



No. 391

September 2025



Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

HUNTSVILLE'S BORDELLOS



***Also in this issue:* The Day the Music Died; Your Feral Cats; The Bowmans, Putting their Stamp on Huntsville; Power of Pause; Revenge of Frank Gurley; Spanish Bar Cake; Old Town Band; Tippy Drink Recipes; Pet Tips and much much more!**

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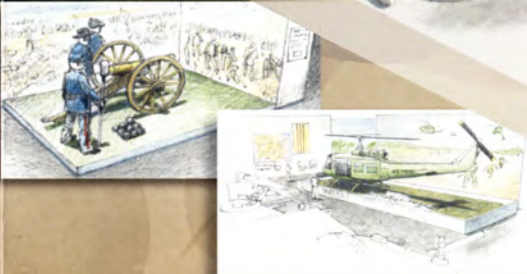
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Huntsville's Bordellos

by Kay Cornelius

From its beginnings as a frontier town in the early 1800s, Huntsville, Alabama has always attracted many different kinds of people from a wide variety of places. Most, if not all, no doubt arrived in town with hopes and expectations that in Huntsville they would be free to make or add to their fortunes. While some failed and left in disappointment, many others stayed, succeeded and settled down to become civic minded citizens.

Over the years many of Huntsville's most successful entrepreneurs have generously contributed to the betterment of the growing city. One of the most unusual of these donors and certainly the most colorful, was a woman named Mollie Teal, who in the latter part of the nineteenth century made her mark as the operator of the

largest and most successful bordello in town.

Before her death, the sporting house that she had run for a number of years was willed as a gift to Huntsville. The building then became the Huntsville City Infirmary, predecessor of the present Huntsville Hospital.

Very little is known about Mollie Teal's early life. According to her tombstone in Maple Hill Cemetery, she was born on August 20, 1852 and died in 1899. Her mother, Mary A. Smith, also buried in Maple Hill, died in 1872 at the age of 43. These facts suggest that either Mary Smith had followed her daughter to Huntsville or that Mollie Teal had joined her mother there at some earlier time.

Mollie may have come to Huntsville from Memphis, where newspaper accounts there mentioned that one "M. Teal" had been arrested for prostitution.

Whether she ever worked for anyone else in Huntsville isn't known, but in June of 1893 Mollie paid \$300 for a large Victorian style house at the present-day corner of St. Clair and Gallatin Streets, where she set up her business. Less than a year later she was able to mortgage the house for \$1,900, a note which she later repaid in full.

Mollie's bordello is said to have resembled a boarding

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house, with many rooms opening from a central hallway.

She wasn't the only madam in town, but with as many as fifteen to twenty girls housed there, hers was the largest operation and reputedly the most popular.

Mollie's establishment included a still in the back yard and the sale of her home brew may have further contributed to her financial success. Pictures exist of the house, but none of Mollie.

Older people in the community who remembered seeing her, reported that Mollie Teal made a most attractive appearance and dressed in the latest fashion when she went out. No doubt she wore the wasp waisted, heavy bosomed styles of the time— leg-horn-sleeved dresses with bustles and perhaps trains, sometimes with a feather or fur boa around her neck. Her costume would be completed by a large felt or straw hat, usually decorated with flowers or feathers and probably tilted at an angle. Mollie Teal habitually took an afternoon ride about town in her elegant black Victoria carriage daintily holding a parasol to her shoulder.

Sometimes Mollie paraded her finely attired girls through the Huntsville streets as a form of advertisement for her establishment. The fact that they wore obvious makeup would have made their profession clear enough, but Mollie's presence also confirmed where they could be found.

One of Mollie's most famous outings occurred when she filled her Victoria carriage with some of her most attractive girls and made an unauthorized appearance in the town's Fourth of July parade. Needless to say the entourage created a sensation which was generally welcomed by the men of Huntsville, but perhaps understandably, not by their women.

Like the residents of the town's other sporting houses, Mollie's girls had regular medical checkups under a pragmatic system that privately regulated prostitution while publicly censuring it. Several times a year the local police or sheriff would dutifully raid the bordellos. These shows of official outrage served to appease the segments of the community who spoke out

against the operation of the bordellos, but they had other benefits as well. The raids also netted fines, fees and other legal charges for the city coffers. In addition, the authorities were able to make sure that any girl who might need a health check would receive it before being released from jail.

One of the most often told stories about these sporadic raids concerns a time that Huntsville's volunteer fire department was called to fight a blaze in one of the local bawdy houses. The firemen quickly put out the fire before much damage had been done, but they made no haste to leave the scene, "lest the flames should erupt again."

While the firemen were still on the premises the police descended on the house in one of their routine raids and arrested them all. The volunteers then resigned their fire fighting posts in protest, leaving the city without fire protection for a while.

Apparently houses like Mollie's never lacked for either customers or residents, but among the girls there was a steady turnover. According to the late Miss Bessie Russell, a number of Mollie Teal's and the other madams' girls managed to leave their



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Anon

chosen profession and marry into Huntsville families. Such instances horrified the "good people" of the town. They might grudgingly tolerate the presence of Mollie's business as a necessary evil, but they expected its practitioners to keep away from the rest of the townspeople.

Others of the girls probably grew restless and moved on, perhaps in search of whatever elusive dreams had brought them here in the first place. However, Mollie Teal herself stayed on in Huntsville and continued to prosper over the years, acquiring real and personal property, jewelry and cash.

In 1898 at the age of 47, perhaps having some premonition that she wouldn't live much longer, Mollie made out her Last Will and Testament.

Although Mollie Teal had relatives, perhaps some who were even then living in Huntsville, she left nothing to them in her will. The immediate beneficiary of Mollie's property was a woman named Mollie Greenleaf, who could have been her personal friend, housekeeper or loyal servant.

After the usual request that her "Just debts and funeral expenses" should be paid, the second clause of Mollie Teal's will stated that she wished to give Mollie Greenleaf during her lifetime "my house and lot, said lot occupied by me now as a residence... together with all household and kitchen furniture."

Another clause specified that at the death of Mollie Greenleaf, "it is my will that the city of Huntsville accept said house and lot for the use and benefit of the public schools or for a city hospital, as the city authorities may elect and the household and kitchen furniture be sold for cash and the proceeds be

used towards buying a library for use of said public schools." Then Mollie requested that "all my other personal property be sold for cash by my executors and the proceeds to be donated to the public schools."

No one will ever know for certain why Mollie Teal chose to leave anything to the town in which she had lived for so many years. One story quotes Mollie as saying on her deathbed, "I've done much to ruin the young men of Huntsville. Now I want to help." However, it is debatable whether Mollie ever felt any such pangs of conscience or remorse about her contribution to the city's morals.

Mollie Teal died only a year after her will had been written and apparently Mollie Greenleaf passed on to her reward only a year or two afterward. At any rate, before any of Mollie Teal's property could be disposed of under the terms of her will, it was challenged in court by "John W. Smith, et al" claiming to be Mollie Teal's "heirs at law and next of kin."

In a tangled web of legal

suits, the Smiths claimed in Chancery Court that Mollie Teal's bequest to the "City of Huntsville" was void because it should have been addressed to, "The Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Huntsville."

When the plaintiffs (the Smiths) won their case, the defendants (the city of Huntsville) appealed and the decision was reversed by the Alabama Supreme Court in a ruling made February 28, 1903. However, the Smiths made one more attempt to gain some benefit from Mollie's estate by filing an Application for Rehearing. They argued that since the money in the bank was not specifically mentioned, it should not go to the city of Huntsville.

In an opinion dated July 9, 1903, the Alabama Supreme Court ruled that the heirs were entitled to the money Mollie Teal had on hand at the time of her death, which was deposited in two banks in Huntsville.

Presumably the proceeds from the sale of her other per-



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sonal property would, however, still be given to the city as Mollie Teal had designated in her will.

On August 5, 1903, the Huntsville Daily Mercury quoted City Attorney Murphy as reporting that the contest of the will of the late Mollie Teal had been settled and the city was to get Mollie Teal's house and property.

The gentlemen who ran the city of Huntsville now had Mollie Teal's house and lot, but they found themselves at a loss to know what to do with it. Mollie's primary request, that the property be used as a school and that the proceeds from her personal goods be used to supply a library for the same, could not be honored.

The citizens of Huntsville might have been able to tolerate Mollie Teal's presence and profession in her lifetime, but even to think of having their children going to school in or checking out books from a building that had been a bordello too far exceeded the bounds of propriety to be considered. Mollie's will had specified that the city was to get the house for use "of the public schools, or a city hospital." As such, it could not legally be sold.

Into this dilemma stepped some doctors' wives and other civic minded women who had long advocated the establishment of a place of treatment for the sick in the city of Huntsville. Since such a use as that not only met the legal terms of Mollie Teal's will, but also filled a genuine need, the city fathers decided that the property she had willed to Huntsville should be utilized as a hospital.

The large house with the shady past was then extensively remodeled and opened for use in 1904 as the "Huntsville City Infirmary." In addition to being Huntsville's first hospital, it also housed a school of nursing. Both remained in operation until 1926, when Huntsville Hospital opened.

Throughout the years, the Huntsville City Infirmary's occupants were quite aware of its for-

mer history. A woman who trained at the school of nursing in the building recalled that the front screen door would sometimes slam and hook itself shut, at which time it would jokingly be said that "Miss Mollie" had locked the door and was "checking on the customers."

After Huntsville Hospital opened, the infirmary building was sold and soon fell upon hard times. Becoming ever more dilapidated, the building in turn saw use as a cheap boarding house, a "shot house," and it is said, eventually reverted to its original purpose although not in a manner that Miss Mollie would have tolerated or approved of in her day, before it eventually burned.

Although Mollie Teal has been gone many years, tales about her still persist and she has never been completely forgotten. Even to this day, her grave, located near the Confederate soldiers' section of Maple Hill Cemetery, is periodically decorated with fresh flowers.

Who brings them no one knows. Perhaps it is someone who thinks that Mollie Teal should be thanked in some small way for adding a splash of color to Huntsville during her lifetime and then giving part of the city's wealth back after her death.

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News Heard in 1899



- A large crowd participated in the supposedly mad dog chase near the jail last evening. After one of the officers had shot the canine twice and failed to put it out of its misery, it was chased to the suburbs and some younger men killed it.

- Mayor Moore will issue a proclamation forbidding the shooting of fireworks of any description on the streets until after the holidays.

- All of the new hose for the Fire Department has arrived and the only thing now lacking is the chemical engine which is expected the early part of January. The fire laddies are in their new quarters and are preparing for any fires that may occur.

- The completion of the Jewish Synagogue is close at hand and when completed, it will be one of the prettiest church edifices in the south.

- The beautiful residence of Mr. J. N. Mazza being erected on Randolph Street will soon be completed.

- A new industry for the city has been secured for North Huntsville through the efforts of Mr. W. S. Wells. It is a hoop and barrel factory to be established by Messrs. S. H. Allen & Co., and will employ about twenty-five hands.

Chickens are the only animal you eat before they are born and after they die.

- The \$1000 street roller which was purchased some time ago to put the finishing touches on streets after crushed rock had been spread will finally be used on the public thoroughfares.

- The rainy season has come and caught the approaches to the City School in a very bad condition. Our city ought to take more pride in its schools.

- What has become of the beautiful fountains that were supposed to be placed in the park at Southern Depot?

- The interior of W. R. Rison & Co.'s bank is undergoing a thorough repair and is taking on a new coat of paint.

- Supt. Hamlet of the water works says it will be only a short while and the new pumping station will be ready for operation.

- A new roof is being put on the J. H. Crocker dry goods house at the corner of Holmes and Jefferson Streets.

- The matter of securing a training school for boys for this city will come up before the Huntsville Chamber of Commerce this evening for definite action. A great deal of interest has been indicated on this subject.

- Clarence Little, farmer of Paint Rock Valley, was shot and killed by John Hinshaw, his brother-in-law. Hinshaw married Little's sister a while ago, separated soon after and it was found that Little had been living with another woman. The shooting occurred at the Southern Depot.



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A WALK IN THE WOODS WITH GRANDMA

by Don Wynn

"Hey Scooter"

It's just after breakfast, on the last day of my summer visit with Grandma and I hear her calling me from down the hall.

"Hey Scooter, get your boots on and come with me, I want to take a walk before it gets too hot!" she says. "Hurry up now."

Scooter is a nickname that she gave me when I was a baby, before I could even walk. She has given everyone in our family a nickname of one sort or another. She gave my dad one when he was just a baby too. She gave my Mom her nickname when my Dad first introduced her to the family. Mom's name is Emma but to Grandma, she is just "M". Simple but personal at the same time.

Grandma has always said that family is more than blood, it's people with shared blood but it's friends too. It's a group of people who add strength and purpose to life. It's people who you can't imagine living without.

Grandma says that nicknames are inside names, inside the family names. My nickname is Scooter but my "outside the family name" is Jason.

I pull on my boots and head down the hall knowing that it is futile to resist. If Grandma wants to take a walk, then we are going to take a walk.

As I round the corner into the kitchen, Grandma is already standing near the back door, ready to begin our walk. She has her hiking stick in her hand and is clearly ready to go.

"Don't you just love the smells and sounds in the woods in the early morning?" she says with strength and purpose in her voice.

She pushes the screen door open, crosses the porch and goes down the steps into the backyard. She is already striding down the path that leads into the woods behind her house before I can catch up. We walk side by side, stride for stride for a long time before Grandma asks. "Do you remember our walks in the woods?" "Sure, I do." I say. "You have taught me so much on our walks." "For example, I

know that tree over there is a flowering, pink dogwood, and the tree next to it is a mighty oak. Acorns feed the squirrels that always seem to be playing in this very spot. See them, they are just over there?"

"A walk in the woods is a lot more than just a walk." She says. "It's really a gift that we give one another. I give you a little bit of me and you give me a little bit of you. I treasure our time together. These walks are part of what makes us family."

I know she is right. It's true but I have never even thought about it like that. Our walks are special and I think I have always known it.

"Did you take walks in the woods with Dad?" I asked.

"Sure I did but we went fishing too. We spent time together in lots of different ways. Togetherness is the gift, maybe the most important gift of all. Any time we spend together like this is the gift I was talking about."

**"If the enemy is in range,
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Grandma can be very deep at times. She has wisdom and grace and has a deep understanding of life and of the things that are important. She can separate the trivial from the vital. Once she explains some aspect of life, it makes perfect sense and seems almost ordained by God, herself.

She has taught me to identify insects, flowers, trees and animals. She has helped me hear the music of the woods and smell the perfume of nature. She has taught me the connectedness of things in the woods and by extension, the links between things in life.

For a while, we walk along in silence, not talking but still sharing the moment. For this moment among all the moments that comprise our lives, my grandmother and I are a single person.

Suddenly, she stops and holds out her arm in front of me. "Do you see that?" she says as she points to the trail ahead of us.

Up ahead, there is a small snake, sunning itself in a sandy spot in the middle of the trail. She shushes me and moves slowly toward the snake, keeping her arm up against my chest. "Do you remember what kind of snake that is?" she asks me quietly.

"Sure, it looks like a young Eastern Kingsnake."

"That's exactly right. What do you know about king snakes?"

"Well, they are 'good' snakes. They are not poisonous. They eat rats and other rodents. They also eat other snakes, even poisonous ones. They're our friends."

"That's right. You are a good student" she says. I am happy because I know I have pleased my grandma.

"Watch this." she says as she begins to stoop. She slowly gets down onto the ground on all fours and begins to inch toward the snake. The snake doesn't seem concerned at all. It just lays there, motionless. I am sure it is aware, but it is just unconcerned.

She pushes her right hand toward the snake with her palm flat on the ground, closer and closer until her fingertips are just a few inches in front of the snake's head. Then she rolls her hand, so her palm is up. The snake still doesn't move.

After a few moments, she pushes her hand ever closer to the snake's head. Just before they touch, the snake finally moves. The movement is slight, but it is also deliberate. The snake raises its head so that Grandma can slide her hand under it. Grandma continues to slide her hand under the snake's body until she can raise her arm. She doesn't grab the snake. She just lets it rest on her arm like it was the branch of a tree.

Grandma slowly stands with the snake on her arm. "You are a pretty girl." She whispers to the snake as she begins to caress it, sliding her hands along its body. The snake is perfectly happy to be on Grandma's arm and slides, gracefully through her hands.

"You can touch it." She says. "But be respectful and move slowly."

I reach out slowly and the snake accepts my touch. Over a few minutes, Grandma transfers the snake to my arm and slowly backs away, leaving me holding it in the bright morning sun.

After a few minutes, she says "You can do almost anything if you have respect for nature and a little patience."

She takes the snake from me and kneels, dropping her hand to the sandy spot where we first saw the snake. On cue, the snake slides off grandma's arm back onto the ground.

Grandma stands and we continue our walk in the woods.

(Note from the writer: This story is fiction but based upon a real event that took place in the Everglades)



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Early VBCC Concert Remembered - Styx as a Warmup Band



by David C. Glover

It may be hard to believe that 49 years ago, Styx came to Huntsville as a warmup band as part of a 3-band lineup consisting of Wet Willie, Styx and Hydra. This odd concert lineup was probably due to Wet Willie being billed as a southern rock band and the promoters expecting a larger southern crowd in attendance than if Styx was the headliner act. Wet Willie, on the strength of their 1974 top 10 hit "Keep on Smiling", had been touring primarily as a warmup act to other well-known headline bands. Prior to the trip to Huntsville, Wet Willie appeared as the warmup act for Lynyrd Skynyrd in Knoxville on January 16, 1976.

Styx appeared with Bachman Turner Overdrive (BTO) and Trooper in Omaha, Nebraska on Sunday, January 25, 1976, just before coming to Huntsville. Styx was touring to support their newly released "Equinox" album from December 1975. This album eventually sold more than 500,000 copies.

Every band has its starting point and some struggle for years before becoming a headline act while others never make it to prominence. The same was true with Styx. The group was founded in 1972 and released 5 studio albums with only one hit song "Lady" by the beginning of 1976. At this point, Styx was still considered a warmup act; however, the band was comprised of Dennis DeYoung, James "J.Y." Young, Tommy Shaw, Chuck Panozzo and John Panozzo, the same group of musicians that were responsible

for the future success of the band.

On a Thursday night, January 29, 1976, a couple of friends and I arrived at the new Von Braun Civic Center (VBCC) in Huntsville to see the concert. The VBCC opened in March 1975, so this concert occurred in the VBCC's first full year of operation. I had no expectation that this night was going to change my life, but looking back it did. Styx quickly became my favorite rock band and I have a collection of Styx vinyl albums to prove that point.

We purchased the concert tickets at \$6 each for general admission, went directly to the arena floor, and positioned ourselves as close to the stage as we could. There were no seats, just an open arena floor for standing. The crowd was small, so we were able to get close to the stage.

Hydra was the first band to perform, although they were not on the advertised venue. The band played southern rock and originated in Atlanta, Georgia. Hydra's performance was good and loud; however, the set was not memorable to me. Hydra had a short career, releasing 3 studio albums producing no top 40 hits. The band broke up in 1977. This band is now considered an obscure southern rock band from the 1970's worth a listen. Hydra simply did not receive the backing of the record label and was overshadowed by other southern rock bands of the day.

The next band was Styx from Chicago, Illinois. They were announced as the "Little Band from Chicago." The band had a completely different sound (not southern rock) and stage presence than Hydra.

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Styx had just added a new member, Tommy Shaw, who was from Montgomery, Alabama. He had joined the band in late December 1975, so this concert was among the first as a member of Styx. Most of the set mix came from the band's "Equinox" album.

Styx energized the crowd with their loud sound and melodic harmonies, just as a good warmup band should do. At the end of the set, Styx walked off the stage only to return for an encore as the crowd demanded. What a great show it was. I had no doubt in my mind that Styx would become one of the greatest bands ever!

Wet Willie, a band from Mobile, Alabama, the headline act, was the last to perform. Because of the 2 warmup bands and the Styx's encore, Wet Willie started late that night around 11 pm. As Wet Willie started their musical set, it seemed as though all the energy was sucked out of the VBCC. The crowd started booing, many individuals began to leave, and most did not like Wet Willie's music at all. Due to the late time and poor music (in my opinion), my friends and I left the event before Wet Willie completed their act. What a disappointment the Wet Willie band was.

The next day, Friday, January 30, 1976, a concert review by Richard Lee Morrison was published in the Huntsville Times. I could not believe what I was reading in the newspaper. Was Richard at the same concert I attended?

Richard's headline was "'Wet Willie and Company Got Message Across'" while stating Styx as "so eclectic that they have no real identity. Their songs simply have no conceptual substance and Dennis DeYoung's vocals are often overwrought."

On January 31, 1976, Foghat (headliner) and warmup bands Styx and Head East performed in Shreveport, Louisiana. The Shreveport Journal newspaper review for that event on declared, "Styx Steals Three-Band Concert."

Styx received two significantly different reviews in just a couple of days. I strongly disagreed with Richard's review and looking back on it now, which band had more success, Wet Willie or Styx? The answer is Styx by a long shot.

In April 1979, I attended a free Wet Willie concert at Jacksonville State University with the same outcome. I did not enjoy them once again. I guess Wet Willie is just not my cup of tea. However, I have attended several more Styx concerts through the years and have deeply enjoyed their performances.

For many music fans of the 1970s and 1980s, Styx was known as one of the greatest bands of the era. The group has remained together with a mixture of different musicians for more than 50 years. The group sold millions of albums and released numerous top 40 singles.

My friends and I were among the few thousand people in the Huntsville area to see Styx as a warmup band just months before the band's climb to superstar status.

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September does mean cooler days are on the way, not that there won't be some heat left. Wow, what a hot summer with heat indexes often well into the hundreds. I know all the outdoor workers will be glad. I've heard of many cases of heat exhaustion and you don't bounce back in a day.

We've had to have AC service twice this summer, and even when it's working properly, sometimes in the heat of the day, it struggles to get below 78. For many units, a 20-degree cooling difference from outside to inside air is max.

Labor Day was established in 1894 to recognize all the contributions of the labor in our country and to have a holiday to relax. It's early this year on the 1st and may be over by the time you read this. If you got it early, a reminder that the University of Alabama's first football game is Saturday, August 30th, at 2:30 on ABC against the Florida Seminoles in Tallahassee.

Great time to either 'tail-gate' in Florida, or for a weekend bar-b-que of ribs with baked beans, potato salad and cold drinks to help "Roll Tide."

Auburn's playing against Baylor in

Waco, TX on Friday, August 29th at 7:00 pm.

Kids are long since back in school. It seems to get earlier each year. When I was in grade school, it was always the Tuesday after Labor Day weekend. Times do change.

Leaves are already starting to fall off some trees, and before long, you'll have them filling your gutters. I just had to have wood replaced on my house and have it all painted because I didn't keep the gutters clean and it rotted the wood. Remember them when you rake or blow your yard.

I just checked our utility closet in the carport, and the big leaf rake seems to be missing. It's amazing with various yard help hired last year, several important tools were either left in the yard, or mistakenly taken, so I've got to re-supply the shed.

It's a while until peak leaf color time, anywhere from the second week in October to the first week in November, and Monte Sano always starts a bit earlier.

As Grandma continues to age, just like we all do, I remember that saying that "Life is like a roll of bathroom tissue—the less there is left—the faster it goes."

See you next month, if I don't blink my eyes too fast.



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The Baileys of Bailey Cove

by Iolanda Hicks and the Bailey Sisters, Tina and Winnie

I met two sisters, not too long ago, by the names of Tina (Katrina) and Winnie. I found that both were so special and unique. One of the hobbies they share is woodcarving. These ladies are so talented in their craft. If you can catch the North Alabama Woodcarvers' Association Show in November, held this year at Trinity Methodist Church, you can see their wonderful creations!

My David introduced me to the ladies and told me that their great grandfather was Joseph Franklin Bailey, a settler, and the patriarch of the Bailey Cove Bailey family. A little added tidbit is that history has also recorded that Mr. Bailey served as a Day Policeman in Huntsville, during his latter years, beginning in 1859.

When Joseph came to what is known today as the Jones Valley area, close to the mid 1800's, he met Frances Maria Flippo. They married on August 12th, 1841 and had eight sons, all born in Madison County. One of those boys was Winnie and Tina's grandfather, Lewis Winston, Sr.

It was Lewis Winston, after marrying Georgia native Mary M. McCay in 1868, who bought 287 acres of land in 1879. This land was east of the original Four Mile Post Road. The names Bailey Cove and Bailey Cove Road date back to this purchase by this young Bailey couple.

The original Four Mile Post Road, in the beginnings of its use, was a continuation of the Bailey Cove Road of today. Settlers and traders used the route during earlier times, when traveling from the East to the Huntsville area.

Winnie and Tina grew up around the 5 Points area in Huntsville. Their home was near the 'then' home of someone I was not familiar with, when Winnie spoke of him: Harry Rhett Townes. Harry caught the acting bug in college and became a Hollywood actor and if you Google the name, you will recognize his face as I did. I never placed Harry as being born here. He died in Huntsville in 2001 at the age of 86 and was laid to rest at Maple Hill.

So much history at our fingertips and such interesting facts exist in Madison County. We just need to take time to do a little research! It was the girls' mother (Christine) who became interested in researching the family's ancestry and history. She found out, not too far into her research, that Joseph and other members of the family were also buried not far away, in Maple Hill Cemetery. In fact, there are over 170 Baileys found in the Maple Hill Cemetery, several are descendants of Joseph and the original Bailey Cove settlers.




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Winston Lewis Bailey, son of Lewis Winston Sr. and the girls' Dad, married Christine Page in 1946. They met when Winston was stationed at Ft. Bragg, NC during WWII and Christine was packing parachutes at the base. They married in SC on the way back to Alabama and settled in Bailey Cove in the old home place, which was on Blevins Gap Road. They eventually moved into Huntsville and had two girls.

Katrina grew up, worked for the government at Redstone Arsenal, got married and had one child. Winnie graduated from University of Alabama, then accepted a job with the city of Huntsville as a police officer, eventually reaching the rank of Lieutenant.

She worked for the City for 30 plus years before retiring.

The girls' Dad served in the military during WWII, eventually passing in 2001 at the age of 89. Winston was a local small business owner, establishing Bailey's Tackle Shop at a time when there were no other such businesses in Huntsville. He owned and ran the business for many years until his retirement in the late 1980s.

Christine, their mom, worked in missile systems sales at Redstone Arsenal until her retirement in 1975. She died in 2013 at the age of 90, leaving her daughters, one granddaughter and a few great grandchildren as a continuing legacy of these Bailey Cove settlers!

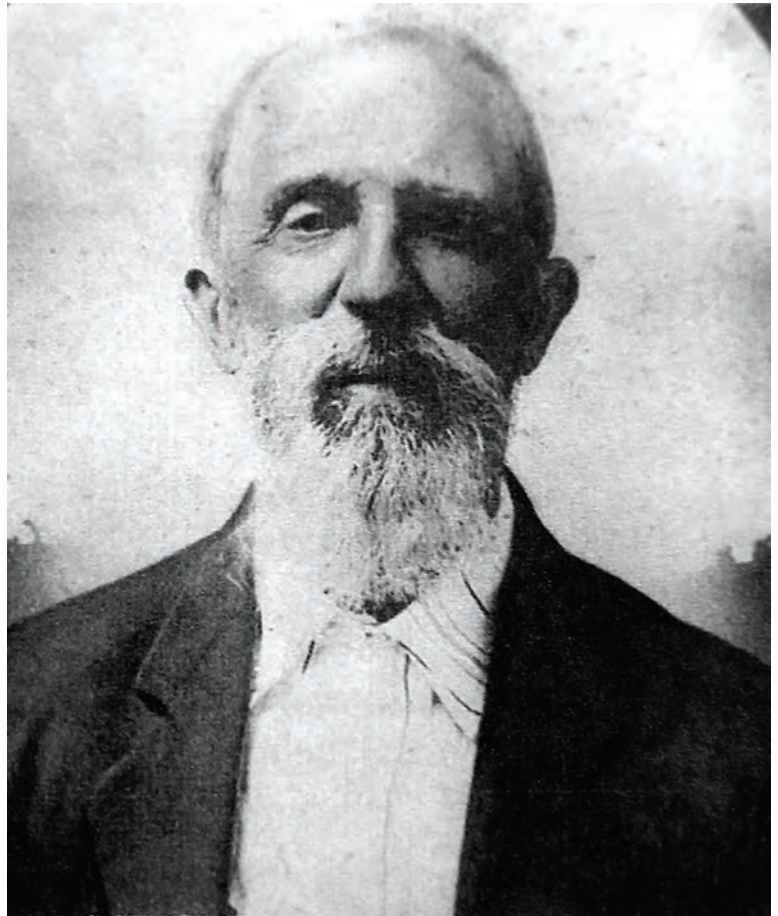
More could be written about this one small segment of Madison County's history, but space is limited. As I mentioned earlier in this article, do your research. You will be awed at what you can find.

I leave you with a quote from one of my favorites, Maya Angelou:

"We are braver and wiser because they existed, those strong women and strong men...We are who we are because they were WHO they were."

"One of life's greatest mysteries is how the boy who wasn't good enough to marry your daughter can be the father of the smartest grandchild in the world."

Jewish Proverb



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Spanish Bar Cake



by Bill Alkire (1965)

I was navigating through my memories closet recently; I do that on occasion. Something or someone will awaken in me a need to start wandering on the backroads of my memories searching for something or start me researching for an answer.

I had the great fortune to work part-time for A&P Food Stores twice in my lifetime. The first was in high school, and a year after I graduated. It was the summer before I turned sixteen and until I entered the U.S. Army at eighteen.

The second time was a full-time position while attending the College of William & Mary from January 1964 until 1966 and part-time then until 1968. I will not bore you with a chronological rendering of my A&P Food Store career. Instead, I want to talk about something that I felt was of great significance. One thing stands out in all those years. I can still think fondly of its existence. What I am referring to is the Jane Parker Spanish Bar Cake.

For those who do not remember or have never savored its aroma or tasted its spicy flavor, this story will mean nothing to you. For that I am sorry! A&P Food Stores sold the Spanish Bar Cake under their Jane Parker label. Having worked for A&P Food Stores for eight years of my life, I can testify how I enjoyed this marvelous little cake. The cake was not large. It was about the size of a small loaf pan.

The cake was heavily spiced, with just a whiff of molasses and gingerbread in texture. It was quite moist with an abundance of plump raisins. You could smell the cloves, cinnamon, nutmeg and other spices from its aroma. The cake was a two-layer design. The frosting was also delectable, existing between the layers and spread on the top. This combination was not overly sweet but gave a nearly perfect balance between the two. The moist spicy cake and plump raisins can only be described as "awesome."

Hot tea, a cup of coffee, or a glass of cold milk make this a treat beyond comparison. Just writing about the Jane Parker Spanish Bar Cake brings back powerful memories from my teen years to adult. I salivate just writing about this delicious treat.

I read there is an attempt to bring the Spanish Bar Cake back in stores. Cherished memories have been taken from my closet and written down here for your enjoyment. I hope it does come to market - it can make memories for you.

I ordered one online - it came in a box beat up in the mail. The cake was fine. Sorry I cannot share - I ate the whole thing! What did you expect?



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JUDGE YE NOT!

by Elizabeth Wharry



Growing up in Mentor, we had a large family in our parish. Dan and his wife Mary had 5 or 6 children under the age of 12. Mary was a housewife and mother. She also took in ironing and sewing, as she was quite the seamstress. Their goal was to own a gas station. Most of the parish was aware of their goal.

Dan worked two jobs. He worked third shift at two different factories. One was his regular job, and the other was on the weekends as a fill in for vacations and absenteeism. Dan could be seen daily at 8 am Mass. He would come in hot, tired and smelling like a factory. He always sat in the back of the church.

On Sundays, he would duck out right after Communion. He would hurry home and help Mary get their children ready for a later Mass. Mary would bring their brood. Every one of them sat quietly. The older ones helped with the younger ones.

There was a group of ladies who were offended by Dan coming to daily Mass. I call this type the "mink coat and country club" folks.

"America is a country that produces citizens who will cross the ocean to fight for democracy, but won't cross the street to vote."

Bill Vaughn

One day, these ladies took it upon themselves to visit the pastor. They voiced their objections about Dan. The pastor said there wasn't anything he could or would do about Dan. He had every right to be there.

The pastor also advised these ladies to stop criticizing Dan and Mary.

Well, they went off in a huff! These ladies took it upon themselves to visit the bishop. They made their appointment. The cathedral is in downtown. They arrived at their appointed time. They were dressed in their finest mink stoles, best jewelry and Sunday dresses.

The bishop graciously received them. They voiced their complaint against the pastor. The bishop nodded, saying he was aware they were unhappy. The ladies voiced their complaints against Dan. The bishop listened courteously and thoughtfully. He then leaned back in his chair, and tented his hands in front of his face.

He was deep in thought. When the ladies started to get uncomfortable and exchange looks, the bishop sat upright. The only thing he said was, "I wasn't aware that God had a dress code."

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Heard On the Street

by **Cathey Carney**



Well we actually had two winners for the hidden screwdriver in the August issue. It was on p. 40 of that issue on the Metro Painting ad, to the right of the porch on the home picture. See it now? I thought I had really hidden it well but had many calls. In fact the first two calls were a tie so they both won a year's subscription. They are **Joe Layne** of Gurley. Joe retired after 30 years working with Huntsville Utilities, 5 years ago. We Love Huntsville Utility workers who sometimes work around the clock if we have storm damage. Congratulations to you Joe!

Then we had **Betty Smith** of Gurley who grew up in west Huntsville and is proud to say she married a policeman! Her sweet daughter is **Sherry Williams** and loves her mom dearly. Congratulations to you Betty!

Here is a short note from one of our long-time readers, **Willie Weaver**:

"Bill Alkire's 'Ode to Ginger Ale', in OHM August 2025, brought back a memory from my childhood. We lived for a while (May 1946 to April 1948) in Tarrant City, northeast of downtown Birmingham. We did some of our shopping in downtown Birmingham. There was a large animated billboard on top of a tall build-

ing a couple of blocks north of 3rd Avenue on 26th Street. There must have been thousands of individual lights which could be switched on and off to form images in motion."

"It was an advertisement for Buffalo Rock Ginger Ale. It would go dark for a moment and then light up showing a large bottle filled with a golden liquid sitting beside a large glass tumbler. Then an invisible hand would lift the bottle and begin pouring the liquid into the tumbler. As the liquid rose in the tumbler, a sparkly froth would form on top and small bubbles could be seen sparkling above the tumbler. The empty bottle was set down and the image would display for a while, go dark for a moment, and then begin again."

"After seeing that for the first time, my sister and I insisted on trying ginger ale. I still like ginger ale but most of what on the market today uses imitation flavoring. Sure would like to find some good ole Buffalo Rock Ginger Ale."

Let's find that ginger ale!

My daughter **Steph Troup** out of Murfreesboro came up with an interesting idea to keep mosquitos from biting you while you're outdoors. She used Jergens Dry Skin Moisturizer in Cherry Almond, did some gardening and had no bites! Try it and see if it works for you. We've all heard about

Avon's Skin So Soft but this may work even better.

We couldn't forget a very important anniversary - **Bill and Tanjie Kling** celebrated their 32nd wedding anniversary on July 31st! There's alot of love in those years and we hope you had a beautiful day to remember!

Cletus and Judy Harper of Huntsville love getting their magazines in the mail and wanted to write to tell us that. We thank you for that and with luck we'll be doing this for another 50 years!

Barb Eyestone of Madison has a birthday on September 17 and we want to wish her the happiest of birthdays. We are hoping you make it the party of the decade! Happy birthday to a beautiful lady and dear friend.

Another important birthday is September 28 for **Sam Keith**. When Big Spring Jam came to Huntsville for so many years it was always the same time as Sam's birthday. A few times his birthday may have been overshadowed by folks like **Willie Nelson** and **Taylor Swift** but not too often! Wishing you everything good on this birthday and many more!

I love to snack at night and found a healthy one, thanks to **Brenda Gantt** of Andalusia, AL. Take a good crisp apple (I love Honeycrisp) and cut it into small wedges, skin on. In a small bowl mix about 1/4 cup crunchy (or

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smooth, your choice) peanut butter with maybe a tablespoon of honey, or more to taste. Sprinkle the apple slices with ground cinnamon and dip your apples into the peanut butter mixture. Sweet and crunchy and filling!

We lost a true Southern lady on August 4th. **Peggy Simpson Guinn** passed away peacefully at her home on Monday, August 4, 2025. She was born on January 21, 1941 in Henagar, Alabama, the youngest of eleven children, alongside her twin sister, **Patty**. Peggy's mother passed away when she was just six months old, and she was lovingly raised by her father and older siblings.

Peggy had a servant's heart and a can-do attitude. Her father passed away shortly after her and her twin's high school graduation, so Peggy changed her college plans to work the night shift as a telephone operator.

It was there Peggy met her first husband, **Fred Simpson**, at a cafe in Birmingham during one of these shifts. She and Fred married in 1961, moved to Nashville so Fred could attend law school, and settled in Huntsville in 1964. They remained married until his death in 2014.

Peggy supported Fred's legal career by ensuring they always had income to fall back on, and she built a successful 40-year career in real estate. However, her proudest achievement in life was her title as Mom. She and Fred had 3 children, **Bryan, Cindy, and Derek**.

In 2023, Peggy found love again and married **Gerald Guinn**. They spent the last two years of her life together in happiness and companionship.

Peggy was a devoted member of Whitesburg Baptist Church. You could regularly find her taking a meal to a family in need. She always ensured her loved ones were well fed and could whip up any meal within a moment's notice. One of her greatest joys was preparing and hosting Sunday lunch for her entire family every week (20 people at times!), a tradition she upheld for decades.

In addition to Fred, Peggy was preceded in death by all ten of her siblings and their spouses.

She is survived by her beloved husband, **Gerald Guinn**; her children, **Bryan Simpson (Ashli Williams)**, **Cindy Howard (Tim)**, and **Derek Simpson (Shannon)**; seven grandchildren, **Betsy Germano (Jamie)**, **Sally Ham (Mi-**

chael), **Charlie Howard (Emily)**, **Sam Howard**, **Kate Simpson**, **Jane Simpson** and **Will Simpson**; five great-grandchildren; and countless nieces, nephews and cousins that she loved so dearly. Peggy was a beautiful lady who will be so missed.

We wanted to send a special hello to **Glenda** and **Jim Luna** of Huntsville, who wrote recently to tell us how much they love our area and our history! We appreciate you!

I have hidden a super **tiny candle** within this issue - if you find it and are the first to call, you win a year's subscription to Old Huntsville. However I don't expect any calls, it's really tiny.

Another special call was one with **Hoyt Harris** who lives at Brookdale in south Huntsville. He was telling me that this February 26, 2026 - he and his sweetheart **Marlyn** (not a type, that's how her name is spelled!) will have been married for 74 years! They must have gotten married as toddlers. That is some kind of record!

We lost another one of our beloved military veterans. **Clarence Clifford "Clif" Corum, Jr.** of Huntsville, AL, passed away August 8, 2025 at the age of 100. He was born in Antlers, OK to **Clarence Clifford Corum, Sr** and **Mary Elizabeth Massey Corum**. He was preceded in death by his parents; his wife of 74 years, **Faye Chenault Corum**; his son, **Steve Van Corum**; and his brother, **Frank Massey Corum**.

Survivors include his daughter, **Debbie Patterson (Kell)**; daughter-in-law, **Debbie Corum**; grandchildren, **Travis Corum (Mary)**, **Brianna Mosley (Chad)**, **Kelly Johnson (Brett)**, and **Daniel Patterson (Susan)**; 11 great-grandchildren; sister, **Mary Andia**; sisters-in-law, **Betty Bunch** and **Jo Chenault**; and several nieces and nephews.

He had a dear friend who wants to write a story about this heroic vet who was wounded at the landing at Iwo Jima. This friend is **Don Cloud**. We look forward to running his story.

Mr. Corum was a combat wounded veteran, serving with the U.S. Marines in the Pacific during World War II. He participated in the capture of Iwo Jima and was awarded the Purple Heart. Clif retired from NASA at Redstone Arsenal.

Have a safe and memorable Labor Day and when you think about it, call friends and/or family that you haven't contacted in a while. It'll make them feel good and you too.

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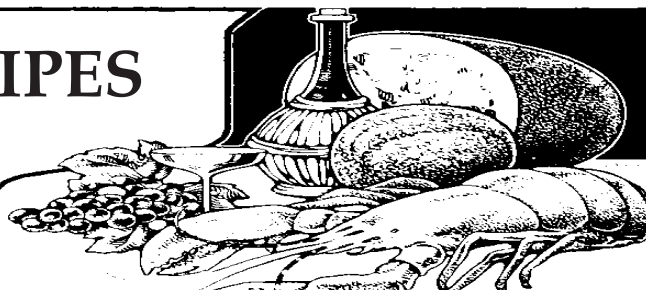
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Late Summer Fun

Blueberry Lemon Drop

2 oz. vodka
1 oz. simple syrup (stir equal parts water and sugar and let sugar dissolve)

1 oz. fresh squeezed lemon juice

10-15 blueberries

Add blueberries to cocktail shaker and muddle. Add remaining ingredients and ice and shake. Strain into a martini glass rimmed with sugar. Garnish with lemon slice (from Stephanie Troup)

Blueberry Margarita

2 oz. tequila

1 oz. simple syrup (stir equal parts water and sugar and let sugar dissolve)

1 oz. fresh squeezed lime juice

10-15 blueberries

Add blueberries to cocktail shaker and muddle.

Add remaining ingredients and ice and shake.

Strain into a small glass filled with ice and rimmed with sugar.

Garnish with lime wedge (from Stephanie Troup)

Vanilla Icebox Pie

4 egg whites

1 c. sugar

1 t. vanilla

1 c. toasted pecans, chopped

13 graham crackers, crumbled into small pieces

1 can shredded coconut

Beat the whites til stiff, add the sugar and vanilla slowly. Add the coconut, pecans, graham cracker crumbs. Pour into a buttered pan and bake for 30 minutes at 350 degrees. Chill prior to serving.

Orange Delight

1 -16 oz. cottage cheese

1 sml. box orange jello

1 - 8 oz.. Cool Whip, frozen

1 lrg. can crushed pineapple, drained

Mix all ingredients in a large glass bowl and chill before serving.

Yum Yum Cake

2 eggs

2 c. sugar

2 c. self-rising flour

2 c. crushed pineapple

Beat eggs and sugar together. Add flour and pineapple and stir well. Bake at 350 degrees for 35 minutes.

Topping:

1 c. sugar

1 stick butter

1/2 t. vanilla extract

3/4 c. milk

1 c. coconut

Mix and boil milk, butter and sugar together for 2 minutes, add the coconut. Pour over cake while still hot.

Bon Bons

1 can Eagle Brand milk

3 T. butter

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2 boxes powdered sugar
 1/2 package sweetened coconut, shredded
 2 c. nuts, chopped fine
 Mix all together, put in freezer 30-40 minutes to chill, roll into balls. Freeze balls, then dip in melted chocolate.

Mounds

1 - 14 oz.. pkg. coconut
 1/4 c. sugar
 1/4 c. melted butter
 1 can Eagle brand milk
 Mix, chill, make into small balls and arrange on a parchment covered plate. Remember that if there are any left over, these freeze beautifully.

Strawberry Slush with Zing

7 c. warm water
 1 3-oz. pkg. strawberry jello
 2 c. strong tea
 1 large can frozen lemonade
 1 large can orange juice
 1 c. sugar
 1 pint vodka
 7-Up
 Mix 1st seven ingredients together and pour in covered containers to freeze. When ready to use, put in a blender and mix with 7-Up until slushy.

Rauschfire

3 bottles dark rum
 2 bottle of bitters
 32 oz. honey
 Triple Sec, large bottle
 In a large glass bowl mix all ingredients. Stir well to dissolve the honey. With a plastic funnel pour the mix into glass bottles with cork tops. Can be stored at room temperature indefinitely. Be careful when drinking this - it's very potent!

Hot Spiced Lemonade *Especially good on those cooler nights*

1 qt. cold water
 1/2 c. sugar
 1/2 t. whole cloves
 4 cinnamon sticks
 1/2 t. allspice
 Juice of 4 lemons
 1 lemon sliced for garnish
 Boil water, sugar and spices. Simmer for 5 minutes and strain. When ready to serve, add 1 quart hot water and lemon juice. Ladle into punch cups garnished with a slice of lemon.

Chocolate Gravy

1 c. sugar
 3 T. cocoa

1 c. milk
 1/2 to 1 stick butter
 Mix sugar and cocoa, then add milk and mix well. Put in a deep pan and bring to slow boil over medium heat, being careful not to burn. Add butter and boil til it gets as thick as you want. Slather this over fresh biscuits. You'll get hooked on this, a really old Southern favorite.

Brandy Ice Cream

1 qt. ice cream, vanilla
 4 oz. Brandy
 Using your blender, blend together the ice cream and brandy and freeze. Blend it again right before you serve, and serve by layering it into elegant glasses.

Apple Crisp

1 qt. sliced apples (peeled and sweetened to taste)
 2/3 c. brown sugar
 1/2 c. plain flour
 1/2 c. regular oats
 3/4 t. cinnamon
 3/4 t. nutmeg
 1/3 stick butter
 Pour sweetened apples into a greased pan, 8" square. Mix all the other ingredients and pour over the apples. Bake for 35 minutes at 375 degrees.

Can it already be September? This summer went so fast! It's almost time for chrysanthemums but not quite yet. Garden cleanup time and cooler weather will be here soon. Come see us for beautiful and unusual plants that you will love. Good time for planting Trees and Bushes as well.

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Bowman's Enterprises, Inc. (Putting Their Stamp on Huntsville)



by John H. Tate

In 1961 with little more than hope, a dream, and a loving wife, Louis P. Bowman founded Bowman's Enterprises, Inc. in Huntsville, Alabama. Louis passed in 1992, however the company he founded is still in operation today. With son Jerry Bowman at the helm, the business is run with his mother Resa Dale Bowman (Everyone calls her Dale), along with his older sister Karen.

Jerry brought Dale in for more context to the early days of the company. It is hard to describe Dale's presence. Think of a woman who has a wealth of knowledge, an accepting presence and a very strong will. Her business acumen is wrapped in her warmth and inviting spirit. In just a couple of minutes, you could forget you are talking to a ninety-year-old woman.

In her matter-of-fact voice, Dale tells how she and

Louis met. With no sugar on it, she said, "I was going home from work one night, he saw me, and that was it."

"I was from the country, and I wanted to get out of the country. So the first guy that came along who paid a little attention to me, that was it."

"I was working at a cafeteria in Little Rock, Arkansas, and Louis was there while he was in the Army. That might not sound like a romantic beginning, but we had a long loving marriage."

Jerry's older sister, Karen, manned the shop while Jerry and Dale sat for this interview. Karen is about fifteen months older than Jerry. When Karen was a baby, Louis was stationed in England, and that is where Jerry was born.

Taking up the story, explaining his father's entrepreneurial spirit, Jerry shares, "When he was in the military, he always had a side business like making stamps and selling them, he did this his whole Army

career."

"When he was in Korea, he had a photography shop. The GIs would go out and take pictures, and he would develop the photos for them at a price. He didn't smoke, so he sold his cigarettes to the other GI's. You know, he came from nothing and had to do what he could to support his family."

According to Dale, "Louis was transferred back to the United States, to Colorado, then Wisconsin. Finally in 1961, Louis was stationed at Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Alabama."

Jerry explains how the family laid down roots in Huntsville. "Louis was 19 years, 6 months, close to twenty years in the Army, and he was ready to retire. The Army was going to send him back to Korea, and he didn't want to go. He wrote Senator Sparkman a letter asking him to please help him. He told Sparkman that he had already bought a house in Huntsville and wanted to retire here. They figured it out where he could stay here for six months, and then he had to retire."



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So now Louis was out of the Army, what was he going to do? After all, he couldn't make it on his retirement pay. According to Jerry, "He decided to make stamps, and everybody around him told him, 'You ain't gonna make any money doing that.' He knew he didn't want to work for somebody else and didn't have a lot of options."

From Army Desk to Engraving Legacy:

Reflecting on how she and Louis started the company in 1961 - after Louis retired from the Army - Dale said, "We started making rubber stamps on an old army desk in our bedroom. We got big enough that we boxed in our carport and moved the machine to the carport."

"Once business picked up enough, we rented a building off of the Parkway. In 1968 we bought our current building on Leman Ferry Road."

When Dale was asked what she thought about Louis starting a stamp company, she simply said, "I knew he was going to provide for his family, and we were in it together. If he went bankrupt, we'd go bankrupt together."

Jerry tells a funny story about their building. "When they bought this building, it was the old Sardine Club. It was out of town, and not part of Huntsville. At that time the Heart of Huntsville Mall (located north of Pinhook Creek from Dunnivant's Mall, which is where the Medical Mall is now) was the center of the city."

"We were on the outskirts of town, with the only things near here was the dog pound, and the dump. I'm not even sure the dump was there, but the old Huntsville Airport was there."

"Louis' insurance guy was JC Wade, and he said, 'I've got this building.' Louis said he couldn't afford to buy a building, but Wade said he could. There had been a fire in the kitchen, and the whole inside of the building had a lot of smoke and fire damage."

Today Bowman's Enterprises, Inc., 57 years later, is still in the same place. Many small and large businesses in the Huntsville area have done business with Bowman's. It all started with rubber stamps and has expanded to magnetic automobile signs, ADA Rotary Engraving, Laser Engraving, Acrylic displays, Aero Brand Ink.

Jerry created a supporting business, housed inside Bowman's Enterprises, known as JB Engraving. JB Engraving focuses on industrial applications and operates inside the Bowman facility, though it is a separate company.

I can't help but think that Louis would be proud of his company and family - their growth and stellar reputation.

When Jerry was younger and went to work elsewhere, people who heard his name would say, "Oh, you know how to engrave - come run this machine."

Even when that wasn't what he wanted to do.

One thing for sure, Louis' work ethic and sense of value was passed on to his family. After all, Jerry learned to hammer nails by straightening out a box of nails Louis pulled out of the walls in that burned-out building.

Jerry said that his dad did not waste money - however, he would pay top dollar for the right equipment, to do the job right. Jerry is the same as his dad, he once bought a machine that cost more than his house at the time. But it was the right machine for the job.

As we end this visit with the Bowmans, I think it is proper that Dale have the last words for the Old Huntsville Magazine readers.

Dale, what would you say to some young woman just starting a new business - by herself or with her spouse?

"Well, just be yourself. When someone asks you something, give them a truthful answer, to the best of your ability. Do what you say you are going to do, and work when you say you are going to work. If you sign up to work from 8 to 5, don't come in at 10 and leave at 4. Just do your best to treat people like you want to be treated."

Thank you Jerry and Dale for an enjoyable interview, and Karen, whom I met in the back of the shop.



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Acceptance

*by Gerald Alvis,
The Poet of Greenlawn*



I am reading a book a good friend loaned me called "Who Believed in You", and I had a chance to apply some of the principles recently.

We were headed into a restaurant after church when a young man approached me and said, "Excuse me, Sir, would you like to purchase a discount card?"

He was selling them to support a local football team. My family had already gone in; it was hot outside, but this person had been sitting in the sun, likely for some time.

When we first made eye contact, he was looking through his brow, bracing for the impact of rejection, but what got me was the determination in his eyes. So instead of saying no, I replied I would like that and tendered the \$20.00. I went beyond and asked about what team and what position he played.

It turns out that he was an inside line-backer and I commented that it must be a difficult position to play, since some huge gentlemen come bursting through that line! I asked his age and a few more questions. His posture relaxed, but it was not due to the resources we exchanged, but because of the acknowledgement and acceptance he received. He was only 16.

As I turned to go inside to rejoin my family, I said, "You are going to do well in life," and I thanked him.

During the meal, I thought about this young man and wondered whether I should have done more; could I have said something different? I admired his tenacity and perhaps saw a person I knew 50 years ago.

As we left, he was still on station, but a transformation had occurred; his countenance had changed, and he was smiling as we said goodbye.

It's nothing new, this encouragement thing and as I walked toward the car, I began thinking about those who had given me a leg up, who had inspired me, and who had believed in my dreams. But he helped me, this young man, to remember that none of us do it alone and to be grateful.

I need to remember and contemplate that more often, for those still finding their way, our words and deeds are a bridge, a pathway, and a map; they echo and remain long after our time has passed.

**"It's tough to stay married.
My wife kisses the dog right on his wet
mouth but won't drink from my glass!"**

Rodney Dangerfield

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PENNSYLVANIA 6-5000

by L D Rogers



My daughter plays with Swing and a Prayer Big Band and I went to hear them recently. There were fourteen members in the group. They played old songs from the 30s and 40s and it was very nice.

One of songs I recognized was an old Glenn Miller tune he did in 1940 called Pennsylvania 6-5000. That reminded me of our telephone number when I was a child. I am on the far side of 80 now but I can still remember our phone number at home. It was 4055-W. Someone asked me one time how did we dial the W. I told them we didn't dial telephone numbers. We had candlestick phones that were tall with a receiver on a hook on the side and a speaker that you talked into. When you took the receiver off the hook and put it to your ear a lady would say "number please" or she would say "operator" and you told her the number you wanted to call.

"My Mom and Dad finally found something they have in common. They both don't want any more kids."

Bessie, age 8

If you didn't know the number you wanted to call you said, "information please" and she would transfer you to an information operator. The same would happen if you wanted to make a long-distance call. When she said, "operator" you would say, "long distance please" then the long-distance operator would ask where you wanted to call and the name of the person. This would be a person-to-person call. Then you gave her the number, and she would complete the process.

There have been a lot of changes in telephones over the years. I remember when we got our first rotary phone. I thought that was really something. Then it wasn't long before we got area codes. You had to dial one, then the area code and then the seven digit phone number. It took a while to get used to all the numbers. So here's to Glenn Miller and Pennsylvania 6-5000 for bringing back great memories.





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“Setting the Record Straight about Russel Erskine, Part 6 The Conclusion

by David Bowser

The previous article in this series showed that Russel Erskine did buy stock in the Huntsville Hotel Company. This article will show through wills and legal documents just what happened to that stock after his death. Although some of these events won't be given many words, it does not mean that it was a trivial event.

In 1921, after Russel had pulled Studebaker out of a national financial crisis with a gain of 29% for Studebaker, other large American companies started courting him to Captain their ship. Studebaker decided that it would be in their best interest to keep Russel, and offered him several thousand shares of Studebaker stock and a

yearly salary of \$100,000.00 a year. In 1922. He stayed.

This, in an article in June, 1928 by reporter Israel Klein who interviewed Russel, said about him (Russel). He said that his psychology is speed, action - the increased volume of accomplishment and the occasional mistake arising from immediate, speedy action, rather than the lesser accomplishment and frequent loss resulting from laziness and procrastination. This is part of a story that was released to American and Canadian newspapers thru N.E.A. services.

By the late 1920s, Russel was having some serious health problems such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and because of a serious heart condition he had

to stop playing golf, his favorite recreation. He loved the game and was good at it. Russel taught son Russ to play and Russ taught his son Randy to play. Randy Erskine was good at golf. Really good and has won several titles. Randy's Grandpa, Russel, built Erskine Golf Club and gave it to the city of South Bend Ind. Russel's new adopted town.

In the mid 1920s, Russel was hit with the I.R.S. contending that he owed taxes on the stock that Studebaker had given him. Taxes for the years 1922 thru 1926. Studebaker historian, Richard Quinn and I, by using a "Scientific Wild Guess" formula figure that the I.R.S. started

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hounding him about 1925. Then the American stock market crash of 1929, and business was suffering from a scarcity of customers, including, Studebaker. Russel, with the best intentions toward Studebaker's stock holders, employees, and the company, kept on paying good stock dividends. For some reason he thought it might help. It did not. Wrong thing at the wrong time. This writer has heard different reasons why he did this, but most of us can't figure it out.

May 24, 1932 in the South Bend News-Times, Section 1, page 1 said Erskine lost his tax appeals and must pay \$732,008 in back taxes. Russel agreed to pay it back at a rate of \$90,000 a year. February, 1933, Studebaker found it could no longer function financially and went into court appointed receivership and re-organization. At first it was thought that Russel would be part of that, but it was not to be. Russel was left out.

Russel received a letter dated March 21, 1933, stating that Studebaker no longer wished to continue his employment under his contract. Here we now have Russel in bad health, he owes the I.R.S. \$732,008 and he has no job. I don't think words are needed to describe his emotions at this time.

July 1, 1933. It was a Saturday morning and Russel's family is having breakfast. This includes Brother-in-Law, James Garland and wife Dorothy, Mrs. Erskine and son Russ. Russel is upstairs in his bedroom and late.

After a couple of reminders to him, Mrs. Erskine sent son, Russ to check on his dad. Russ Jr. found his dad's body in the bedroom's bathroom. Russel left notes and instructions for a sedate funeral devoid of flowers. There was no note to his wife.

The funeral was held in the

mansion and later Albert Russel Erskine's body was transported to his birth place of Huntsville, Al. and his body interred in Maple Hill Cemetery.

In Russel's will, wife, Annie, received the 150 shares of H.H.C. stock. Annie Erskine named her brother, James V. Garland, as executor of her estate and part of it the same 150 shares of stock. James Garland left his estate to wife, Dorothy K. Garland which included the same 150 shares of H.H.C. stock. We have a receipt that shows Mrs. Garland, on June 11, 1948 received into her account \$2000 for the same 150 shares of H.H.C. stock that Russel Erskine originally bought.

There is power in writing and speaking and with that a responsibility. A responsibility that to the best of your knowledge that you will pass along the truth. If one finds the truth after mistakenly passing along erroneous information, it should be that person's desire to set the record straight.

*I want to thank the following people, because with them these articles were made possible. * First; Cathey Carney for publishing these articles. "The Erskine Grand Children, Randy and Judy Erskine and Craig and Susan (Erskine) Whitmore * Studebaker historian, Richard Quinn of Mokena, II. * Margaret Anne Goldsmith * The folks at U.A.H. Archives Library.*

These articles have been submitted for your enlightenment.



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"Never lend your car to someone to whom you've given birth."

Geri Stone, Athens

A Chicken Named Horace

by Catherine Clemons Cameron



My daughter Gail was 3 years old when our neighbor Horace Hollaway drove up. In his huge hands he held a tiny fluffy yellow chicken. He told Gail that he had brought it to her for a pet because it had no mother to care for it. Gail was really excited about it, since we had no pets and no small children lived nearby. I had to be her playmate, as we lived out in the country at that time.

We found a cardboard box and I lined it with newspaper. We named it Horace. I thought to myself, this is not going to be fun. I managed to feed it table scraps, with a bowl of water nearby. Gail's dad went to a neighbor, who had a chicken-house full of little chicks and got some food for Horace.

It became a chore for me to clean up behind Horace. We didn't know if Horace was a he or she. Late in the afternoon, Horace was ready to go to sleep. It's amazing that animals are born or hatched with the instinct to tell time. (Remember how a rooster would wake you about daylight?).

When it got older and could hop on the couch, it would come on to my shoulder and under my long hair and it would say "peep," "peep", "peep" and go to sleep.

Then I would put him in his box for the night with it closed. It would let us know when it was time to get up, better than an alarm clock.

Later that year in 1957, Gail's dad Robert had to be gone for a week to North Carolina to train for a new job that he worked at for 34 years.

I didn't drive at that time, so my sister-in-law Ruth Cameron drove me and Gail to my mother and dad's house, about 7 miles away, to stay a few days. She let us out about 1/2 of a mile away so we wouldn't have to open and close the gate to the pasture. She and her husband Clyde fed our other chickens.

Gail was carrying Horace in his box with a string around it and I was carrying our clothes as we walked up a short path by the cotton field. We had no phone, so we surprised my folks. Mother came out on the porch, astonished as to why we were here.

Gail went running to her and said, "Grandmother, I brought Horace." Mother told me later that she wondered what in the world Horace was.

Horace thrived and soon developed feathers and his bigger red comb let us know that he was a rooster. When he began to use those larger wing feathers and began to fly around the house, I told Gail we would have to put him outside with the other chickens.

At night, we would bring him inside. He would come to the back door and let us know it was bedtime. Yes, chickens can fly, not too high nor very far in distance, like birds do.

He was almost grown when he disappeared. We never knew what happened to him. My little girl sure did miss him.

"As I hurtled through space, one thought kept crossing my mind. Every part of this rocket was supplied by the lowest bidder."

John Glenn, Astronaut

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The Monkey



by Tom Carney

Jake was a long time employee of Ashburn & Gray Construction Company. Although he was known to "tip the bottle" on a regular basis, he was still a valued employee who showed up for work on time every day.

Once during the 1960s he was sent to a construction site on the Arsenal. That morning Cecil Ashburn, one of the owners of the company, was driving around checking on the progress of various jobs and decided to stop by and see how Jake was doing.

Ashburn parked his truck, got out and looked around but there was no Jake. Ashburn was getting worried - it was not like Jake to simply disappear. Finally, after searching for a few minutes he found Jake hiding behind some bushes, trembling with fear.

"Captain," Jake said, "There's a monkey over there staring at me!"

Ashburn looked around, but needless to say there was no monkey. This was a real dilemma. Jake was a valued employee but if he was hallucinating - seeing monkeys - it might be dangerous to leave him on the job alone.

"You been drinking?" Ashburn asked.

"No sir, Captain. I had a few last night but I was fine until a few minutes ago!"

"Yes, I have a good reason for speeding. I need to get there before I forget where I was going in the first place."

Old Geezer pulled over by police

Not knowing what else to do, Ashburn told Jake to go back to the shop and work there for a few days until he got over it.

Jake didn't mention the monkey again but the more he thought about it the more worried he became. Finally, one day at quitting time, he announced to Ashburn that he had quit drinking. "Captain," he said, "I done learned my lesson!"

Ashburn congratulated Jake on his wise decision and went on home.

That evening he was reading the newspaper when he saw an article about Miss Baker, the first monkey in space.

Miss Baker had escaped her cage and had been gone for several days before being captured in the woods near where Jake was working.

Ashburn clipped the story out and first thing the following morning showed it to Jake.

"Jake," he said, "It looks like you really did see that monkey."

Jake stood there, not saying anything, but with a look on his face like he was about to cry. "What's the matter, Jake?" Jake continued to stand there with a sad look on his face, struggling for the right words. Finally he looked at Ashburn and said, "Captain, I recond I done quit drinking for nothing!"

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Delbert Parkinson

Upon the Rising of the Sun, Bring to Me the Head of Jackson P. Burwell

by Jack Burwell

Who was saying these dramatic words? It was Mikey's libido telling him to even the score.

In the summertime, I spent many pleasant days playing in a sandbox located under a big pecan tree with a part of my rather large collection of toy soldiers. I would get the hose pipe and create a river that the invading army would have to cross. It was usually the Union Army trying to cross the Mississippi River before they attacked Vicksburg. The main attack was going to be some time before July 4, Independence Day. My men had to stop them from crossing the Mississippi.

There was a three year old boy who lived down the street who looked a lot like Mikey in the Life cereal commercials. I can't remember his real name, so I'll just call him Mikey.

One day Mikey showed up with a big butcher knife in his hand and an angry look on his face. I don't know what I said to him the day before, but whatever it was, it certainly got him mad. I may have sprayed him with the hose pipe. He said, "I'm going to cut you good."

Being larger than Mikey, I didn't feel terribly threatened, although the size of that knife was quite intimidating.

I remembered from a past experience while Mikey was visiting that a large white dog had come

through the yard when Mikey was there. The white dog had made Mikey have a panic attack.

Remembering that, I looked at him and said, "Mikey, look in the backyard. It's the white dog, I see him coming."

It worked perfectly. Mikey started trembling and howling, turned around with his butcher knife and headed straight for home. I never saw Mikey again.

Don Woody, the official authority as to whom lived in the neighborhood in the 1950s says he doesn't remember Mikey. My guess is that he was visiting grandparents and wanted to finish me off before he had to return home.

Three and four year old little boys when by themselves can be outside the restraints of civilized society. They sometimes harken back to Thomas Hobbes' state of nature where there is no respect for human life except one's own. The episode brings to



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Hercules was born with one ear, a right eye that was looking to the side, his nose was set to one side of his muzzle, a crooked tail and the vet thought he had hydrocephalus (water on brain). He is now almost 10 weeks old now and is amazing. Heike, my volunteers has done wonders with him. He does have an ear canal where the ear flap is missing. He has a tuft of hair God put in front of it to protect the canal. His eye is now straight looking forward as it should, and the opening in his skull cap (he had 2) have closed completely and his nose is where it is supposed to be. Is that amazing or not????

We love this little guy dearly. His mouth was so tiny he could not suckle. Heike & I got him to suckle his mothers milk because he had to have it for his immune system. We are so proud of him. He is a little fighter.

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mind some of the words of Hobbes in his work Leviathan in describing mankind before civilization introduced rules of conduct, "...and which is worst of all, continual fear, and danger of violent death, and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short."

If I had had my throat cut by Mikey that morning, with my blood turning the sand red, Hobbes' description of the natural state of man would have adequately summed up my solitary, brutish, short life. As for Mikey, he probably wouldn't even remember my murder. Being under the age of accountability, there would be no prosecution, only concern that such an event might scar his life forever. But what about mine? One good thing might have come out of my early demise.

Hopefully, his mother or grandmother would have been told that he was no longer to have ready access to butcher knives in her kitchen.

As for my mother, if I had been killed, she would still remember me, bringing flowers to put on my grave on my birthday. My mother, I know, would have done that for years. She was that type. I probably would have had one of those cute little monuments with a lamb on it, the kind that makes a person a little misty eyed when he sees it. There may have been an inscription that said, "Jackson Parker Burwell, who died happily playing in his sandbox."

There would be no need on the monument to go into the gory details about my assassination. But I'm just supposing what might have happened. It turns out he didn't actually kill me.

**"Heard your wife left you,
How upset you must be.
But don't fret about it -
She's moved in with me!"**

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Paul Esslinger, Huntsville

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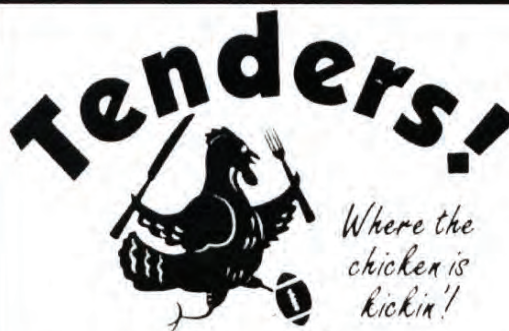
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The Power of Pause

by M. D. Smith IV



The heroine stepped timidly through the threshold of a decaying Victorian house, the kind that moaned with memories and whispered in the wind. A letter had lured her here—wedged between the screen door and the rusty grill—a letter she thought was from her long-lost love. But now, with the door groaning open and shadows peeling back from the foyer, she began to sense something was wrong.

And just as the tension thickened, just as the musical score surged with dread—

“Honey, can you hit pause? It’s my sister in Atlanta calling.”

“Yes, dear.”

I thumbed the remote with all the resignation of a soldier falling into rank.

Now, it’s known—universally, cosmically—that men control the remote. But in our house, we share a treaty: if one of us gets a call, the show halts. Not just because the sound track now competes with our aging ears, but because neither of us wants to miss a beat.

Still, it’s usually Judy’s phone that rings.

I sat there, staring at the frozen screen—the heroine caught mid-breath—and waited. Tried to read an article about deer habi-

tat loss in *The Sportsman*. Made it three paragraphs before Judy’s cheerful “Well, take care!” signaled my return to suspense.

Back in the story, the letter wasn’t from her beloved, but from the ex. The evil ex. And he was back to claim her, bound and gagged, heading to some remote island hellhole. Just as our gallant hero mounted his steed—or SUV—off to save her—

The phone rang again.

“Oh! It’s my college roommate from Seattle! I have to take this.”

“Yes, dear.”

Remote. Pause. Again.

Their conversation meandered between freak hail in the Pacific Northwest and an embarrassing story from our wedding rehearsal dinner. I knew every word before she said it. Still, I dared not protest. Judy’s friend had been in our wedding party—her past, her joy. Who was I to deny her that?

Meanwhile, the frozen screen gave up and switched to a slideshow of Norwegian fjords and urban skylines. Mesmerizing. But I’d rather see if the villain gets punched.

I checked my email (nothing), sipped lukewarm coffee, wondered whether our dog would remind us she hadn’t peed since afternoon. At last, the call ended.

We resumed. For seven uninterrupted minutes, the story soared. Our heroine had been tossed into a car. Our hero was closing in, muscles flexed, resolve in his eyes. And then—

Ring.

“Oh, it’s just a robo call about insurance,” Judy said.

“Good,” I mumbled. “Maybe they’ll insure our evening.”

That pause was mercifully brief.

Then came the real cliffhanger.

Just as our hero reached the gates of evil one’s compound, ready for the showdown—

Ring.

“Honey, it’s Martin (our son),” Judy whispered, hand cupped over the phone. “He just finished his delivery shift. He’s bringing me a pint of that new Ben & Jerry’s.”

I hit pause with solemn dread.

We would not finish the movie tonight.

Martin arrived five minutes later. I love the kid, but he’s a conversationalist, a storyteller. We chatted about weird customers, gas prices, his post-grad plans. By the time the ice cream was half-melted and he’d said his goodbyes, the hour was too late, the plot too foggy, and the energy drained.

“We’ll finish it tomorrow night,” Judy said.

“Yes, dear.”

We didn’t.

The next evening, I had a Zoom board meeting that ran long. The night after that, she was too tired. The night after that, I forgot what streaming service it was even on.

It’s been a week now. The heroine is still bound, gagged, and paused in mid-peril. The hero, halfway through a punch. The villain, likely still amidst his monolog.

And I’ve come to realize something profound.

The Power of Pause is real.

It’s not just a button. It’s a state of being. A force of marriage. A symphony of interruptions, small sacrifices, and quiet acquiescence. It’s learning that suspense can wait—but so can you, and so often, you must.

Because, as I’ve learned through thirty-two years of movies, missed endings, and ice cream interruptions, the secret to a happy marriage comes down to two little words:

“Yes, dear.”

Unusual Superstitions

- Don't throw your hair clippings out of an open window - that signifies bad luck to the thrower.
- If you kill frogs, your cows will "go dry".
- Tickling a baby will cause stuttering.
- To thank a person for combing your hair is bad luck.
- To allow a child to look into a mirror before it is a month old will cause it trouble in teething.
- A child will have the nature and disposition similar to that of the person who first takes it out of doors.
- If a person comes into your presence while you are saying bad things about him, and he puts his hands anywhere on you, you will die.
- Plant all seeds, make soap and kill meat on the increase of the moon. If done on the decrease, the seeds will not grow, the soap will not lather and the meat will shrink.
- If, on a cloudy morning, blue sky is seen sufficient to make a pair of pants, the sun will come out.
- Wasps coming out thick in the fall is a sign that winter is about to set in.
- Misfortune will come to you if you sell or pawn a wedding gift. Above all, never hock your wedding ring.
- If you work on the day of your wedding you will have to work always.
- It is very bad luck to sweep your house on Friday night.
- If rats cut your clothes, do not allow your kinfolds to mend them.
- When you hear the first dove of the spring, take off your right shoe and you will find a strand of the man's hair you are to marry.
- If you hear a screech owl it means instant bad luck - to prevent their cry, turn your pockets inside out and set your shoe soles upward.
- If you dream of a live snake, beware of enemies out to get you. If in the dream the snake is dead, your enemies are powerless.

- To see the new moon through clouds or treetops means trouble; if the disk is clear, good luck; if seen over the right shoulder, joy; if over the left, anger and disappointment.
- No one who touches a dead body will be haunted by its spirit.
- When your cat runs about the house and plays, that is a sign that there is a strong wind coming.
- Three successive cloudy mornings, it will rain on the third.
- When visiting someone, always leave by the same door you entered.
- Never, ever put shoes on a bed.
- Weddings must begin on the half-hour so that the minute hand is moving up, not down.
- If you frequently get your belly wet whilst washing the dishes you will definitely marry a drunk.
- Left palm itches, money coming in. Right palm itches, money going out.
- Burying a sausage in the ground the night before your wedding will keep the rain away.
- It is also believed that if you see three white dogs together, you are soon to come into a high financial gain.
- If a person does walk under a ladder and receives bad luck, they can actually reverse their misfortune by immediately crossing their fingers and not uncrossing them until they see a dog.
- If you gift a friend with an unwrapped set of knives, the chances of your friend experiencing a very bad cut with those knives are very likely.

"We had quicksand in our backyard sandbox. Eventually, I was an only child."

Steve Wright

**Treat Your Grandkids with Kindness.
You won't be around forever and you
want them to have good memories
of you.**



**With Love to the Class of "66
Huntsville High School
Oscar Llerena**

Tales from the Porch on Pratt: An Olfactory Tour of Old Huntsville

by Collier Bouldin Hundley



Some memories are at the brain's beck and call to recall items from the past and bring their glory to the present. Some are so clear and vivid that you don't have to squint your eyes for the mind to see. We lose touch with things that are dear to us by the razing of meaningful history as progress destroys architectural structures for the influx of incoming families and vast apartment complexes to accommodate them. As age conquers me, I try in vain to hold onto some of my senses, which brings me to this missive about the smell of Huntsville.

I am fortunate to be a native Huntsvillian with lineage to before Alabama was a State and a father who would take me for wonderful rides throughout the city, windows down and my head to the wind, these are my "Smell-a-Vision" for you.

"The patient was increasingly worried and concerned about the lack of anxiety in her life."

Seen on local Patient chart

J.C Brown's Hardware store on Triana Boulevard with a dusty, musty and slightly pleasant scent that now is hermetically sealed by the boarded-up sides and padlocked double doors.

Pearsall's Greenhouse with the warm smell of fresh grown flowers ready for the picking to take to my grandmother for our weekend visits.

Huntsville has and does have a great culinary experience and one's mouth will water at the mention of a few with odiferous reminders wafering about; the watercress salad served fresh from Mountain Fork Creek in New Market (the Watercress Capital of The World), at Mr. Steak on the old four-lane Parkway; across the street and to the north you can catch the billowing hickory smoke from Gibson's BBQ.

Now, to the Courthouse Square and your eyes will tear up from the grilled onions from Big Spring Cafe #1, onto Five Points and one of my favorite smell, taste, and memories of hot grease from the fryer Zesto's Dip Dog. I then waded through the fog and stench of lit tobacco at Mullin's Drive-in to sample the rich and warm smell of their chili.

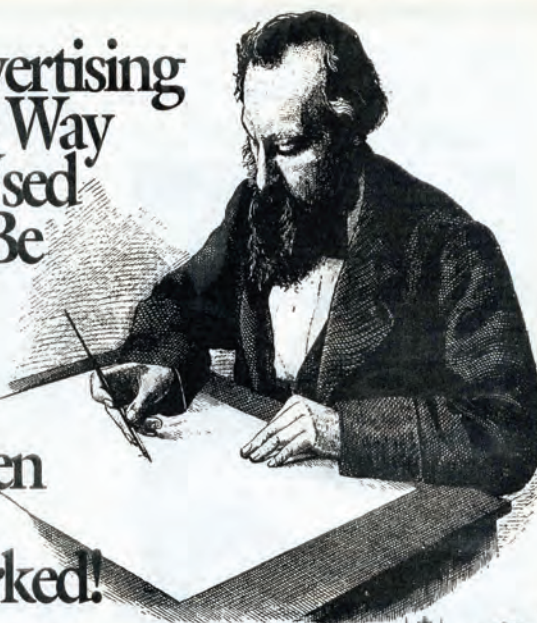
On the way back home, Dad would always treat me to my trifecta of aromatics: Kaffeeklatsch for their roasted coffee beans, the Cotton Seed Oil Plant that I miss so much, and the distinct smell of love at Grandmother's home on Pratt Avenue.

I hope this opened up your senses, as I wrote this article just for the smell of it.



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Our Trip to Mentone, Alabama High Atop Lookout Mountain

by Cathy B. Bridges

A few years ago, we took a trip to Mentone with our friends. Although we have lived in Alabama all our lives, there are so many places we have not visited. Mentone was one of those places, and I am glad we went. I booked a chalet at the Cloudmont Ski and Golf Resort, and we were all excited about going. We weren't going to ski or play golf — just peace and relaxation for a few days. The pictures online made it seem to be just what we wanted, and the chalets looked like they would be fun and different.

Mentone is in Dekalb County atop Lookout Mountain. Mentone means "Toning of the Mind," or "Mind Stretching," although some folks say "Mind-Boggling" would better describe this magical place with the highest elevation

of any incorporated town in Alabama. Initially occupied by Indians, mainly Cherokee, Mentone is known for its healthy iron-rich mineral springs, peacefulness, and pure, fresh, crisp, clean mountain air. In the spring, many blooming trees and shrubs plus mountain laurels and other fragrant wildflowers bloom, adding to the natural ambiance of the area.

The spring-fed Little River flows through Mentone along the eighty-three-mile-long narrow high plateau of the Lookout Mountain. It plunges over a precipice one hundred seven feet to form Desoto Falls in part of Desoto State Park, which is in the Chattahoochee National Forest. The falls and park got their names for Spanish explorer Hernando De Soto, who was in the area of what is now Mentone around the year 1540.

Little River Falls is in Little River Canyon National Preserve near Fort Payne approximately 10 miles south of Desoto State Park. The preserve sits at the southern edge of the Cumberland Plateau. The falls are easy to get to with practically no hiking to enjoy gorgeous views. Both Little River Falls and Desoto Falls are the most impressive waterfalls in the state of Alabama. There are quite a few private boys and girls adventurous summer camps located in

Mentone offering horseback riding, archery, arts and crafts, canoeing, swimming, and more. Some are Christian camps inspiring kids, building character, and confidence. The area is perfect for those who appreciate the outdoors. There are lots of campgrounds and RV parks, log cabins, mountain chalets, bed and breakfast Inns, and even a cute little wedding chapel. Imagine no traffic jams or neon signs — just lots of natural beauty to enjoy.

It was the first week in July before the 4th when we arrived

A tobacco chewer on Sand Mountain has agreed that if smokers won't blow smoke in his face, he won't spit at them.

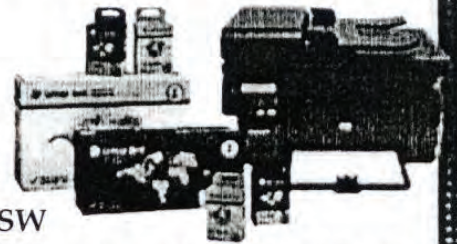
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at the Cloudmont Ski and Golf Resort. We did not know what to expect, and once we finally found it, having passed a camp or two along the way, the long winding road eventually brought us to our destination. It was quite a large place and appeared to be partially unkept, especially the golf course, which seemed to be in the middle of it all.

After winding our way around the long road to the office, we checked in, and the lady gave us a key and pointed us toward our chalet. It was in a lovely private spot, which is what we had wanted. It was very near the ski area and not far from the entrance to the Shady Grove dude ranch, which was also on the property. The Little River was flowing right behind our chalet. In the background, you could see the old covered Union crossing bridge originally constructed by Union forces around 1863. The owner of Cloudmont had moved it from another location in 1972 as an added attraction to enhance the area. We were going to love this!

The chalet was cute on the outside, and reminded me of the Swiss Alps or maybe something you would see on a box of Swiss Miss Hot Chocolate mix. After we went in, it was evident that updates had been in order a long time ago. There was a full-size bed downstairs, a small bathroom, a small kitchen and a sitting area. The sitting area led out onto a wooden deck that overlooked the Little River. In between the kitchen and sitting area, a narrow metal spiral staircase led up to the small loft with another full-size bed.

The loft is where my husband and I slept because our friends are taller than us, and we knew that there was no way they could comfortably get up and down that narrow metal staircase, especially at night trying to get to the bathroom. After drinking beer on the first night, my husband had to use an empty plastic coke bottle so he would not have to go up and down those stairs to the bathroom. When you get our age, nightly toilet trips can often be exasperating. He did not think it was so funny, but it was quite comical to me and gave me something with which to tease him.

The beds were the worst of it all. No. They were just flat out horrible. I may as well be honest. The mattresses were so old and worn out; we had to hang on to the sides to keep from rolling into each other in the middle. I don't think any of us got a good night's rest the whole time we were there. Oh well. Who needs to sleep when you are on vacation anyway, right?

We had to be careful not to get too feisty when taking a shower because it felt like the bottom was going to fall out of the tub. Please. Don't get me wrong. I don't mean to sound ungrateful, and when all was brand new, I am sure it was a fantastic place to visit and have fun. We were just about 35 years too late, but it wasn't all bad. The beautiful natural scenery and fresh air made it all worth it. There is just something special about being in the mountains.

Cloudmont Ski and Golf Resort is located on an 800-acre spread and is also home to the Shady Grove Dude Ranch. The resort opened around 1970. The ski area had two 1,000-foot beginner-intermediate slopes with two "pony lifts" to take skiers to the top. I have never been skiing there, but I knew a lady that did, and she said it was great fun back in the day. Of course, the temperature had to drop to 28 degrees for making a quality machine-made snow base to hold the snow during warmer days. The month of January is probably the best time for skiing in North Alabama, and then it does not always get that cold.

We visited the Wildflower Cafe nestled in the trees in Mentone, which is in a 120-year-old building that was once an old Mentone Smokehouse. It opened in 2007, and besides the great food served

there, the entertainment of local musicians and casual atmosphere is perfect for the locale. A country store with pottery, jewelry, clothing, candles, jams, jellies, and local artwork is located inside also. The Wildflower was voted best cafe in Alabama in 2015 and again in 2018. It also was featured in Southern Living Magazine. People from all over return again and again. The famous tomato pie is one reason, and their peanut butter pie may very well be another. Unfortunately, we failed to try either one, but I am sure we will return one day. When we do, I will be sure to try both.

A lot of the craft shops in Mentone were not open when we were there, which was disappointing, but some folks only open their shops on weekends since they live elsewhere. As we drove around the downtown area, the remains of the 130-year-old Mentone Springs Hotel came into view. Built in 1884, it was known as one of the healthiest and most attractive spots in the



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South. There were on-site swimming and fishing in the river, tennis, bowling, croquet, billiards, dancing and a playground for children. This historic hotel burned to the ground in 2014.

While at Cloudmont, we did a lot of walking and just enjoyed the peacefulness. It was so quiet, which was a nice change of pace. We heard not one siren or honking horn and that was great. There were trails with colorful wildflowers and so many large rock formations jutting out; you could stand under some of them when raining and not get wet.

The day we went to Fort Payne, we had a good country breakfast at the historic Mountain Inn Restaurant at Desoto State Park. The restaurant is in the original sandstone lodge built in the mid-1930s and has a warm rustic feel with a fireplace and ladder-back chairs. It sits on the edge of a canyon overlooking the west fork of Little River. There were quite a few windows so we could enjoy the scenery while we had our breakfast, although it was a bit foggy.

We visited Desoto Falls and Little River Falls, which were breathtaking. Although we were there in July; spring, late fall or winter is the best time for observing the most water flow. There are many waterfalls in the Lookout Mountain area, but we only visited the two I mentioned. While there, we saw picnickers, hikers, kayakers, and so many diverse people who were also enjoying God's creative masterpiece.

While in Fort Payne, we visited the Alabama Fan Club and Museum because we always loved the group Alabama. Three cousins from the Fort Payne area starting singing together around forty decades ago, and became famously well known. There was not much there on that day, though. Most of it had been taken out for Fan Appreciation Day another time. We did, however, buy some t-shirts and a few other souvenirs.

After we had exhausted all options, we decided to leave one day early. It was the 4th of July. We loaded up our friend's truck and was looking forward to going home soon.

What happened next was unexpected. The truck would not start.

The alternator had gone out! Our friend had to call his mechanic to come from another county to where we were so he could fix the truck for us, and on his birthday, no less! What a dedicated mechanic! Several hours later, we were finally on our way and thoughts of sleeping in my bed sounded better and better the closer we got to home!

At least we can say that the crisp mountain air was exhilarating, and we are not sorry that we went. It was an experience, and we will go back one day with a little more knowledge of the area than we had the first time.

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

Jerry Seinfeld

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AUNT ESSIE GOES TO TOWN - THE SUMMER OF 1895

by Cathy Burns

We were sitting on the front porch of the house on Eustis Street, trying to escape the afternoon heat by drinking water with ice in it. I had never had water with ice in it before coming to Huntsville, but I quickly learned that during the hot Alabama summer just about anything is improved by the addition of ice cubes.

"When I was a girl," Aunt Essie reminisced, "we lived over in what everyone now calls Big Cove. Every so often we would travel into Huntsville to go shopping. Daddy would put all us children into the wagon, hook up the ox cart..."

"Did you say an OX, Aunt Essie? Not a real ox! You really traveled by ox cart?"

I hushed immediately when I was impaled by those pale, grade school teacherish eyes.

"Yes, an ox, a real live OX!" She sniffed. "Daddy had an ox to work the farm and to pull the wagon when we needed to go into town."

"We always stopped at the top of the gap and went to look out over the valley. Daddy would stand, looking in the direction of Huntsville, and always say, 'Some day there is going to be a fine road all the way from our place - all the way into Huntsville!'"



"How we laughed at that," she smiled. "We thought he was crazy."

She settled back in her chair and gazed absently across the street at the crepe myrtles which had just flamed into bloom.

A little bit later she turned, fixed me with a piercing look from those pale orbs which marched its way down her rather long, elegant nose her mouth set in a ruler straight line.

"Now today, you young folks are telling me that there is going to be a way, all the way to the moon." Her eyes twinkled, and the corners of her mouth turned up ever so slightly.

But she didn't laugh or say it was crazy.

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PET TIPS FROM ANGEL

What to Do with Your Feral Cats

What is a feral cat?

A feral cat is a member of the domestic cat family but is just not socialized. These cats live outdoors, usually near homes, but are not social with people and other animals and therefore are deemed as "wild." Believe it or not, these cats have been living near us for more than ten thousand years. They generally live in "colonies" and have strong social bonds with other colony cats.

Keeping their Numbers Down

The most humane way to deal with these colonies is the Trap/Neuter/Return method. The cats are caught in humane traps, taken to a vet who neuters and vaccinates them, then returns them to the colony. If there are some of these cats who are more socialized and can be adopted out, they are. This is probably more likely to happen in a larger city than Huntsville, but we have our share of feral cats and the goal is to prevent any unwanted kittens as well as rabies.

Solutions for Some Problems: Cats are digging in my garden.

Explanation: It is a cat's natural instinct to dig and deposit in soft or loose soil, moss, mulch, or sand.

- Scatter fresh orange and lemon peels or spray with citrus scented fragrances. Coffee grounds, vinegar, pipe tobacco, or oil of lavender, lemon grass, citronella, or eucalyptus also deter cats.

- Plant the herb rue to repel cats, or sprinkle dried rue over the garden.

- Use plastic carpet runners spike-side up, covered lightly in soil. They can be found at local hardware or office supply stores. Or, set chicken wire firmly into the dirt with sharp edges rolled under.

- Artfully arrange branches in a lattice-type pattern or wooden or plastic lattice fencing material over soil. You can disguise these by planting flowers and seeds in the openings. You can also try embedding wooden chopsticks, pine-cones, or sticks with dull points deep into the soil with the tops exposed eight inches apart.



- Obtain Cat Scat™, a non-chemical cat and wildlife repellent consisting of plastic mats that are cut into smaller pieces and pressed into the soil. Each mat has flexible plastic spikes that are harmless to cats and other animals, but discourage digging.

- Cover exposed ground in flower beds with large, attractive river rocks to prevent cats from digging. They have the added benefit of deterring weeds.

- Establish a litter box by tilling the soil or placing sand in an out-of-the-way spot in your yard. Keep it clean and free of deposits.

Cats are sleeping under my porch or in my shed.

Explanation: The cats are looking for a dry, warm shelter away from the elements.

- Physically block or seal the location the cats are entering with chicken wire or lattice once you are certain the cats are not inside. Be sure to search for kittens before confirming that the cats have left – especially during spring and summer, prime kitten season.

- Provide a shelter (similar to a small doghouse). Or, if they are feral and part of a nearby managed colony, ask the caregiver to provide a shelter for the cats. Shelters should be hidden to keep the cats safe, and placing them in secluded areas can help guide the cats away from unwanted areas.

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From the Desk of Tom Carney

The Revenge of Frank Gurley



by Tom Carney

The year was 1914 and the Civil War had been a memory for almost a half-century. Capt. Frank Gurley was in the twilight of his days. A hero and defender of Huntsville and North Alabama, Gurley had tried to live a peaceful existence since those long ago days when he had pledged his honor and life to the Confederate states of America.

As Captain of the 4th Alabama Cavalry, he kept in touch with the remaining men who had fought beside him against the northern aggressors. Gurley felt it his duty to represent these men and do for them all he could in matters pertinent to them.

In the fall of 1914 it was brought to his attention that one D.B.F. Whitaker was on the pension rolls of the State of Alabama Pension Bureau for the relief of Confederate soldiers and sailors. Whitaker was listed on the pension rolls as a private in Company D of the 49th Alabama Regiment.

Certainly a commonplace occurrence for a surviving veteran of the Confederacy.

The only problem with Whitaker's name on the pension rolls was the fact that he was also on the pension rolls of the United States of America as having served as a yankee soldier!

In his application for pen-

sion relief from the State of Alabama, Whitaker stated that he was an enlisted private from March 10, 1864 until July 3, 1865. Capt. Gurley knew from his men that Whitaker had only served in the Confederate Army a short time and then had deserted to join the Union Army and now, nearly fifty years later, Whitaker was drawing a pension from both sides of the conflict!

This was an affront to every brave soul who had fought and sacrificed everything for the Rebel cause.

Gurley would not stand by and let such an injustice continue. The wounds of the Civil War were deep and the people of North Alabama had suffered enough without having to endure the indignity of giving a turncoat a pension.

On October 31, 1914 Frank Gurley wrote to the Pension Bureau in Montgomery revealing all he knew about the Rebel traitor. Three days later Whitaker was sent notice that he had been charged as ineligible for a pension because he was a deserter from the Confederacy and was drawing a Union pension. If he failed to respond to the charges, it would be taken as an admission of guilt and loss of pension.

D.B.F. Whitaker never responded to these charges, was dropped from the rolls and never heard from again.

In some small way Capt. Frank Gurley, C.S.A., had come again to the defense of Huntsville and North Alabama. He had restored to his native land its honor and dignity and driven out the yankee invader from his home.

"In my hometown, the most common form of transportation was a stretcher."

Rita Rudner

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The Story of Rusty



by Cathey Carney

Marilyn had been married for about five years when she and her husband divorced. It was a bitter time in both their lives, and a year dragged on until, both miserable, they decided they couldn't live with each other any longer. The fight over possessions was lengthy, but finally it was over. Marilyn got most everything, even their beagle, Rusty.

At the time Rusty was about four years old, but still acted like a puppy. He was a friendly, outgoing dog and especially loved going after anything that was thrown to him and bringing it back. His coat was shiny, his eyes bright and expressive. He loved both his "parents" immensely.

When Marilyn and her husband began having troubles, Rusty was sometimes caught in the middle. He was the victim of a broken glass one drunken night after an especially bad fight and had to be taken to the vets with cuts. He cringed at the shouting and got to where he hid under the bed when he heard them yelling.

The divorce finally over, Marilyn got over her grief fairly quickly and began to date other men. She worked during the day, so the long walks she used to take with Rusty at night became very infrequent.

Rusty began to try less and less to get her attention. He didn't run to meet her at the door anymore. He didn't wolf down his food anymore and just seemed a little listless. Marilyn noticed all of this but was so caught up in her new and exciting life that she just didn't take the time to pay attention to him.

He got to the point where he spent a lot of time just sleeping. His eyes were no longer bright but had a dull glaze over them. His coat became dry and dull. He gave up, and in just a short while, he passed away.

Marilyn was heartbroken and could not forgive herself for her neglect. She had realized that something was wrong, but didn't do anything about it. She couldn't bring him back. The sweet animal who had lived only for his owners' attention died because of the lack of it.

Marilyn cried herself to sleep for weeks. She asked me to write this story because someone out there, who may not be paying attention to their pet, may still have the chance to show love and give it the attention it deserves.

Your cats and dogs have feelings and memory, just like you. They will love you no matter if you punish them or hurt them. They need you to take good care of them, and especially to show attention to them. Most of all, they need your kind words and touch. Please don't make the same mistake Marilyn did. Show your pets your affection for them every day. You surely won't regret it.

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SLIPPERY WHEN WET

by Shawn Parikh

The evening of January 31, 1985 was like countless evenings that I had experienced in my then 12 going on 13 years on this planet. Mom created a typical culinary delight for me, my brother, stepfather, herself and visiting sister, brother-in-law and my year-old nephew.

While the house was occupied with more persons than normal, my accommodating mom always made a vacancy for visiting family. On television, my optical nerves were engaged exuberantly while watching NBC'S Must See TV lineup of Cosby Show, Cheers and Night Court.

Most television viewers were watching NBC instead of CBS and Magnum PI or ABC's showing of the movie Star-crossed. After a pleasant evening of television and participating in the antiquated lost art of talking, (note to kids in 2025, yes we did have actual face to face conversations without the aid of some electronic device) we bid each other a good night.

As I lay in my bed, I thanked God that unlike many, I was in a nice place; safely protected from the elements of cold and rain occurring outside my window.

As my eyes slowly and reluctantly released the hold that slumber had on my being, I detected something or somethings that were askew. For one thing the house was strangely quiet, the familiar and comforting hum of the heater was oddly not present.

As I finally clamored out of my bed, when I went to turn on my bedroom light, I sadly discovered the familiar illumination from the bulb overhead was not doing its job.

Finally as I made it to the den, I noticed every room was eerily void of light. My brother-in-law burst through the door and excitingly informed us that "the trees were breaking!"

So like in the poem Night Before Christmas, I indeed rushed to the window and what did "to my eyes did appear?" Everything in sight had apparently frozen over. The yards, the streets and the trees were covered in multiple inches of ice!

Oddly none of the three TV stations had predicted this event. It was as though seemingly overnight, we had reverted to some Neolithic second ice age. As I hurriedly got dressed, I rushed out back to find that the trees were absolutely breaking; and those that had not fallen to the ground were leaning from the weight of the ice. Some of the trees that lost their valiant fight to stay upright, found themselves toppling power lines.

The site of that February 1, 1985 ice storm made one almost feel as though they were on the frozen tundra of Alaska instead of the southern city of Huntsville, Alabama.

The fact is that humans since time infinity have always found clever and ingenious ways to deal with adversity. My mom and stepfather were no exception. Unlike many, we did have some things that proved advantageous. First we had a fireplace where we could roast marshmallows and hot dogs, but more importantly, it provided warmth for the collective cold bodies of my family.

Back in those days, we had a motor home equipped with a blessed generator. The only fly in the proverbial ointment was one could only use two items for

"Why do banks charge you a 'Non-Sufficient Funds' fee on money they already know you don't have in your account?"

Ethan Jackson, Arab

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this generator. Since the bitter cold outside would provide a naturalistic and pioneer reminiscent way of keeping food cold, the refrigerator definitely was not needed. So the conundrum on which two items to attach to the generator was easily solved when we all decided the stove and television were necessities.

After hearing lastly (as was the norm in those days) that Huntsville City Schools were closed, my brother and I took full advantage of our unexpected snow, er, ice day. We spent this almost mystical day, ice skating in the streets and playing hockey in the parking lot of the now defunct Johnson High School.

For a young boy the day took on almost magical proportions. It was as if God Himself had taken His mighty hand and coated the world in glistening white.

The amazing thing, when I look back on forty years later, is that even without power, no cell phones, not one infinitesimal trace of the information super highway (kids this was the internet's original name back when dinosaurs walked the planet), no social platforms except the ones people stood on to catch a train, and Tik Tok was the sound heard emanating from a grandfather's clock; we not only survived, we lived life to the fullest.

As my sister and her family made it back safely, the rest of us played board games and thoroughly enjoyed each others' presence. That night as I lay by the fireplace, I gazed at the crackling and almost incandescent flames, seemingly mesmerized. As the fire seemed to dance in front of me, sleep began to overtake me. I recall that as my nightly nocturnal journey was about to commence, I thanked God for my family, the warmth, the food, my dog, the amazing day. He allowed me to experience this day, no school and most of all for being able to watch television.

By Saturday morning, the power was back on. It took the ice several cold days before it melted underneath the sun's warmth.

The clean up even with neighbor helping neighbor took a substantial amount of time. Of course other winter events have occurred over the past forty years, but I must admit I hold this one in a special place in my heart.

For one extraordinary time on February 1, 1985 this city was silent and held in a slippery but beautiful icy grip.

**"Step aside, Coffee.
This is a job for Alcohol."**

Ken Owens, Huntsville

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When I first came here I mainly hid under a cat tree because I am quite shy. But I have gotten over most of my shyness and now come out to interact with the other cats and to see the volunteers and visitors to our cat room.

I'm not sure how I came to be here but I am looking forward to having a home and family of my own. If you are looking for a new family member please come to the Ark Animal Shelter and ask to see Pearl the cat. I will be so happy to see you!

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My Parents' Marriage

by Willie Weaver

In the spring of 1933, Dewey Weaver, still single at 29 years old, was a busy man. He was operating his own successful coal delivery business and he was getting ready for the biggest event of his life. He had two major tasks to complete.

First, he needed to find and furnish the right house. Second, he needed to secure the blessing of Charles and Georgia Hallman

to marry their daughter, Willie Mae.

He found a three room house with a small front porch and a somewhat larger back porch. In the backyard was a water well, a small stable/chicken house and a privy. He soon had the place minimally furnished. He put a bed, dresser, and wardrobe in the middle room, and a wood cook stove, table and chairs, some shelves, and a wash stand in the back room. He also acquired some miscellaneous items so he could sleep there and also prepare something to eat.

Dewey had known the Rev. Hallman for many years; first through his father's business of selling coal and then through running his own coal business. As was customary in those days, he addressed the Hallmans as Uncle Charlie and Aunt Georgia.

Over the last several months he had spent many hours at their home calling on Willie Mae. These visits usually included a conversation with the parents. He and Uncle Charlie would discuss the current status of the coal business, world and community events, and the Bible. Aunt Georgia usually wanted to know how his business was going and what was going on with his folks.

After a bit, the parents would retire to the kitchen and give the young folks some semi-privacy. Eventually, he asked if he could take Willie Mae to a square dance at the school. Aunt Georgia readily said, "Yes", provided that they would be accompanied by her older sister and sister's beau.

That worked well for a while, but both couples soon tired of always having to be together.

Dewey finally got the nerve to ask to take Willie Mae places without the escorts. Aunt Georgia asked Dewey to follow her to the kitchen, shut the door, sat him at the table and sat down across from him. She then gave him a speech which included things like the following:

Dewey, I have known you and your family for many years.

A Decatur man complains there are two reasons why his wife won't wear last year's dresses - she doesn't want to, and she can't.

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In the last few months, I have gotten to know you much better.

I like you, Charlie likes you. However, you are a man almost twice the age of our young daughter.

You know so much more about life and the world than she has ever imagined. I think you are an honorable man and I am placing her in your hands. When you walk through that door, I am trusting you and God with the rest of her life.

After that they were free to go out together without the escorts. They were soon making plans for their eventual marriage. As her 17th birthday drew near, they approached her parents for their formal blessing on their plans.

True to her previous words, Aunt Georgia made no objection and she and Uncle Charlie gave their blessing.

Sometime after her 17th birthday, they both went to the Courthouse and got the marriage license. After that they went shopping. They got three bags of groceries, some pots, pans and tableware. They also got a mop, a broom, a dustpan,

a washtub, and a rub board.

Dewey paid with a \$20 bill and got change back.

After dropping off their purchases at the house, they headed a few miles up the road to the home of a Justice of the Peace.

When they arrived in front of his house, he was coming out his front gate. They told him what they wanted.

He said he was leaving to perform another wedding down the road, but if they had the license, he could perform their ceremony before he left. They could just sit where they were.

He looked over the license, saw a young fellow coming down the road and called him over to act as a witness. The young fellow climbed up on the running board next to Willie Mae and stuck his head through the open window.

He put one foot on the running board next to Dewey, laid the license, his Bible, and a copy of the ceremony across his knee, performed the ceremony and pronounced them man and wife.

Then they headed home.

Coffee Liqueur

3 cups sugar
6 cups freshly brewed very strong coffee
1 vanilla bean
1 fifth Vodka
1 tablespoon Hershey's chocolate syrup

Mix the sugar into the coffee and bring to a rolling boil, turn off heat and cool. Chop your vanilla bean into tiny pieces, keeping the seeds.

Take a large sterilized glass jar and place the vanilla pieces in there, pour in the vodka. Add the cooled coffee mix and chocolate syrup, stir well.

Cover the container and put on a shelf somewhere for 30 days (this will be difficult, as you'll be dying to try it.)

At the end of the resting period strain the liquid through cheese-cloth. This will keep for at least 6 months.

"Who's cruel idea was it for the word 'lisp' to have an 's' in it?"

Jennie Franklin, Gurley

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

BY TOM CARNEY



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THE DAY THE MUSIC DIED

A Story Inspired by Don McLean's
"American Pie"



by M. D. Smith IV

Buddy Holly's birthday is September 7, 1936, but that is not the date everyone remembers; it's the cold night in February of '59 no one can forget. It was "the day the music died."

A long, long time ago, when jukeboxes glowed neon blue and car radios crackled out rock 'n' roll, I used to pedal my newspaper bike down White Street with a song in my heart. That music—his music—used to make me smile. Buddy Holly and his 'Chirping Crickets.' The name itself sounded like a chord change. If I could just learn to play like him, maybe I could make people dance too. Maybe they'd be happy, even for a little while.

But then came February.

That bitter morning, frost bit through my gloves as I delivered the newspaper. The headline struck like a lightning bolt straight through the canvas bag slung across my shoulder:

"ROCK 'N' ROLL STARS KILLED IN PLANE CRASH."

I stopped cold on Mrs. Chandler's porch. My knees buckled as I read the names: Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens, and J.P. "The Big Bopper" Richardson. I dropped the rest of the papers. Couldn't take another step.

I was only fifteen, but something inside me cracked that day—like a guitar string snapping mid-song.

I can't remember if I cried. Probably did. But I do remember his wife—Maria Elena, widowed just weeks after their wedding. She was carrying his child. She lost Buddy, and the news of his death caused her to miscarry. Unimaginable grief.

Something about that touched me deeper than I understood at the time. Like a radio going quiet and never tuning back in.

The day the music died. Don McLean wrote *American Pie* later. We just didn't know the words yet. We were too stunned by the multiple meanings to sing clearly. We just hummed and cried and drank warm soda from glass bottles behind the gym.

Later that summer, I met Jenny. She wore daisies in her hair and danced barefoot to rhythm and blues. She was in love with Elvis. I was in love with her. We kicked off our shoes in the gym and spun in circles under crepe paper and cheap disco lights. For a moment, it felt like the music might live again.

But every time I turned on the radio and Buddy wasn't there, it was like hearing silence wrapped in static.

I was a lonely teenage broncin' buck. A pink carnation in my pickup truck, hoping someone would hear me strumming "That'll Be the Day" on my daddy's old Gibson.

But I knew I was out of luck—Dad's guitar wouldn't play.

Years passed. The Beatles stormed in. The Stones rolled louder. Dylan sang like a prophet. But Buddy's voice, simple and bright, never left my heart.

We tried to keep up. Tried to understand the shifting tide of music and madness and war. We gathered at parks and sang. Sometimes dirges. Sometimes love songs. Sometimes, we just listened to each other breathe.

And all the while, I thought about that icy Iowa night. That Bonanza with the pilot, and three passengers rising into the black sky with white snowflakes. That frozen emptiness where a coin toss decided who would live and who would fall.

By '69, I'd grown my hair out. Marched in the streets. Saw friends drafted, some never came home. Others came back strangers.

The world felt loud and chaotic. Music was shouting now—angry and wild. At Woodstock, they said we were one. But I felt alone in the crowd. Like the band played on a broken stage, while the strings

in my chest refused to resonate.

The levee was dry. The whiskey warm. The rye bitter.

Sometimes, I'd drive my Chevy out to the edge of town and stare at the sky. Wondering if Buddy's voice still echoed up there. Wondering if heaven had a dance floor. Wondering if, maybe, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost had saved him a front-row seat.

Because if anyone could teach angels how to play a Stratocaster, it was Buddy. One night in '75 I walked into an old record store, now a dusty shell of what it had once been. The man behind the counter looked like he hadn't heard joy in a decade.

"Do you have any Holly?" I asked, barely hopeful.

He shook his head. "Music like that don't play no more."

I left without saying a word. The sacred store was silent.

Outside, I passed a girl singing the blues beneath a flickering streetlight. I asked her for some happy news.

She just smiled. Then turned away.

Now I'm older. My hair's silver. My hands tremble when I try to play. But every now and then, somehow when the wind blows just right and I close my eyes, I hear him.

Not just Buddy Holly the singer — the legend. I hear Charles Hardin Holley, born in September of '38, the Lubbock boy with big glasses and a bigger heart. The kid who fused country and rock, who dreamed of making people dance. Who never got to hold his baby or grow old with

his bride. Who died chasing a sound no one else could quite reach.

I remember September, but I light a candle on every February 3rd. I place an old 45 on the turntable and let the needle drop with a hiss. The song begins, pure and sweet.

"Every day, it's a-gettin' closer..."

I close my eyes. I remember everything — the headlines, his weeping bride, a pink carnation I wore to the prom — and the static in my speakers and the awful silence that followed.

The day the music died.

And still...

I sing. Bye, bye, Miss American Pie — this'll be the day that I die.

But I haven't yet.

And I won't forget — because as long as I remember Buddy — the music lives.



"I had a rose named after me and was very flattered. But I was not pleased when I read the description in the catalog: 'Not good in a bed, but fine against a wall.'"

Eleanor Roosevelt



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HUNTSVILLE HISTORY THROUGHOUT THE YEARS



As Huntsville moved into the 1950s, there was a sense of excitement in the air. The population had grown to an astounding 16,437 people and Huntsville's own John Sparkman had been chosen to run as Vice President with Adlai Stevenson. Downtown was still the place families shopped and went to the movies even though the city fathers had routed most of the streets one-way. UAH was located in the old Butler High School on Clinton Avenue and Huntsville had a total of 3,178 students. Bill Haley and his band "The Comets" released "Rock Around The Clock," a song that had many parents concerned because of it's wild rock and roll lyrics.

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