

When I got home from each country, I knelt in grateful prayer. There was so much I had taken for granted here! It felt luxurious to walk through the grocery store, and see shelves well stocked with several brands of so many items. Being able to walk into church and hear the sermon spoken so freely brought me to tears. Gathering with friends, and not having to choose my words carefully felt liberating. Thanksgiving was overwhelming. Seeing the bounty and volume of food was intoxicating. When asked what I was grateful for, I had no words. It was incredible just to be reunited with my family.

Am I proud to be an American? Despite her imperfections, she represents FREEDOM! The freedom to speak up, the freedom to worship as I believe. The simplest freedom to choose what brand and type of peanut butter I want. And all because of our veterans, active military and the families behind the line.

To these folks, THANK YOU! Happy July 4th!



Old Huntsville Magazine and Old Town Historic District wishes you a happy 4th of July!
We Honor our Veterans and Thank Them for Our Freedom.