



No. 397

March 2026



Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

A Kid's Life In Huntsville in the 50s and 60s



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Old-timers all knew this locale as being one of the popular neighborhood "watering holes" where patrons could purchase "fifty-cent shooters," or shot glasses filled with stiff spirits.

I've heard at least a half dozen sermons and a few dozen beauty shop tales referencing the ill presence of this place and those visiting its premises.

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A Kid's life in Huntsville in the 50s and 60s

by *Frankie L. Preston*

In the early 1960s my daddy was always a frustrated farmer but he made our living working for the Huntsville Times. From age 17, departing briefly to temporarily work for Meadow Gold Dairy, he soon returned to "The Times," where he remained for 43 years, retiring at age 63 and dying at 64. Often he bragged about working for seven years, seven days a week, without taking a sick day or vacation. My dad was a reliable worker and well known as a "character among characters" at the Times and in "the Village."

When I was approximately five years old my dad bought a 20-acre plot situated between Hazel Green and Harvest, Alabama on Bobo Section Road. Upon purchasing the totally wooded land my dad began clearing it, digging a pond, fencing half of it and planting the remaining half with a rotation of corn, cotton and soybeans. We made a garden and my pa-

ternal grandfather and mother mainly planted, harvested, froze, and canned a wealth of delicious fruits and vegetables.

During my youth, customarily my dad and I would together go out to "the place" - the name to which all my family referred to the above acreage. He went to work at approximately 6:00 AM and came home shortly after 2:00 PM unless a "breakdown" occurred. In any event my school day ended at 2:30 PM, long in advance to load the car or truck and be ready to go before picking me up at school's end.

I generally hated the work such as picking up rocks spread by bulldozers extracted from a 20-foot deep one-acre pond. This task was among the toughest... to pick up all rocks so we could plant grass around the pond and have a rock-made bridge covering two eight foot by eighteen inch tiles for trucks and tractors to cross the natural creek supplying the pond.

"The place" and the pond would become my father's main interest and focus for many of my family's most precious memories. We had many horses we rode each weekend with local youth. Thousands of fish were caught...some of trophy size taken from the pond. A wealth of vegetables were grown, harvested, canned or frozen by my mother and many of our neighbors for delicious meals. We camped at "the place", hosted many picnics, "fish-fries," hootenannies and dance events, and just went there to enjoy the ambience of "country." Additionally,

"It's scary when you start making the same noises as your coffee maker."

Brandon Owens



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P.O. Box 4648

Huntsville, AL 35815

(256) 656-5321

Email - oldhuntsville@gmail.com

(Website) www.oldhuntsville.com

Publisher - Cathey Carney

**Advertising - (256) 656-5321
Sales & Mktg. - Cathey Carney**

Editor - Cheryl Tribble

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my dad raised and sold cows that slightly contributed to our family income and protein intake.

My father focused on his job and insatiable interests at "the place." My mother handily worked as a full-time wife and mother and she operated an in-home "beauty shop" (hair-styling) and worked each Saturday at Troop's Beauty Salon. Her work financially supplemented the family income - plus she was an accomplished seamstress who made many of the clothes she and my elder sisters wore. Within this context I share my story about the time my dad bought me, his only son, my first pony.

The story begins on a Friday morning. It seemed odd that my dad had a day-off and my mother welcomed a brisk assemblage of local women who wanted to get their hair fixed for the weekend. My daddy - typically drinking coffee, smoking his Winston's... each lit by a distinctive Zippo "click" while waiting for me to down my sausage and biscuit with chocolate milk. He would devilishly converse with the elder aged women who arrived early for their thirty-minute staggered wash-roll-dry-comb and spray "hair-doo's".

Amongst the clatter only equaled by a covey of blackbirds, my dad and I left our well-attended home-beauty shop, hopping aboard a four-door sky-blue and white Ford Fairlane 500 with gold trim. It was a three shifter on the column regarded by my father as the next best thing to a Thunderbird, and I remained ever confident we were aboard a stealthy ride. Proudly I sat beside my dad in the front seat and after the rumble of one of the best 289 cubic inch V8 engines known at the time, we'd travel three houses away to pick up Mr. Jim Barrett.

I always welcomed Jim. He was a guy who made sure I was heard and he told more funny stories than my sides could stand. Jim was dark-skinned; he stood about six-foot two inches tall and was thin; his face was long; he had a large hooked nose above a sharply dimpled chin; he always had a freshly clipped "GI" haircut and he covered his salt and pepper colored hair with a dark blue ballcap. He appeared Indian-like and knowing his origins were in Michigan before coming to Dallas Village I would later guess his lineage wasn't likely far from trib-

al native America.

Jim was a cotton mill retiree. He drove a two-door 1952 Chevrolet he'd purchased from my maternal Uncle Roy and was known by local motorcycle police to drive in the opposite direction on one-way streets. When stopped by police who asked: "Don't you know you're driving the wrong way on a one-way street?" he'd dryly reply: "Son, I can't go both ways."

To my knowledge he was never given citations for this regular practice (shortcut to the grocery).

The majority of Jim's time was spent raising ornamental pigeons (which now abound in Maple Hill Cemetery), Bantam chickens (pronounced as "Banny" chickens among Villagers), and regularly visited with his close friends, John and Daniel Harrison (owners-operators of Harrison Brothers Hardware). Hard to believe, given current city ordinances, chickens were plentiful and ponies were occasionally owned and housed in backyards of many Villagers. Jim regularly traded pigeons and Bantam roosters with the "Harrison Brothers" and he often attended their birds and animals, located "on the hill" just above Maple Hill Cemetery. I guess you could say Jim was a "good judge of stock and animals"...at least



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"If you want to impress me with your car, it'd better be a food truck."

Emma James, Gurley

that's what my daddy thought.

This particular Friday would eventually take the three of us to a stock purchase although I didn't know it at the advent of our journey. First we drove to "the place" to survey a few beef-bred cows, looking at pastures and checking fences. Dad and Jim first visited "Clayton's Place" for libations and a brief social check-in, before proceeding on our travels to "the place."

Clayton's Place was an establishment located on the corner of Dallas Avenue and Stevens Avenue, just across from Fire Station Number One. Old-timers knew this locale as being one of the neighborhood "watering holes" where patrons could purchase "fifty-cent shooters," or shot glasses filled with stiff spirits. I've heard at least a half dozen sermons and a few dozen beauty shop tales referencing the ill presence of this place and those visiting its premises.

After surveying "the place", our journey next took us to Elkton, Tennessee, the nearest farm implement store. There we would purchase some tractor supplies but not before stopping on the way for more refreshments-libations at "31 Blue-spot" just over the Alabama-Tennessee state line in Ardmore. There, I'd be given some change from my dad's change purse for playing pin-ball and miniature shuffleboard.

I never got the hang of these apparatuses of entertainment and as my dad and Jim shared an ice-cold pitcher of draft beer... not offered in Alabama, I'd be offered a Coke and choice of pickled eggs or bologna with a serving of either potato chips or fried pork skins. Thirst and spirits attained and impatience noticed on my part, daddy and Jim hopped aboard that mighty Ford and proceeded to the farm-implement store in Elkton.

After securing a few three-point-hitch bolts and pins and several tubes for the grease gun we left the implement store and went across the street for yet an-

other episode of draft beer libations for Jim and dad. This Elkton establishment whose name I fail to recall had a fantastic juke box, and I admit having a good time feeding this neon lighted, push-buttoned, record retrieving and loud playing machine as much silver as it could swallow. In retrospect, I might have caused or exacerbated headaches for several patrons, and after about six songs dad and Jim were prepared to leave, each taking "a quart to go." The next best thing to draft beer was quart beer - neither easily acquired in Alabama.

By this time noon had long come and went, and dad decided to take a back road to return to our home. I now understand why but then I sat in the backseat looking at the beautiful landscapes while overhearing smatterings of conversation between Jim and dad about planting grass, tractor parts, and grain-feeding cattle as they sipped on their quart beers sleeved in brown paper bags.

Winding down back roads seemingly at a snail's pace, I heard my dad say: "Look Jim, they got a pony for sale," as I heard the Ford's tires leave asphalt turning into a gravel driveway.

I rose to get a better look and immediately saw a hand painted sign that I couldn't read standing in front of a lavish green lawn adorning a hill atop which stood a Walton's styled drop-sided two story white house shaded by huge oak trees. Slowly we drove up the drive, and as the dogs barked, alerting their owner of company, a stately elder man opened his screened door stepping onto a house-length front porch. Waving dogs back both hanging their heads with wag-tailed invitation, I shot out of the car followed by dad and Jim, who emerged to introduce themselves. After exchanging customary handshakes, my Daddy inquired: "Where's the pony you've got for sale?"

The gentleman responded, "I got him staked out over here behind the house," motioning for us to follow and inspect. Being faster than my elders, between two bouncing collie type dogs licking me all the way, I excitedly made my way to the pony. Catching my first glimpse...a dappled tan on white Shetland pony, withers standing approximately 40 inches, was haltered and roped to a tie-out steak,



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he perked his ears. I came nearer, speaking softly and he continued to chew the grass he was eating. Simultaneously cautioned in various forms (i.e. "don't spook him," "boy, be careful," and "holdup and wait for us") by his owner, my dad, Jim and I slowed and allowed the elder gentleman to make introductions.

On approach the pony welcomed us, and my dad and Jim interspersed queries to the owner about the pony's age, his demeanor, his lineage and his health status. I was simply impressed when he allowed me to rub his silky nose and Jim quietly interrupted my greeting by performing a cursory inspection of teeth and hoofs. Daddy and the owner stood outside the reach of the pony talking about price. When Jim gave the unobtrusive nod of approval and a right-eyed wink, my daddy peeled off a twenty-dollar bill and ecstatically I declared the pony as being "Smoky."

The man went into his house for paper and a pen to proffer a requested bill of sale while my dad and Jim consulted about how this pony might be transported. The seller provided my dad with a suitable bill of sale and meanwhile Jim began unhitching Smoky from his steak-out. Walking toward our car the prior owner inquired about how and when my dad would transport my new pony, and he said: "We're gonna put him in the car and take him with us."

The former owner, obviously astonished - almost chuckling said: "I don't think that's a good idea."

Almost overriding his statement Jim boldly commented, "Oh, he ain't so big and if we take the backseat out and roll the window down he'll fit just fine." The seller said, "He's your horse now" and kindly excused himself, retiring into his home as quaintly as he had emerged.

My daddy opened the trunk while Jim held the pony, and swiftly produced some wrenches, removed some seat bolts from the floorboard and proudly deposited the backseat into the golden Ford's trunk. With both back doors openly secured my daddy wrapped the long halter, attached rope around his hand and elbow accurately pitching it into the left side and through the right side of the vehicle. He confidently walked around

our car and secured the front end of the rope. Jim had simultaneously lined my now wide-eyed pony to face the driver's side rear door.

With a "Ready? Okay" question-response daddy pulling and Jim pushing by firm tail grip, Smoky went in the Ford's backseat compartment with surprising ease. Jim shut the left door; dad pushed against Smoky's head to prevent escape; and together (Jim joining my dad) they eventually accomplished the arduous task of turning Smoky's head for clearance through the passenger side rear window while securely shutting the right rear door. Once done the push-styled door locks were activated for "safety."

Initially we noticed a few hoof-to-carpet shifts but he found his balance mainly leaning onto the rear seats upper upholstery. He snorted a few times, and settled in for the ride. I was directed to sit in front between my dad and Jim. "Happy as a lark" and cautious as a lark watched by a hungry cat the Ford, as usual, cranked like a top. Off we went proceeding even slower than before homeward bound - Dallas Village. They leisurely sipped their quarts, wishing for all delay of Smoky's two main biological functions. Eventually quart bottles were tossed (my dad by an over-the-car shot and Jim by a direct passenger-side hit) at upcoming road-signs. Two tosses yielded two hits - all passengers amazed except Smoky.

For many miles we met few passing vehicles and of those we met they didn't seem to notice a pony with his head sticking out of the backseat passenger side of a vehicle. However, the back roads eventually ended and we took to a major highway about ten miles out of town...only a half-mile from Trackway Beverages where dad and Jim agreed to stop, dad got more beer for them and I was treated with a Coke and peanuts, while proprietors and patrons came for a look at "a horse in a blue Ford."



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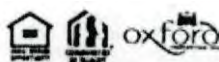
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From that point and all the way to our house, passersby pointed, turned heads and laughed but Smoky remained sure-footed and amazingly in command of biological operations.

Unobserved by me, Smoky was a stud-pony and his destiny had been plotted before purchase for a timely courting episode with a neighbor mare. We traveled down Meridian Street, Oakwood Avenue, onto Andrew Jackson Way, and eventually McKinley Avenue and onlookers were bemused by what they saw... smiling and doing double-takes.

Finally we turned into the graveled driveway separating 806 and 808 McKinley. The Ford dropping a bit in the rear glided just past our back door. As we came to a slow stop, my mother, followed by a half dozen before the weekend women hair-doo seekers came out of the back door as if Castro had finally launched the big bomb.

Some in curlers, others waiting for a wash, and a few draped with towels, and some out of the dryers began knee-slapping, hand slapping howls of laughter pointing to the amazing sight of a horse staring back at them... head jutting from the rear passenger window of a four-door Ford. My feisty mom arose from the frenzy, comb pointing in one hand, the other hand on her hip. Just as Jim and Dad exited the front seat, she asked: "Frank Preston - have you lost your mind?"

He didn't answer...but as Jim opened the rear door allowing Smoky's physically and emotionally overdue release, he asked my mother: "Ain't he a dandy?"

Smoky was staked out in our backyard, and a week later my dad bought me a black western saddle, studded with silver trim, a matching bridle and martingale fit for the Lone Ranger. I rode what seemed to be a million miles on Smoky even though he threw me off a couple dozen times. Mean as a Tasmanian Devil he went a courting and he

did ride in a Ford Fairlane 500.

This is the same car in which my family made many midnight rides to Pensacola, Florida, hauled several tons of fertilizer, grass seed, and cattle feed, and that I learned to drive at age nine or ten (seat forward, pillow assisted, paternal grandmother supervised) in rural-dirt road Alabama.

The '58 Ford Fairlane, initially showroom featured before purchase at the local Woody Anderson dealership, was sold in 1966 to my above-mentioned grandmother, so Dad could make a down payment on a much needed truck. He bought a flashy new short-bed truck...black on white F-150 from Woody Anderson.

It proved as true and tough (perhaps more) as the Fairlane and dad would daily drive his truck until his untimely death in 1988 at age 64.

When I see television commercials about "Built Ford Tough", I think of Smoky and a couple dozen similar examples of living life aboard a Ford in Dallas Village.

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Debut at the Grand Ole Opry

by Charles Flanders

Dr. Robert Frazier, better known by his family and friends as Bobby, was a graduate of Gurley High School, just another good ol' farm boy, and my brother in law. Then after a lifetime in college, he became a school teacher just out of Huntsville at a tiny city called Princeton. Later he finally worked his way up to teacher in what was then -- the little town of Madison. But then, with his excellent credentials, he was offered the position of principal of a brand new school in Farragut, Tennessee. The local board of education, his peers, his students, and everyone who had the pleasure to work with or for him, considered him as the most respected, the best principal, person, and friend anyone could ever have.

Finally, the state of Tennessee decided to honor him by bestowing on him the title of 'Best Educator in the State of Tennessee.' To honor him, they held a banquet in his honor at Nashville, Tennessee, the state capital. Principals and educators from all over came to honor him. The night before the banquet, he called Sue and I and invited us to come up to Nashville and stay with them. We would not be able to attend the ceremony but could just enjoy being with them.

The next morning, I woke up around 5 A.M., and being a coffee addict, I decided to quietly sneak out of the room and get some coffee. As I was getting dressed, Bobby woke up and asked what I was doing. I told him and he decided to go with me. Being so early, the hotel restaurant wasn't open yet, so we walked outside, took a right, walked to the corner and took another right. Then we noticed that we were standing right in front of the Ryman auditorium -- Home of the Grand Ole Opry.

We didn't see anyone, but the doors were all standing wide open. So we crossed the street and peeked inside to see what was going on. All we saw were people cleaning up the building. So we ventured on into the building.

I had been to the Opry many times, but always a paid guest. This was different. After

wandering around the building, we finally walked up on the stage and then to the back where the dressing rooms were located. Then, when returning to the stage, we were asked by a lady, who was mopping the stage, if we worked there - we told her that we did not work there. That we had just wandered in off the street. She then asked if we were singers and we both answered "NO".

Then she told us, "I KNOW you both sing and since you're on the stage of the Grand Ole Opry I "COMMAND" you sing me a song while I "STAND" here and listen."

Bobby looked at me and I looked at him. He said do you know that old country song "You are my Sunshine"? I said yes, and with that, we burst into singing. As soon as we finished, the lady started clapping as loud as she could and started yelling BRAVO BRAVO! Then she said "All right now, you two trespassers need to get out of here. BUT from now on you can always tell everyone you meet, that not only did you have a Command performance at the Grand Ole Opry, but that you also had a Standing ovation."

For reasons I'll never understand, we have never been asked to return for a second performance.

**"Everybody can't be Irish.
Someone has to do the driving."**

Jeb O'Donnell

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GENERAL PATRICK'S GRAVE

by Billy Joe Cooley

When the U.S. Bureau of Roads was surveying a route for Interstate 24 between Nashville and Chattanooga, the engineers discovered a single grave marked "General Patrick".

Knowing the governmental red tape involved in moving a grave, the chief engineer asked property owner Richard Craig about the possibility of getting permission to move the general's grave, in order to make way for the great highway.

Richard replied: "Absolutely not. The general was one our most revered heroes. Me and him was best friends and he wanted to be buried right here between the great Cumberlands and the Tennessee River."

"Me and the general hunted and fished all over this area for years, enjoying each other's company. I'm afraid you'll just have to build your road around the grave."

The engineer was very moved by this and said he understood the sentimental value. He would change the highway plans. They built an expensive chain-link fence around the grave and spread the eastbound and westbound lanes a half mile apart. Even now motorists driving to Chattanooga will notice, just after passing the Jasper exit, that the highway splits for a considerable distance. Now they'll know why.

Years later the engineer was driving through the area again and stopped to chat awhile with Richard Craig.

"Well, Mr. Craig," he said, "How do you like the nice chain-link fence we put around the general's grave?"

"It's fine," said Richard, "and don't think for a minute that our townspeople aren't appreciative of your kindness. You've shown the general proper respect. After all, he was the best coon dog I ever had."

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Turn to the experts

My Experience with the Spirit World

by Carolyn Woodyard



I was the 4th of 5 children born to Weston and Ruby (Stallings) Hatfield who lived in Sulphur Springs (DeKalb Co.) AL. Dad was a sharecropper; Mother was a good Christian lady that was a homemaker plus worked alongside Dad in the fields.

I remember going with Dad when I was 3 to this farm in the cove of Fox Mountain and Sand Mountain. The house seemed so large to me - 4 large rooms downstairs and 2 upstairs (all wood interior). To get the vision of the house, there was a full porch across the front. The single door entrance was in the middle of the house. As one walked in the front door there were 3 rooms to the left and 1 to the right. The hallway led to a large L-shaped back porch. Just before going out that door the stairway led to the right.

The name of the family living there was "Blevins." We only went into one room downstairs to the right of the hallway where Dad was talking with a group of people about us moving there. I only remember an

old lady sitting in a rocking chair, sitting in front of a fireplace. She had a blanket draped across her lap.

I clearly remember her saying, "Weston, you are going to hear noises in this house but don't think anything about it; it's only rats." Later I realized rats can't make sounds of walking up and down stairs, much less come out with a blood-curdling scream.

One room upstairs was used for a "play" room when company came. On Sundays after church, if family didn't all gather at the Hatfield's house, they visited each other for lunch and spent time together all afternoon; older people visiting and children playing. One Sunday when company was there, my sister Myrna had one corner of our children's "playroom" for her "house," my brother, Jimmy and a cousin, Roberta, had another corner for their "house." I had one corner with my doll for my "house." The other corner (close to the door) was our "church." I had my baby (doll) dressed and was ready before the others so I was leaving early for "church" and started to sing. We had closed the door when we went in to play.

When I started "singing" the door opened about a foot, closed, opened all the way, closed, opened again about half-way. There was a man standing just outside the door. He was all the same color - a pale blue-grey all over - hair, skin, eyes (which were wide open and did not blink), clothes. The four of us ran (falling on each other) to the opposite corner where my sister Myrtle was and called for someone downstairs. They all answered. We picked up enough courage to ease along the wall and tried to close the door but couldn't. When my older brother, Tommy, came up to check on us, there was no one there.

Other people that would come to our house at different times to visit (but we would not be at home) witnessed seeing a man

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in light colored clothes, hearing a terrible scream, or hearing footsteps going up or down staircases or walking in the hallway. A cousin Burt Heard, who lived on Sand Mountain was visiting us once when dad had made a trip to Chattanooga. It was late in the day. Mother was in the kitchen cooking supper; we children were lying on a cot in front of a window that looked out onto the L-shaped porch. Burt saw a man walk by the window, jumped up and ran to the door. No one was there.

On another occasion, Mother and I were a short distance from the house where she was looking for hen nests. Since they had the run of the property, we called them "yard birds".

Suddenly mother said, "Let's run!" Myrna had been left in the house to wash breakfast dishes. She was running out the back door, crying and calling Mother. She had heard a SCREAM and Mother had heard the same. I didn't. Don't know if it was because I had other things on my mind such as picking wild black berries or just being in my own little world.

Another time, Mother was in our living room and she saw a man walk out the front door and close it behind him. She thought it was one of Dad's brothers who was in the room across the hall from the living room. His wife was in that room after she had given birth to one of her children and Mother was helping take care of her - a normal thing back then.

When Mother walked into that room and saw my uncle sitting there, she went pale from shock when she realized it wasn't him she had seen go out the front door.

In the hallway close to the stairway there was a stain on the floor that Mother said looked like blood when it stains wood. She always mopped the floors with lye soap/water.

The more she mopped that floor, the brighter it got. Just as blood does. Always wondered if someone was murdered there. It was rumored that a man came to date a daughter of the family and mysteriously disappeared.

Two other families after us, but no one confessed to seeing or hearing anyone or anything. The original house burned and a group of hunters purchased the property with a different house. I took some friends to the area to show them where I grew up. I was pleased to see and talk to one of the hunters. He told me about his brother who was going to spend one night there but called and said he was leaving - the place was haunted!

So apparently the SPIRIT is still there!

Some years ago, a speaker came from another city to Huntsville to speak on the SUPERNATURAL. I attended and after the speech was over, I talked to him because I wanted to know why some "heard" and "saw" and others had not.

He said some people are just more susceptible to the Spirit World.

Onion Crisp Chicken

4 chicken breasts
3 T. mayonnaise
3 T. dry bread crumbs
1 packet dry onion soup mix
1 t. garlic powder
2 T. minced onions
Salt & pepper to taste

After you've put your chicken in a shallow greased baking pan, pre-heat oven to 350 degrees.

Spread mayonnaise over chicken evenly. Combine remaining ingredients in a small bowl and sprinkle over the chicken.

Press the crumb mixture down into the mayonnaise. Bake uncovered for 45 minutes. Your family will be asking for this on a regular basis!



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Can you believe we switch to Daylight Savings Time on Sunday, March 8th this year? Gosh, to have regular time for only four months from November through February doesn't seem worth the trouble. We get more evening daylight, just harder to get up in the mornings.

Another date of note is March 20th. It's the first day of spring, marking the astronomical equinox at 9:46 AM CDT. This day signifies the moment the Sun crosses the celestial equator, bringing nearly equal day and night lengths. To me, marking the end of cold weather (for the most part) and all the flowers and bulbs blooming.

When I mentioned the end of cold weather, I will always remember being in Huntsville Hospital on the maternity floor on March 22nd, just having had my third son, Brent, and I looked out the window and it was snowing. Some stayed on the grass and in shady places for the rest of that day, so snowy cold weather can come late into March, too.

Lots of events are going on this month. March 27-29, The Broadway Theater League will present Mrs. Doubtfire. The movie was lots of fun, and I look forward to seeing the play. Get your tickets early.

The Junior League of Huntsville invites you to a fun event weekend at the Von Braun Center. The American Girl Fashion Show returns for three different shows Saturday and Sunday, March 5-6. Saturday 10 & 2 and Sunday 2pm in the East Hall.

Just a note that Palm Sunday is March 27th this year, and April 5th is Easter Sunday.

I see that there are a few 'kite days' scheduled for late April, Chapman Elementary: April 25, 2026 and Challenger Elementary: April 26, come with kites ready to fly.

When I was coming along, it was in late March and we made them at school. I can't remember what kind of wood or maybe rigid plastic tubing for the cross-members were, but the kite was from brown paper bags. Once the frame with string glued or wrapped about the four points, we'd lay it down on the brown paper cut a tad larger than the kite, apply glue to the edges and flap it over the string and glue it to the inside. We had to have thin strips of material for the tail to keep it from flipping around in circles and crashing. Too much tail and it wouldn't fly. So that took some experimenting, but to have something you've built yourself flying high in the windy sky was such a thrill.

Come to think of it, my friends, *go fly a kite.*

"In the early days I would not have had anything to eat, if it hadn't been for the stuff the audience threw at me."

Bob Hope



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De-Lite-Ful (1960)

by Bill Alkire

The forecast was for a beautiful spring night. A warm breeze was blowing from the southeast at 4-5 mph, and there was a full moon (it had been raining for the last three days.) How perfect could it be for four teens - and a Saturday night off from work?

I had picked up the "Rabbit" (my 1953 Studebaker Champion Hardtop), freshly painted Polar White (Chevrolet Corvette color). My girlfriend had arranged a date for my 1st Cousin (he played lead guitar in our band the Crystals), with her best friend. My cousin and I picked up my girlfriend and drove on to her friend's house in town - it was a "gonna be a great night." You could feel the energy in the air.

We began our evening venturing from one teenage dance to the next. We were dancing, talking, dancing, singing, dancing, laughing ...did I mention we were dancing? I am not sure whose idea it was, probably mine, however, it was decided that the group of would-be Fred Astaire/Ginger Rodgers want-to-be's would crash a party at Alderson & Broaddus University, in Philippi, West Virginia - a good band was alleged to be playing.

The party turned out to be a bummer and the band was even worse, it was not what we had expected. Besides being teenagers, we were beginning to get hungry with all the dancing we had done. Dan-Delight had great foot-long hot dogs with their signature chili - "to die for."

The girls passed on the hot dogs - however a Cherry-Chocolate Coke would be okay.

We got in the car and proceeded to leave the Alderson & Broaddus Uni-

versity campus. However, the vehicles going down the hill from the University were completely stopped! "Oh, I know a short-cut" I claimed. A quick left turn onto the short-cut road brought us immediately into the back yard of a house. Not at all what I had expected or planned for.

Abruptly we were stopped - well not just stopped - a better term would be "we were stuck!" We apparently were sitting on the homeowner's septic tank drain field, and with three days of rain we were faced with a soggy, muddy mess.

The girls made it clear they were not getting out to help! I noticed a good supply of tomato stakes on a rack attached to the back of a garden shed. A plan developed - the stakes laid under each rear wheel, rock back and forward and "BINGO," problem solved. With the plan implemented the Studebaker pulled free - away we went. I turned to the right - down a small grade (past a picture window with a surprised homeowner looking out in amazement).

I considered it would be wise to keep going - rather than stop to explain or apologize to the man. Besides, he could be a gun owner and/or hunter, why take the chance? Neither idea seemed like a smart move at that time. I continued to drive until we were out of town. I stopped and cleaned the car's floor mat and my shoes as soon as I knew we were out of town far enough that no one would notice.

We got back on the road again. Headed for our ultimate objective - food. We made it to the Dan-Delight - the girls awarded us boys with a Root Beer Float. I had to promise however, "not to take any shortcuts again."

"Sure," why not? Besides next to Hot Dogs, I like Root Beer floats.

"When a movie on TV is rated PG-13, that means how many minutes your mom will let you watch before she turns it off."

Jeremy Green, age 12

William M. Yates, CLU, ChFC

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RESCUED

by Connor Pugs

Today I brought an old treasure home from the shelter. And the moment he lay down in the car, nothing happened the way people would expect—no barking, no tail wagging. He just looked at me with eyes that seemed like they were holding tears.

"I'm just glad it'll be Clark Gable who's falling on his face and not me."

Gary Cooper on his decision not to take the leading role in "Gone with the Wind."

I still don't know what hurt him more: the endless waiting... or the fear that no one would ever choose him again.

For almost a year, this gentle senior Rottweiler sat at the shelter, usually quiet in a corner. He was "too old," "too calm," "not interesting enough." Most people just walked past. But they didn't see what I saw: a tired heart that was only hoping to finally be noticed.

Maybe those tears were the weight of all those cold nights behind the bars. Maybe it was the uncertainty of leaving the only place he'd known for months. Or maybe it was something else entirely: a tiny spark of hope. Hope that the soft car seat now means rest. Hope that my hand on his back means safety. Hope that he isn't invisible anymore.

He's almost nine—an age that scares a lot of people away. But today, that number didn't define him. Today he didn't leave the shelter as the "left-over dog."

He left as family.

His name isn't just a label on a kennel door anymore.

It's a promise: that his final years will be warm. Safe. And filled with a love strong enough to quiet old wounds.

Whatever those tears were—pain, relief, or the very first hint of joy—one thing is certain: he'll never have to doubt his worth again.

Because he matters. And he is loved.

(Credit: born legend)



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Local News from 1923



- With his neck broken by a fall from a power line pole, George Corgan, 25, lineman, has refused the edict of physicians that he must die and is waging a game fight for his life here. "Don't tell me that," he grinned gamely when told that by all medical rules he must die. "For I'm not going to die. I'll fight it out and show you that a broken neck can't stop me!"

- Walter L. Harris, who has been associated with the W. L. Halsey Grocery Co. of this city for several years, leaves with his family tomorrow for Fayetteville, where he will represent the Trigg-Dobbs Co. R. B. Searcy has succeeded Mr. Harris as city salesman for Halsey Grocery Co.

- An automobile wreck occurred last night at the corner of Church and Holmes streets when a Standard Oil truck driven by S. H. Bice and a taxi owned by A. E. Overton collided in which the car of Mr. Overton was slightly damaged. None of the drivers were injured too badly.

- Three cases were docketed in city court Saturday morning. W. Jordan appeared and pled

guilty and was fined \$10. The other two defendants, Will Ikard and John Kennedy of New Hope, forfeited their bonds and \$10 by not appearing.

- Mr. John Rison Jones and children are indisposed at their home on West Holmes Street.

- Hotel Twickenham will be the scene tonight of one of the most spectacular dances of the winter in celebration of St. Valentine season, with the Grace Club as hostess.

- Mrs. White and Mrs. Schiffman were present representing the Library board and stated that the Library was in need of a heating apparatus in view of the fact that it was heated by the same furnace that heats the city hall. After the city hall closed in the afternoon the library had to close on account of being without heat. The council voted to install gas heaters in the library to be used when needed to heat the building.

- Mrs. Jerry Pennington was robbed early this morning when two masked men broke into her home and stole her jewelry. She is asking for the return of her engagement ring.

- There was only one case in City Court this morning, that of Floyd Wallace who was up on a charge of disorderly conduct. He pled guilty to hitting a woman in the head with a hatchet and was fined \$10.

- A. C. Cruse died yesterday at noon after an illness of several days with pneumonia and his remains were shipped today to Carlisle, his old home, for burial.

- Joseph Young, a man of nearly 70 years, a doortender in a local hotel, dropped dead this morning under unusual circumstances. The old man was in love, and in his pocket was found a letter. It said: "I died for Miss Boyd, of Randolph Street. I cannot live without her and my body should be sent to my brother at East Pepperill, Miss." That he was in love with Miss Boyd there is no doubt, but Miss Boyd rejected his advances.

- Mrs. Annie Farley, a well-known lady of this city, lost her life recently while preparing supper. Her dress caught fire from the cooking stove, and in her frightened state she ran into the yard. She called for help but before the family could reach her the frightened woman was burned to a crisp.

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Left - Roy Cox; Back center - Karen Nabors (Cox);
Front center - Sandi Singletary (Cox); Right - Wanda Cox

Trav-Ad Signs: A Family Legacy of Craft and Community

Part One: A Sign of Good Business *Building Trav-Ad from the Ground Up*

by Writer C5

For nearly fifty years, the signs rising across Huntsville and the Tennessee Valley have done more than mark businesses and roadways. They have told a quieter story — one of family, craftsmanship, and pride in work done well. Founded in 1976, Trav-Ad Signs has grown alongside Huntsville itself, remaining firmly rooted as a local, family-owned business while serving customers large and small.

The story begins several years earlier, in 1969, when Roy Cox returned home from Vietnam with his wife, Wanda, and a determination to build a better future. Roy began working for a small local sign company, where the work was demanding and conditions were hard. Skilled craftsmen labored long hours, often underap-

preciated for the expertise their work required. Over time, Roy came to understand something most people never see: it takes as many as twenty-one skilled trades to design, build, and install custom commercial signage.

Out of that experience grew a dream — not just to start a sign company, but to create one where employees were respected, valued, and empowered to use their skills fully. Roy envisioned a place where craftsmen could point to a sign as they drove down the road and proudly say to their families, "I helped build that."

In 1976, with that vision firmly in place and \$2000, Roy founded Trav-Ad Signs. There were no computers or digital renderings in those early days. Artwork was drawn by hand at a drafting table, measurements taken carefully, and layouts refined line by line. Much of the early work was done out of the Cox family

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garage, which doubled as workspace, storage area, and classroom for learning the business.

From the beginning, Trav-Ad was a true family operation. Wanda left her banking career to manage the office and oversee the books, providing the steady foundation every growing business needs.

Their daughters, Karen and Sandi, didn't grow up around the business—they grew up in it.

Karen remembers working with her dad on cold Saturday mornings to letter feed-and-seed trucks for local businesses. Roy would outline the business name by hand, and Karen, paintbrush stiff in her frozen fingers, would carefully fill in the letters. Those trucks might belong to small, family-run operations, but they received the same care and precision as any large commercial job.

As a teenager, Karen moved into the office, working alongside her mother and learning firsthand how the financial and operational sides of the business worked. She learned early that successful signs depend as much on solid planning and accountability as they do on fabrication and installation.

Sandi's memories often come from higher up. She recalls riding in bucket trucks, gaining a new perspective on both the work and the responsibility that came with it. She learned alongside seasoned craftsmen—the "old sign dogs"—absorbing lessons on fabrication, installation and problem-solving that could only be taught in the field.

Only months after opening, Trav-Ad was awarded a significant signage contract on Redstone Arsenal. The project tested the young company's capacity, but it also confirmed its approach. With careful planning and strong supplier relationships, the job was completed successfully, setting a precedent that still defines Trav-Ad today: no job is too small to matter, and no challenge too large to approach with confidence.

As Huntsville grew and evolved, so did Trav-Ad—remaining, at its core, a local family business committed to excellence for every customer it serves. The values formed during those early years would eventually be summed up in a phrase still associated with the company today: "A sign of good business, is a good sign."

First Sight

by Ron Jeffries, Published in Old Huntsville Magazine in 1994

The first memory I have of Huntsville is hundreds of yellow lights that shone brightly on the hill at Haystack Apartments (now the Hunt Club).

My pal and I were 16 and heard that we could meet lots of girls in the clubs over here. We soon learned that it was true, so we would drive over every weekend from Tusculumbia.

There were very few businesses to speak of on University Drive west of Sparkman, so those big bright lights always signaled that we were right on target. They came into view just as we topped the hill out by Waddell's RV sales place.

Even though we were minors, we must have acted pretty responsibly, because Ken Moss would let us in the Fogcutter, which he had recently built. Later he hired me as DJ there.

I had arrived!

Since then I have enjoyed some good years in Huntsville as manager of some excellent night clubs and now as owner of my own Club V downtown.



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Heard On the Street



by Cathey Carney

We heard recently from a reader **Jimmy Striplin** who read a story in OHM about Huntsville back in 1959. It reminded him of attending Huntsville Junior High School as a 7th grader, and how much those memories mean to him. He especially loved the Dip Dogs you could buy at Zesto's at Pratt & Russell when it was located there for years. Thanks for getting in touch Jimmy!

Did you find the 4 leaf clover I put on p. 8 in the Feb issue? We had a good number of calls but the

first one wins and that was **Joan Nichols** of Gurley. She and her family have only lived here for 3 years but she loves the people and the area - congratulations to you. It was next to the left shoulder of **Iolanda** top left picture!

How lucky were we to have known **Microwave Dave**. He was not only a beloved blues musician, he was also a mentor to many younger musicians trying to get their start. He was 79 years old when he died on Feb. 6, 2026. He leaves literally thousands of friends and associates who will always be grateful they knew Dave.

My personal experience with Dave Gallaher was when my husband **Tom** passed away of lung cancer, in June 2011. He only wanted grave side services at Maple Hill cemetery, and he wanted Dave to do the singing. Dave arrived with guitar and along with **Suzie Nolen** sang "I'll Fly Away," "Amazing Grace" and several other beautiful hymns. I'll never forget it nor will the people who were there that day. Thank you, Dave, for doing that, it meant the world to us.

A portion of Dave's obituary follows:

Born April 25, 1946, in Chicago, Dave moved as a toddler to Texas. When he was in tenth grade, his family relocated to Atlanta and Dave got to join his first

band. The "Cavaliers" developed a Beatles tribute act stupendous enough to have them invited to perform with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. From that moment onwards, music was always in Dave's life. In 1965, his band "Majestics" performed regularly at the Royal Peacock Lounge in Atlanta, a club that hosted the likes of Aretha Franklin, James Brown and Little Richard.

While serving in the Air Force, at the Tan Son Nhut Air Base in Saigon, Dave performed at officer clubs and nightclubs as a member of "Rotations." While completing his military service at Langley Air Force Base, he played with the band "Empacts". Next, Dave headed north to attend the Berklee School of Music. He later joined "Cameron Company", a band he followed to Miami, Florida. "Cameron" appeared with groups such as "Dr. Hook and the Medicine Show", and "Blood, Sweat and Tears." In 1974, "Cameron" came to Huntsville, Alabama, performing at the Monte Sano Amphitheater and at The Plush Horse. Dave discovered he loved the city and in 1982 he made it his home. For the next few years, he was a member of "Delta" and then "The Thrasher Brothers."

For 37 years, Dave hosted the program, "Talkin' the Blues" on Huntsville's public radio stations,



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WLRH and WJAB. Week by week, he made a gift of his time and expertise by going out to the radio station to record the show.

In 2015, **Tommy Battle**, Mayor of Huntsville, Alabama proclaimed June 28th to be in perpetuity, **Microwave Dave Day**, honoring not only his breathtaking virtuosity on the frets, but also his profoundly generous nature. The nonprofit that Dave started, the Microwave Dave Music Education Foundation, works to have live music incorporated into the schools of North Alabama. This mission had special meaning for Dave. When he was an elementary school student, a Dixieland band trooped into the auditorium and lit up his life.

In addition to performing with the Nukes, Dave regularly played solo gigs at such places as: The Kaffeeklatch (1992-2004), The Jazz Factory (1997-2009), the Flying Monkey/Lowe Mill Cigar Box Guitar Festival (2004-2020), Bandido's South Side Cantina (2009-2016), The Lumberyard (2016-2020). From the summer of 2020 until the week before he died, Dave played at the Nook.

Dave was preceded in death by his parents, **Tom** and **Barbara Gallaher**, and by his sister, **Gail**. Dave leaves behind his daughter and three grandsons, his brother, **Tom**, and his beloved niece **Kyle**. He also leaves behind his spiritual family-his brothers and sisters at **The Episcopal Church** of the Nativity in Huntsville. Nativity provided sustenance for Dave's soul, and a Sunday/Wednesday steadiness to his odd-ball work week. He was long in the habit of stopping by that sacred space alone, after a late-night gig.

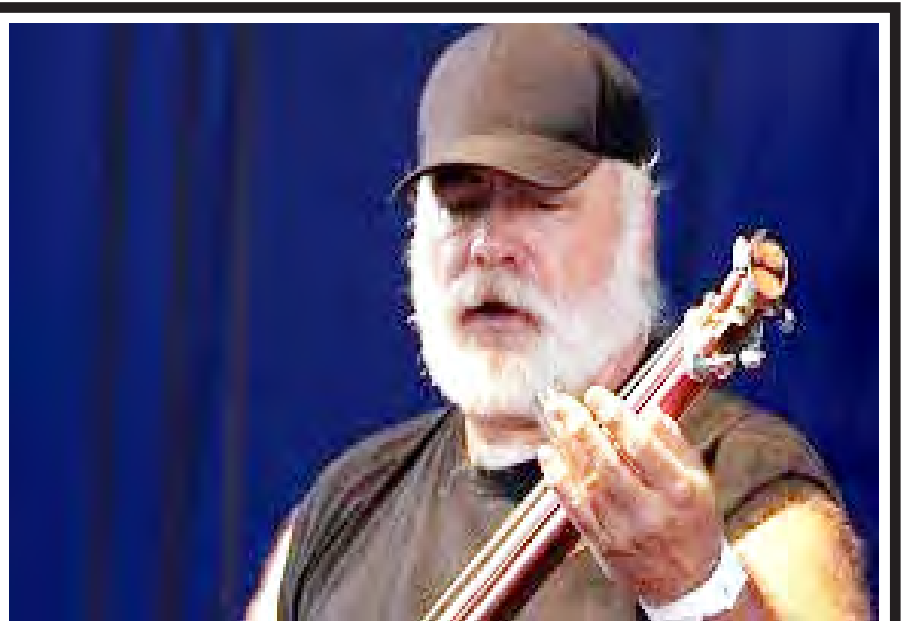
Sometime in the near future, there will be a **Microwave Dave "Graduation Day"** at which Dave devotees throughout the region will be able to honor his life and legacy. Love you always, Dave. In honor of Dave we are hiding a tiny guitar somewhere in these pages - be the first to call when you find it to win a year's subscription.

We are all looking forward

to warmer weather and green leaves, flowers and everything spring brings. Here's an idea for our parents who have elementary age children - let them grow a garden. Many kids will find it amazing to plant a seed, maybe indoors, watch it grow, plant it outside when the time is right and care for it as it grows. Then when the time comes to pick the flowers or eat tomatoes from a plant they grew from tiny seeds, full circle. May be a great alternate to spending so much time on a cell phone.

Newcomers to Huntsville are telling us how much they're enjoying the hiking trails on Monte Sano and Green Mountain, Tennessee River and Ditto Landing, nearby Guntersville with the dam and lake, our Big Spring Park and beautiful historic districts full of old homes and gardens. There's so much to do here that involves getting outside and walking which will boost your mood immediately!

Try it and let us know your favorites!



The Danny Hall Memorial Music Scholarship (started in 2018 by the Microwave Dave Music Education Foundation)

This was Dave's pride and joy. The organization works with local musicians, educators and music teachers to support and promote music education in North Alabama. Each year, MDMEF selects four recipients to be awarded the Danny Hall Memorial Music Scholarship. Through this scholarship program, MDMEF hopes to assist and foster talented young musicians, enabling them to progress in their craft as well as in life.

The scholarship pays tuition for one year of music lessons at any approved music school, including Valley Conservatory, Musicology. Maitland Conservatory and Pope's School of Percussion. MDMEF provides up to \$1620 per scholarship which is equivalent to 12 months of music lessons.

For donating, applying and more information go here
<https://microwavedavemef.org/danny-hall-memorial-music-scholarship/>



Hot and Hearty

Chipped Beef Dip

- 1 c. chopped pecans
- 2 t. melted butter
- 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened
- 1/4 c. milk
- 2-1/2 oz. dried beef, minced
- 1/2 t. garlic powder
- 1 8-oz. carton sour cream
- 4 t. minced onion

Saute pecans in butter til lightly browned, drain on paper towels and set aside. Combine remaining ingredients, mix well. Spoon into greased 1-1/2 quart baking dish. Top with the pecans and bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes. Serve hot with assorted crackers or Bugles.

Senate Bean Soup

- 2 lbs. navy (pea) beans
- 1-1/2 lbs. smoked ham hocks
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1/2 t. ground cayenne
- Salt and pepper to taste

Wash beans and run through hot water. Add beans to a kettle with 4 quarts hot water and the ham hocks. Boil slowly for 4 hours, covered. Braise chopped onion in butter and when light brown add to soup. When beans are tender, season with salt, pepper and cayenne and serve.

Chicken with Almond Sauce

- 4 chicken breasts, bone in
- 1 T. Crisco
- 1 T. plain flour
- 2 c. heavy cream
- 1 T. fresh parsley, chopped
- 1 c. almonds, blanched

Heat Crisco in skillet and fry chicken til golden brown and done. Put it on hot platter while you make the sauce. Thicken the grease in the skillet with the flour, stir til smooth. Chop the almonds. Add the cream and parsley, add salt and pepper. Stir well, add the almonds. Let boil for 5 min-

utes, stirring constantly. Add liquid if it gets too thick. Pour the sauce over the chicken and serve.

Mother's Meat Loaf

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

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

Broccoli Piquant

- 1 lrg. bunch broccoli or 2 pkgs. frozen
- 2 T. butter
- 2 T. minced onion
- 1-1/2 c. sour cream
- 1/2 t. salt

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- 2 t. sugar
- 1 t. white vinegar
- 1/2 t. poppy seeds
- 1/2 t. paprika
- Dash pepper

Cook broccoli until it is just tender and drain well. Melt butter and sauté onion til clear. Remove from heat and stir in sour cream, sugar, vinegar, poppy seeds, paprika, salt and pepper. Pour over warm broccoli and serve.

Note: Deliciously different and good over other vegetables, too!

Cheesy Hash Browns

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

Mix together all ingredients, saving part of the cheese for topping. Salt and pepper to taste. Grease a 9x13" pan, put the mixture into the pan and bake 1 hour at 325 degrees. Sprinkle the remaining cheese on top the last 30 minutes.

Roasted Garlic Cloves

- 6 elephant garlic bulbs
- 1/4 c. olive oil
- 1 t. rosemary
- 1/2 t. seasoned salt

Take each bulb and cut 1/3" off the wide end. In a garlic roaster or a mini-cupcake pan, place the garlic bulbs cut side down, drizzle the olive oil over each bulb and sprinkle with the rosemary and seasoned salt.

Bake at 350 for about 45 minutes - you should be able to smell it cooking. If it looks like it is cooking too fast and may burn, turn down the heat to 300. Cook covered, take out to cool. On some toasted fresh bread squeeze out each clove and "butter" the bread. This can be habit forming if you love garlic!

French Bread with Garlic & Cheese

1 loaf French or Italian bread, sliced lengthwise

- 1/2 c. butter, melted
- 2 t. minced garlic
- 1 c. shredded Monterey Jack cheese

Combine the butter and garlic and pour over the bread halves, then sprinkle with the cheese. Bake at 350 degrees for about 25 minutes, and cheese is melted and slightly browned on top. Slice in smaller pieces.

Chiusciki

- 2 egg yolks mixed with 1/4 t. salt
- 1/3 c. sugar
- 1 t. rum
- 1/2 c. sweet cream
- 2 c. flour
- Oil for deep frying
- 1/2 box confectioner's sugar

Take a large bowl, and to the egg mixture add sugar, rum and cream. Using a whisk, continue to beat, adding flour gradually until a ball forms. Turn your dough out onto a floured board and knead it until the dough blisters.

Using a floured rolling pin, roll out the dough very thin. Cut with a sharp, floured knife into strips 4 inches long and 1/2 inch wide. Twist each strip slightly.

Heat oil til nearly smoking, place dough strips into the pan. The twists should be golden in less than two minutes, take them out with slotted spoon and dust with confectioners sugar while still hot.

Trav-Ad Signs



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A Penny for Your Thoughts

by Tommy Towery



Another memorable item from our Baby Boomers' lives just faded into history. Future generations will never understand the significance this small item meant to us. Few will mourn its loss, but many of us senior citizens will continue to carry pleasant memories about its place in our early lives.

The era of the penny coin in the United States has officially come to a close. After 238 years of production, the U.S. Mint struck its final penny on Wednesday, November 12, 2025, in Philadelphia. Despite its common usage, most people cannot tell you whether Lincoln faces left or right on his coin without looking. "Goodbye; it's been fun Abe. We'll miss you."

The decision to stop minting the one-cent coin was primarily economic.

The Department of the Treasury cited several key reasons: (1) It cost approximately 3.7 cents to manufacture a single penny. (2) With the rise of digital payments, physical pennies had become increasingly irrelevant for modern commerce. (3) The purchasing power of a penny had dropped significantly.

Most folks would not even stop and pick up a penny they see laying on the ground today. I guess a penny meant a lot more to those of us who grew up in the Fifties and Sixties. You could almost get a sugar high on a penny back then.

In the 1950s, "penny candy" was a staple of neighborhood grocery and variety stores, where children could often find a wide array of treats for exactly one cent. While many larger candy bars had risen to five cents, small individual items remained a penny.

Penny candy was called penny candy long before we entered the scene, but thank goodness, it was still around when we were kids. I don't think it

could exist today, even if there was not an economic issue of never being able to make a profit on something that sold for just a penny. I don't think the health department and the consumer protection people would dare let penny candy, as we knew it back then, be sold today.

While many of the sweets were individually wrapped, I remember just as many were not. They were in open boxes, or big-lid glass jars, all just sitting there for any dirty-fingered kid to reach into and mill through until he or she had the right one with the right color or size. Sometimes you were given a small brown bag to put them in, and many times you laid them down on the counter where everyone else had laid money or sat dirty diapered babies or emptied all the lint out of their pockets while they looked for the correct change. It didn't matter. When you bought it you crammed it down into the pockets of your dirty jeans until you got a chance to eat it.

When I think of where I remember penny candy being sold, my first thought is of Brown's Grocery in West Huntsville. That was because I was often given money by my grandmother, who was a cook at the Rebel Inn, also at that intersection, to go buy myself some candy. Brown's was a big building, also caddy-cornered from the Center Theatre. Downtown was the home of Woolworth's, Kresses, McLellan's

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and W.T. Grants. On East Clinton, Mrs. Grime's little one-room grocery in her house had lots of penny candy as well. Back when I went to Rison in the first grade, I often stopped in Gordon Loftin's Grocery Store located at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Humes Street for those treats. There was another store way down in West Huntsville, near West Huntsville Cafe, across from the old Merrimack Mill in that little strip mall. I don't remember Kroger, A&P, or Piggly Wiggly having penny candy areas, but they must have had some close to the cash registers somewhere. Most cafes had a few things near the register to make you spend the odd pennies you got in change. I think the Grand Newsstand did that too.

What kind of candy do I remember, you ask? The easiest to remember are penny B-B-Bats, Mary Janes, Peanut Butter Logs, and Atomic Fireballs. Many other small items like Peppermint Sticks, Root Beer Barrels, Lemon Drops, Jawbreakers, and Swedish Fish (introduced to the U.S. in the late 50s) were also sold for a penny each. If you put gum in the same candy category, I remember Double-Bubble, Bazooka and Joe Palooka gum. I also still can get saliva glands working just thinking about the banana flavored taffy which I think were called Banana Bikes or something similar. There were some other chocolate and strawberry taffy type candy that came individually wrapped, and then grouped into a waxed paper wrap of four for a penny. Those were called Kits. There was also the wax Nik-L-Nip

type bottles that we would bite the top off of, suck out the sweet syrup, and then chew up the bottle. "Growl! I'm mean...I can eat a bottle!" And many of you have to remember the wax lips that fit into that same species.

There were other candies too, like Tootsie Roll Pops, and miniature Tootsie Rolls. There was one I remember that was a small ice cream cone filled with a marshmallow topping that made it look like ice cream. There were individual Bit-O-Honey pieces too. And how many times did we choke when we tried to breathe through our mouths just about the time we tore the end off of a Pixy Stix and started pouring the powder down our throats? I never liked licorice sticks, but many did and many bought them with their pennies. There were suckers called Dum-Dums and other stick candy and multi-flavored suckers that never seemed to have a commercial name but were just in the jars.

Penny baseball cards were primarily produced



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

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"Who in the hell wants to hear actors talk?"

**H. M. Warner, Warner Brothers
1927**

by chewing gum companies from the early 1930s through the early 1950s. Bowman Gum Company was a major force in the post-WWII era. Bowman sold one-cent "penny packs" that included a single card and a piece of gum. They remained the dominant producer of these packs until they were bought out by Topps in 1956. These companies used baseball cards as a "premium" or sales gimmick to encourage children to buy their products for a single cent.

Little did we know how valuable those cards would become later in our lives. In almost every conversation today by collectors of these cards there is one participant who laments about his mother throwing away his collection when he flew his nest.

And, of course, some of the most notable and favorite penny usages were the gumball machines and weight machines. Sometimes you got your weight and your fortune for a penny. Most cafes and drug stores in Huntsville had those.

I also remember my parents used to buy packs of cigarettes when I was young. The cost of a pack of cigarettes once increased to 27 cents. To make them easier to buy, they were sold for 30 cents in cigarette machines. Three bright shiny new pennies were slipped into the side of the cellophane wrappers for instant change, and I would get to keep the pennies when they opened the packs.

Some penny-related memories had faded before our times, but we still heard about them from our parents, and they probably will be lost to time as well.

The phrase, "Penny for your thoughts," one of the most enduring idioms in the English language, was used to kindly ask what someone is thinking about, and was still around in our lives

The song "Pennies from Heaven" had lyrics to encourage opti-

mism during hard times (like the Great Depression), suggesting that "every time it rains... it rains pennies from heaven". Beyond entertainment, the phrase carries a spiritual meaning for many. A popular folk belief suggests that finding a penny in an unexpected place is a "hello" or a sign from a deceased loved one to let you know they are okay. They may have to up their ante now.

Finding a penny on the sidewalk was more than just a cent gained—it was the center of a centuries-old superstition that has evolved through multiple cultures and rhymes. The most common version of the famous rhyme was "Find a penny, pick it up, and all day long you'll have good luck."

"Penny Serenade" was a popular 1938 song Director George Stevens used as the basis for a movie their generation enjoyed. The film is considered a quintessential "tear-jerker" or "weeper," noted for its realistic but heart-wrenching depiction of parental grief and marriage.

Our parents had Penny Arcades, which were the pioneers of the modern gaming industry, emerging in the late 19th century as storefronts filled with mechanical and coin-operated wonders. While their heyday was between 1902 and 1907, they remained staples of communal entertainment for decades.

Our parents and grandparents were also associated with some historic pennies that stopped production before we were born.



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Indian Head Pennies were produced by the United States Mint from 1859 to 1909, but some still popped up on rare occasions in our change.

There were also the steel pennies - (officially known as 1943 Steel Cents) the unique one-year issues produced by the U.S. Mint during World War II. Because copper was a critical material needed for ammunition and military equipment, the government authorized the use of zinc-coated steel to conserve thousands of pounds of industrial metal for the war effort. These were still around for us as well.

As we grew up, we listened and danced to Bobby Darin's "Mack the Knife". It was a popular song a song from the musical "Three Penny Opera."

Besides the penny-candy treat, we found other uses for the copper coins, and used them in some unique ways.

In 1950 the penny became a necessity for many vending machines when the price of bottled Coca-Cola officially rose from five to six cents around town. To raise the price to six cents, the company had to replace or rebuild nearly every cola machine in the country.

Many a school kid participated in a game of pitching pennies, a centuries-old game of skill and chance that was once a common sight on American street corners and schoolyards.

We were sometimes aided by the "Take a Penny, Leave a Penny" trays in many consumer checkout counters. It was a long-standing fixture in American retail culture designed for convenience and community trust.

The wearing of Penny Loafers was common by the 1950s and 60s, when the practice of keeping a shiny penny in the shoe was purely a "preppy" fashion statement among students.

I am sure there are many other memories going unmentioned, like placing them on railroad tracks to be smashed, and for the new generation, the souvenir penny smashers at national parks and places like Disney World. There are probably thousands of homes containing big glass jars filled

with pennies today.

But those days are gone now, and probably for a good reason. By halting production, the government expects to save roughly \$56 million annually. Existing pennies will remain legal tender, and you can still spend them or deposit them at your bank indefinitely. There are an estimated 114 billion pennies still in circulation, and it will take many years for them to naturally phase out as they are lost or damaged. The U.S. Mint will still produce limited quantities of numismatic (collector) pennies for sets, but these will not be released for general circulation.

I've accepted it now costs more than "a penny for your thoughts!"

"I was going to have some plastic surgery until I noticed that the doctor's office was full of portraits by Picasso."

Rita Rudner



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NASA Test Stands Demolition

by Jim Vann

Hearing all the noise and seeing pictures of the NASA Test Stands demolition brought back some memories for me that I hope you find interesting.

Back in 1961 I got a summer job working for NASA. I was assigned to a "millwright" crew. My experiences that summer were varied and many were different from anything I had ever done before.

But first, let me tell you about some of the "millwright" crew members. There was an arsenal in Milam, Tennessee that closed and many of the workers from there came to Huntsville to continue their government work. One crew member was an exception because he was from Birmingham and had worked at one of the mines there. I called him "big bad John", because his name was John and that song was popular about that time. He was very strong.

One day some of our crew were cutting and welding some steel in a building half a mile away from where we were located. Big John and I were told that those workers needed some more gas supplies so we loaded up at least three of those big green metal tubes that held the gas they needed. We got to their site and I very laboriously was carrying one of the bottles into the building. I looked back just before entering the building and here comes John with two bottles, one under each arm. The bottles weighed about 80 pounds each.

Nearly all of the fellows from Milam were pranksters and you never knew what was coming next. We all gathered at our building each day for lunch at a fairly large table there for us to use.

One of the supervisors had a garden in his home backyard and would most everyday bring something to eat from his garden. One day he brought in a big delicious looking tomato from his garden. One of the fellows had been planning what happened next for a long time. The supervisor came to the table and asked if anyone had any salt he could use on his tomato. The prankster told him that he had some salt bound up in some waxed paper on the top shelf of his locker. The supervisor gets the twisted wax paper out and sprinkled some of the "Salt" on his tomato and took a huge bite. Immediately, his mouth puckers up and he can hardly talk. The "salt" in the waxed paper was actually "alum" which will cause such a reaction when eaten.

Another one of the Milam fellows brought his lunch every day in a lunchbox that looked like a small mailbox. It opened as the top part separated from the bottom part and there in the top was a thermos bottle containing his liquid for the day. Every day, one of the items his wife would pack was a hard boiled egg. Each day, he would get out the egg, start cracking it on the tabletop and complain about his wife's choices for his

lunch. As you might expect, one of the members of our crew got to his lunchbox and exchanged his hardboiled egg for a fresh un-boiled egg.

He got that egg out of the box and after reciting about what his wife packed, he forced the egg down on the tabletop. The egg broke and spewed raw egg all over him, the tabletop, the checkerboard and everyone within three feet of him.

Another day that I specifically remember was at the end of the day, we were back at our building, changing back into our street clothes ready to go home. One of the Milam fellows was having trouble getting his shirt buttoned. I asked him what the problem was and he replied that his wife had made the shirt for him. She had used a pattern designed for a woman's shirt that buttoned from left to right instead of right to left as a man's shirt would button.



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I was intrigued by this and my research showed that the left to right pattern started years before when most women had a maid that would help the lady of the house get dressed. This left to right feature allowed her to button right to left, facing her lady.

One of the older gentlemen from Milam took over as my leader because he was afraid I would get hurt doing some of the work we were required to do. His name was Mr. McManus and he really did help me by giving good advice and was just a good friend.

Now back to the test stand subject at hand.

One of the first things that comes to mind is working on one of those test stands that were recently demolished.

The test stand had a roll-up door (like a garage door) that would be closed to keep the weather from bothering the rocket motor when it was not being tested.

The door had a shut-off switch at the top that stopped the door from going up too far into its enclosure. Because of the violent shaking from a test on the stand, the stop piece would be moved such that it didn't do the job it was supposed to do. One of my jobs that summer was to take a long ladder to the test stand and adjust the stop piece so that it stopped the door like it was supposed to do. I had to perform that operation a couple of times during that summer.

Through this assignment, I got to know the man that was in charge of that test stand.

He took an interest in this college student and showed me a great deal about the test stand and its capabilities.

He gave me an invitation to come witness one of the live firings of the rocket motor being tested. We were to observe from what they called a bunker or pillbox that was about a quarter mile away from the stand. That bunker had an opening that was about one foot tall and went across the entire structure.

In my millwright job, I had to wear coveralls while I was working. I had those coveralls on that day.

They had long sleeves and I propped my arms up on that slot to get a really good view of the stand while the missile was firing. I will never forget as the countdown approached zero and the motor fired, the sleeves of my coveralls fluttered from the sound waves coming from the test stand. Also my stomach (or my guts) shook like I had never had happen before in my life. It was an impressive experience to say the least.

Another experience I had on that stand involved a quarter inch electric drill. After a certain number of firings on that stand, the tub that was directly under the nozzle of the test engine would be repainted with a special paint that changed color depending on the temperature of the flame coming from the rocket motor. Water was sprayed from that tub under the flame to keep from burning the stand down. There were probably a thousand quarter inch holes that were drilled at various angles in the pan to spray water under the flame of the firing rocket motor. Those holes were drilled at various angles in that steel shell to spray the water in all directions while the rocket was firing.

After the new paint had dried, I spent an entire week hanging over the edge of that stand sitting on a boson's chair (or boatswain's chair), drilling the new paint out of those thousand holes with the quarter inch drill so the water would flow again. There's no way to know how many of those quarter inch drill bits I broke because you could not tell at what angle the hole was drilled until you started drilling.

There were many interesting tasks that I had to perform during that summer job.

As an aside, later in life, my wife and I attended one of the races at the Talladega Raceway. We were seated on the back side of the track and I walked down to the fence that separated our seating area from the track itself. As those forty cars came around all bunched together for the start of the race, those engines shook my gut just like the shaking I got at the missile test stand that day in 1961.

I'll never forget that feeling.

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How I Got 63 STITCHES IN MY LEG

by M. D. Smith IV

The year—1949, I was nine years old and starting the fourth grade. I also had a dog, as most boys my age did at the time. My parents got me a young Doberman Pinscher for my first birthday, whom they called Peppy because of his lively antics. Of course, I don't remember much until later years; there was a photo of me riding my dog like a pony while my dad held onto me.

As I got into grade school, he was my constant companion wherever I went on my bike, and if other friends' dogs got into a disagreement, Peppy always won. Made me proud. He was a muscular dog who wore a 'choke chain' collar that tightened when you held the center loop or attached a leash to it. That was the only way I could restrain him as a young boy.

"My goal in life is to be as good a person as my dog already thinks I am."

Amy Eades, Madison

But I mentioned in the title about the 63 stitches I had to have in my leg at age nine. It was the summer of 1949, and a new house was under construction across the street and up two houses. They'd started plastering the walls. Back then, they'd put up wooden backing on the exterior studs, nail metal checkered lath over it, cover it with plaster, and then paint it.

Walking onto the construction lot in shorts and a T-shirt, I saw a giant, partially used dirt mound. I imagined myself on a battlefield, dashing toward the enemy, climbing up the embankment, and wanted my faithful dog to follow me. Twice, I coaxed him to come, and he'd turn around and go back. All I needed was a leash to tug, and surely, he'd follow my lead—but no rope.

However, I found this thin strip of the metal lath, about 3/4" wide and six feet long. One side was sharp and prickly where it'd been cut on the diamonds, but it was all I had. I gingerly looped one end around Peppy's collar, folded and bent it to hold.

Now, I was ready to scale the hill with my dog to charge the enemy. We started at a run, Peppy following the tug on the 'leash' I had made. Just as we were near the top with Peppy in front, he changed his mind, swiveled, and ran backwards down the hill. The metal lath was like a buzz saw as it dragged against my bare right leg calf. I screamed out in pain, dropping the wire. When I could get my breath and look at my leg, it almost made me vomit. There were three deep gashes in the side of my leg, and I could see the white flesh exposed at least an inch deep, with tiny trickles of blood beginning to form in the tissue.

I knew it was serious, but I assumed some nerves got cut, because there wasn't much pain anymore. Limping home and inside my house, I screamed for Mom, who



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came running. I said, "Look," pointing to my leg, now with blood only running into my sock. Those three deep gashes said it all.

Mother gasped, then called my father at work and told him to meet us at our family doctor, located in an old house he used for his practice and some surgeries.

My father was waiting there, and the doctor came out from the back immediately. One glance, and he said, "Got to clean and stitch that wound."

My father went back with me to his main treatment room, containing an operating table and many glass cabinets of sterilized stainless-steel instruments.

With the help of his nurse, Dr. Lester first injected several syringes of Novocain into my leg, which I barely felt, then, with soap and water, scrubbed the three slices with what felt like a stiff-bristled brush. I remember worrying at the time that he might wash some flesh out. He stopped and began probing with forceps. That's when I asked if I could lean up from the table and watch, and he said, "Sure, whatever you want."

As I looked, he was extracting a small black piece of metal lath. Apparently, several 'teeth' broke off while sawing my leg flesh. That look made me queasy, and I decided I did not need to watch anymore.

After all the cleaning, he started stitching....and stitching. He told my father he hoped the two slices of flesh and skin in the middle would mend and not rot out and need a more extensive surgery. That scared me, and I know it did my father, but he'd never let me see it or hear it in his voice. He was all positive that I'd be fine.

As they were about to bandage my leg, I asked him how many stitches he put in, and he said, "Sixty-three."

I walked on crutches for six weeks, including the first two weeks of school, and received sympathy from everyone, especially the girls, which I enjoyed. My special girlfriend was more attentive than ever, and our 'romance' blossomed that fall, but in January, her mother moved the two of them to Texas.

When I look back on my stupidity, it

seemed like such a good idea at the time.

By the way, my leg healed properly with no complications or limitations. And I can still show you the triple, long white scars on my leg, a permanent reminder of unwise things I've done in my life.



"Peppy" - Doberman Pinscher - 1941-1950

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With Love to the Class of '66 - Huntsville High School

Oscar Llerena

FORAGING

by Giles Hollingsworth

When I was growing up, during the 1930s and 1940s, Huntsville was considered to be a big little city, but it occupied only a small portion of Madison County. There was a vast countryside in all directions, and there were a lot of country roads, including many unpaved ones. There were also a lot of wooded areas. I mention these things because they are important to what I want to tell you about foraging.

The word "foraging" isn't all that common in usage, so I should say that for this story it means searching for food, and more specifically I mean free food. Not begging, stealing, or borrowing, but actually searching the land to see what nature has provided. Well, nature made Madison County's countryside a virtual cornucopia. If you drove or walked on country roads back then you were sure to readily find forage because roadsides were a favorite place for plum bushes and blackberry vines. I guess the main reason why they aren't there now is that improved road maintenance meant widening and clearing road shoulders.

Yes, blackberries and plums were forage. I didn't know that back then, and in fact I had never even heard the word "forage". But I dearly loved those beautiful, juicy, red and yellow plums....they had a special sweetness that told you they were nature's gift to you as the first-fruits of spring. Not only did I snack on them as I walked the country roads, but I, and other family members went "plum picking" at least twice every spring, bringing home bucketfuls for Mama's jelly-making.

About two weeks into summer, blackberries ripened and we got out the buckets again. But before I go any further I need to point out that we were not the only people out there foraging, and blackberries were the forage favorite. It's a little hard to understand why, because picking blackberries is a real tough job. There is no way to keep from getting really badly scratched up by the vine barbs that we called stickers, and chiggers will feast on you because for some unknown reason the vines are chigger havens.

For lots of people, worst of all was the

well-known fact that snakes love blackberries, so they hang out there under the vines.

The chiggers and the stickers are definitely natural deterrents but I think that part about snakes might be what today we would call misinformation, circulated to inhibit or scare off competition, other foragers. I say that because during the worst time of the Great Depression, when we lived in Merrimack Mill Village, small groups of people, usually men, would get together and go "blackberry picking" out Madison Pike. And if you were the first pickers at whatever patches you found, you would naturally end up with more berries than later pickers. More berries for jelly, jam, or wine making, or even to sell, because blackberries would readily sell.

I think the group picking grew into a quasi tradition that continued for a few years, even after times got better. The city pickers no longer needed to sell any of the blackberries, but oh what delicious pies, jam, jelly, and wine they made. Moreover, it might have even become a bit of a macho thing, showing off your chigger bites and scratched up arms, and bragging about how you braved the danger of getting snake-bit.

So, as I mentioned earlier, we, the Hollingsworths, as blackberry pickers, had some competition. But from 1941 to 1950 we had a clear advantage, because we lived in the country, so we knew just where the best patches were, not just the roadside ones, but also those by the creeks and at the feet of small mountains, and we knew which land owners had no objection to you foraging their berries. And we used that advantage.

Late in summer muscadines ripened. As I progress through my list of forages it occurs to me that some of them will not be familiar to a lot of people. Muscadines, for one. Muscadines are wild grapes

More in another month or so.

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To Your Health

- Avoid Cola drinks
- Jump rope
- Get some hand weights, do 2 sets of 8-10 reps a day

To slim down:

- Keep a food diary, you'll be amazed what you eat.
- Drink peppermint tea, it decreases your appetite.
- Decrease your portions.
- Eat slowly, enjoy each bite.
- Eat more tuna to recharge your brain.

Do yoga for all types of improvement, including the function in the brain's cortex. Do your normal chores with your left hand if you are right-handed, and vice versa if you are typically left-handed.

Take Omega 3 fish oil supplements - (avoid the Omega 6) - I take one in the morning and one at night and it helps alot with arthritis pain.

Boost your metabolism:

- Eat smaller meals throughout the day, go easy on the sugar/fats.
- Eat oranges & other citrus
- it can help to prevent obesity.
- Add avocado and olive oil to your diet - will keep you full longer.

- If you're buying organic food, be sure that products are marked "100% Organic".

Some safer foods to eat:

- Bottled tomatoes rather than canned tomatoes (the acidity of the tomatoes can eat into the lining of the tin cans and can impact your health).

- Popped popcorn rather than microwave popcorn - this version contains chemicals in the lining of the bag that have been proven to be unhealthy to people to breath in.

- Organic potatoes rather than regular - root vegetables readily absorb herbicides, pesticides & fungicides that wind up in the soil and even thorough washing won't help.

- Wild Alaskan salmon rather than farmed salmon - the farmed version is high in contaminants and lower in Vitamin D than the wild.

- Organic apples rather than regular. Apple trees are among the most doused with pesticides, which stay in the apple even after washing. Organic are the best.

- Grass fed beef rather than corn-fed beef; farmers feed cows for market to fatten them up with corn & soybeans. However the grass fed cows have much greater levels of beta carotene, vitamin 3, Omega 3s, calcium and is lower in saturated fat that is linked to heart disease. Opt for grass fed rather than corn-fed.

- Brown rice is good to eat - it contains amino acids which are good for your skin. It helps nails and hair as well.

- Those who drink sauerkraut juice every day are said to be always able to avoid the flu.

- Certain kinds of cancer can be avoided by eating a handful of raw almonds daily, according to psychic healer Edgar Cayce.

- For that bad hangover, take 1 tablespoon of honey mixed with lemon juice, or mix a glass of water with 1/4 teaspoon of ground cayenne pepper, or try a cup of ginger tea. Best to not drink alcohol!

- Clean that paper cut with lemon, then cover it with ground cloves. The pain should be gone in a matter of minutes.

New Beginnings, By Kimberly Lang

The month of March represents new growth and the start of spring. It was initially the first month of the year but in the 7th century B.C.E March became the third month after Numa Pompilius, Rome's second king added January and February creating a 12 month calendar.

We today see March as a time to plant our gardens and a time to see all the pretty flowers blossom.

March is also a time to celebrate Women's History month.

It's a time we shed light on women's roles and their influence in our world. Who are your favorite women that you celebrate? Who inspires you the most?

March is also the month of awareness for MS. This hits home for me since I suffer from this disease. Do you know March Symbolism? The birthstone is aquamarine, and the birth flower is the yellow daffodil.

There is one thing above others that March brings to us and it's March Madness!! So whatever influences March holds for you I hope it is filled with growth and joy. May the sunshine shine on you and your family.



Anderson Drugs and Thomas Drugs: The Final 50 Years

by Tanjie Kling

Some families are not only bound by love, but by shared interests, abilities, and even professions. This has been the circumstance of Charles Anderson's family. Together, Charles, his grandson-in-law and his great grandson have practiced pharmacy for approximately 106 years, serving the residents of Huntsville, Alabama and Madison County.

Charles Anderson had a pretty granddaughter who caught the eye of a new, young pharmacist that moved to the city, Walter Thomas, Jr. He was born in LaFayette, Alabama and was a 1936 graduate of the pharmacy school of the Alabama Polytechnic Institute (later Auburn University). He began his professional pharmacy career in Prattville, Alabama immediately after graduation. Soon, he moved to Huntsville to work as the pharmacist at J.D. Humphrey and Sons at 119 S Washington Street.

Walter did not count on meeting and falling in love with the granddaughter of his employer's main

competitor. It was in Huntsville that he met the beautiful Anne Hertzler, who was the granddaughter of the pharmacist and owner of Anderson Drugs. Walter and Anne married in April of 1939 at the First Presbyterian Church in downtown Huntsville. Her maternal grandfather, Charles Anderson, walked her down the aisle and gave her away in marriage. After their wedding, Walter and Anne moved to Montgomery, Alabama where he was employed by Lagget's Drugs.

They stayed for 6 months and the couple returned to Huntsville, where Walter was employed by his grandfather-in-law as the pharmacist in charge of his drug store in January 1940. The addition of Walter to the company allowed Anderson Drugs to advertise that they had graduate pharmacists on duty all of the time.

Walter's position with Anderson's Drugs was relatively short-lived. When Walter was a student at Alabama Polytechnic Institute, all students were required to select Military Science as an elective. As a result of this mandatory training, he graduated college with a military commission as a second lieutenant as well as a pharmacy degree. As the draft was beginning in the United States for World War II, Walter was deployed for military service. He and his wife moved to Fort Benning, Georgia in July 1940 where he was ordered for a year's active duty with the field artillery unit. He was then sent to several other military bases stateside for training before he was deployed to Europe.

By this time, Anne and Walter had an infant son. Walter's family didn't see him for about three and a half lonely, yet apprehensive years. After his tour of duty, he returned to Huntsville to manage Anderson's Drugs in 1945, but remained available for further military service. Charles Anderson died suddenly of a massive heart attack in June of 1946, and in accordance with his will, directed Walter to sell Anderson Drugs as soon as feasible. In the meantime, Walter was called to active duty in the fall of 1946.

By 1947, Anderson Drugs, was sold to Mr. L.A. Adams, who later sold it to R.C. "Scotty" Carter. Anderson Drugs existed, but not in fam-

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ily hands, until 1951, when the company was divested.

Walter remained in service to his country until he was medically discharged on August 31, 1953. He left with accolades of service to include a Bronze Star with 2 Clusters, a Silver Star, and a Purple Heart. Somehow and somehow, even through World War II and the 17 years of serving his country, Walter found a way to keep his pharmacy license up to date. Once discharged, Walter and his family moved to Huntsville, and then to Columbus, Georgia where he resumed his pharmacy practice. He later owned a drug store in Auburn, Alabama and sold it to move to Huntsville in 1966.

Anne and Walter had a son, Charlie, who followed his father and his great grandfather in the pharmacy field. Charlie went to Auburn University's School of Pharmacy and served as the president of the pharmacy school's student body. He was a member of the national leadership society of Omnicron Delta Kappa, and an idea occurred to him. Why not have a national leadership society for pharmacy students? Charlie met with the faculty to propose the idea, and upon their approval, Phi Lambda Sigma national fraternity was founded to meet this purpose. Today, the society has 138 chapters at schools and colleges of pharmacy in the United States and Canada, and even has a scholarship named in his honor.

Upon graduation from Auburn in 1965, Charlie moved to Huntsville, where he worked as a pharmacist at various locations from 1965 until 1984. Like his great grandfather, he was well respected by his customers and colleagues alike. Charlie was a member of the Madison County Pharmaceutical Society, and was elected to various leadership positions within the organization, including president in 1984. The same year, a business opportunity allowed him to own his drug store, Thomas Drugs, located at 5000 Whitesburg Drive.

In 1989, his business was destroyed by the deadly November tornado that cut through Airport Road and Jones Valley. In the interim, he brought in trailers to serve his customers, but the trailers were burglarized twice. Those that broke in were arrested. It was a trying time, but Charlie rebuilt his business. From 1990 to 1997, Charlie served on the Huntsville-Madison County Marina

and Port Authority, including 3 years as board president. In January 1992, Charlie was elected to a 3 year term on the Huntsville Madison County Chamber of Commerce Board. He also served the Chamber as the Chairman of the State Government Committee, Secretary, Vice Chairman for Small Business Development, and Chairman of the Small Business Committee.

During July 1992, governor Guy Hunt appointed him to the State Board of Pharmacy with a term beginning January 1, 1993 and ending December 31, 1997. The board regulates the practice of pharmacy in the State of Alabama. Charlie also served as a Charter Member on the Board of Directors of the Mental Health Association. He sold Thomas Drugs in 1994 to Harco Drugs, but remained on staff as the pharmacy manager until 1996.

In 1997, Charlie served as the president of the Alabama State Board of Pharmacy, and from 1997 until 2015, he was appointed and served as the Pharmacy Director of the Alabama Department of Public Health. This position required him to live in Montgomery, and to travel to all counties to manage the pharmaceutical dispensaries for each county health department, including Madison County.

Upon his retirement, he returned to Huntsville, where he currently resides with his wife, Donna Ligon Thomas. He remains an active member of the Auburn Pharmacy Alumni Association. Charlie has two daughters and four grandchildren from his first marriage. His daughters are Pudden Watkins and Laurie Stapp, who pursued careers in nursing. His four grandchildren are Ben, Joe, Rose and Lilly.

Charles Thomas is a pharmacist who served the citizens of Huntsville as well as the State of Alabama for about 50 years. He has also contributed to textbooks, served on several professional pharmaceutical boards and associations at the State and National level, was on the Dean's Advisory Council and affiliate faculty member at both Auburn and Samford University's schools of pharmacy, and made many more contributions to the practice, education, and leadership of the pharmacy profession locally and within the State of Alabama. His family's legacy of serving the Huntsville area in the pharmaceutical profession spans well over a century, and that is a legacy worth remembering.

When there are conflicting versions of a story, the wise course is to believe the one in which people appear at their worst.

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TWO MONDAYS IN ONE WEEK

by Elizabeth Wharry

I love to travel. My greatest adventure was going to Australia in January 2012. I had been corresponding with my pen pal Martin for about 25 years. We heard about each other's lives through "snail mail" and then email. There were a few odd phone calls, but they were quite expensive.

I boarded my plane in Nashville on a Monday and landed in Melbourne on a Wednesday. It was pretty awesome crossing the equator as well as the international date line.

During my stay with Martin, his lovely wife Liz and their children, I had a wonderful time. Martin took me around to various sites. Altogether too soon, it was time to come home. Those two weeks went by way too fast.

As I boarded the jet, and found my seat, I heard a lady with the most unusual deep drawl. For the life of me, I could not place it!

She said to the young man who

was greeting passengers..."hey...hey! We gunna cross that 'quator line thang?" The young man smiled and affirmed that fact.

She went on to say, "When we cross it, I wanna get a pichur of it. I done sawl what it looks like in man daughter's jography book". (These are all her exact words). The crew member said that we were also going to cross the international date line as well. She asked, "What color is that? Does it intersect with that 'quator line thang?" With a twinkle in his eye,

and a straight face, he replied that it was blue.

At this point, I couldn't help myself...I had to chuckle quietly. Several of my fellow passengers also giggled quietly. None of us were sure if she was having a bit of fun, or she was serious. I do know that she made a rather uneventful flight somewhat amusing.

We left Australia on a Monday, and by crossing back over the international date line, we all had two Mondays in one week.

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My Two Earliest Memories

by Jean Breweer McCrady



We lived in the Berry house somewhere between Maysville and New Market. Houses then, as now, were named after the owner and we were renting from the George Berry family, our closest neighbors. This is where I learned about Gypsies and death, from two unrelated incidents.

I was 3 years old and my sister Net slightly older. We were standing in the corner of the front yard picking red velvety petals from a rose bush and eating them. Our attention was drawn to billows of brown dust rising from the dirt road in the distance and our curiosity was peaked as to what was causing it. As we watched, the image of a horse-drawn covered wagon took shape and as it drew closer, the surprises increased. We soon saw that the wagon carried several passengers and the women were dressed in bright colored robe-like garments with equally colorful head gear.

About this time, our show was interrupted by Mania's frantic calling from the back door, "You kids get in this house, RIGHT NOW!" Either the tone of voice or the words would have gotten us moving, but coupled together, had us headed for the back door in a dead run. Once inside, we learned the reason for the urgency. Mama informed us, "those are Gypsies and they could snatch you into that wagon and be gone with you."

The three of us stood at the front window to watch the wagon pass by, with Net and me clinging to Mama's skirt as she clung to Daddy's shotgun. What happened next was heart-stopping. The horses were drawn to a stop right in front of the house, as the passengers

talked among themselves while looking and pointing in our direction. I don't know whether Mama made sure they could see the shotgun she was wielding, or they decided to move on for some other reason, but move on they did. That's when I learned that the traveling nomads we called Gypsies dressed funny and were to be feared.

The Berrys had a teenage son named Howard who apparently was prone to acrobatic behavior. I remember hearing the adults saying that Howard had been doing somersaults and cartwheels in the yard and it caused his liver to turn over: he was dying. Mama was called over to the Berry's house and she took Net and me with her. I remember going into a bedroom where Howard was stretched out on his back on a fully made bed, in his regular clothes, and he had passed away. That was my introduction to death.

From the Berry house, we moved to Jordan Lane (now Patton Road) in the area of Squirrel Hill. We left there in May of 1941, two weeks before the end of my second grade school year. Daddy must have known that in July of that year, all residents would be mandated to evacuate to make way for the military defense facility that would be Redstone Arsenal. The Lord willing, I will be sharing some of those memories of living on the Arsenal before it was.

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BITS AND PIECES OF THEN AND NOW, PART 2

by Iolanda Hicks



In the late 1800s and early 1900s, textile mills began their appearance in Huntsville. One was the Lincoln Mill, called by other names before this name stuck. Merrimack Mill, Lowe Mill (located off of Governor's Drive of today) and Dallas Mill (in NE Huntsville) were the others located around different areas of Huntsville. The Bell Factory Textile Mill was another located on the Flint River, about 10 miles NE of Huntsville. Child labor was prevalent at the mills during the earlier years. Children as young as 9 worked in various capacities. They worked long hours with dangerous conditions. This employment practice declined with the Fair Labor Standards Act, passed in 1938.

Housing for workers, of course, was a necessity. The early establishment of the suburbs started with the East Huntsville Addition that began in the late 1800s, continuing into the 20th century. This Eastern part, known as Old Town today, is part of the 5 Points Area. Streetcar lines were soon developed around 1901 (built by the St. Louis Car Co.) that helped with the commute to work. It ran on a regular schedule between downtown and the mills at Merrimack Mill Village (located around Triana Blvd. of today). By 1931, the system was replaced by buses.

I found some interesting facts, in my research, involving some of the buildings in the city. There are so many of them! One of the first buildings built in the city was the Hotel Twickenham (1914) located at the corner of Clinton Avenue and Washington Street. The hotel was the pride of Huntsville, the hub for events, dining and accommodations for travelers.

By 1971 its doors closed on this once popular hotel and was soon demolished. The Carnegie Public Library (1916) located on the corner of Monroe and Gates streets, existed for several years before being torn down in 1966. That location became a parking garage.

I can remember catching the city bus when I was a youngster to go downtown to the library. I have a 65 year-old plus library card somewhere!

The Huntsville Times (city newspaper), first resided in the art-deco 12 story Times Building, which is still located on the corner of Holmes and Greene Street. This paper was originally known as the Huntsville Daily Times, having had at least 3 different owners, and moving its location several times during its existence. For over 100 years, this paper served Huntsville, merging with the Birmingham News and the Mobile Press-Register in 2012. The city also had a morning paper for a time, called The Huntsville News, that printed for a while but stopped its distribution after a few years.

The Spanish flu hit in 1918. The hospitals in and around Huntsville were overwhelmed with the epidemic. To add to this condition, the city became a center for military support and housing for recovering soldiers with World War I (1914-1918). During this time period, there was an industrial boost even though cotton production slowed down.

In the 1920s, Huntsville had a significant growth which was adversely affected by the Great Depression. There were shut-downs of the mills and labor strikes. By the end of the next decade, the results of the Depression receded, as the consequences of the outbreak of World War II (1939-1945) entered the Huntsville scene.

Huntsville in the 1940s, surprisingly, had a population increase even though housing was lacking to accommodate the growth. This was mainly because of the establishment of The Redstone Ordnance Plant and the Huntsville Arsenal. When the two combined, they became Redstone Arsenal. The work accomplished at these locations gave Huntsville the nickname 'The Rocket City'. German scientists, who had worked on the V2 rocket, came to Huntsville under Operation Paperclip. Wernher von Braun was with this group, all setting 'the stage' for the 1950s and the 'beyond' era at the Arsenal. This set the 'foundation for the space and rocket industry'.

Redstone became involved in rocket and Missile production, which led to the creation of Nasa's Marshall Space Flight Center. The

mills began to close, downtown became more socially active, and the parks saw continued use, including what would later be known as Optimist Park in NE Huntsville.

An old limestone quarry, named the Three Caves, became a local landmark. In 1978, the movie 'The Ravagers', was filmed partly in and around the Three Caves. My longtime friend Maureen Watanabe told me once that she, her mother and dad (extras) did a scene inside the Three Caves. The scene staged several of the cave 'inhabitants' dancing around 'camp fires'. Maureen was so tickled at being in a movie, she didn't mind being an 'extra'!

Between 1950 and into the 1960s, Huntsville's population grew over 340% from about 16,437 to 72,365. Memorial Parkway became the main thoroughfare. Would you believe, we had full-service gas stations where actual attendants pumped our gas and cleaned our windshields? Wow!!

There was a Snow White Cafe downtown and boy were those burgers so good! The 1960s brought growth and struggles for civil rights. Huntsville was the first Alabama city to begin desegregation of public accommodations. Our children's lives revolved, with much of their free time, around climbing trees, building tree houses and activities at local parks. Monte Sano and the Blossomwood neighborhoods expanded.

New Year's Eve of 1963 brought us a single-day record snowfall of a total of 15.7 inches. It was beautiful and so white! I was young enough to enjoy it. I remember making a Mr. Magoo 'snowman' with neighbors. It was magnificent at its almost 6 to 7 foot tall height! Now whenever we get just a touch of snow (which is rare), I appreciate the beauty, but enjoy staying inside with a cup of hot chocolate!

A little tid-bit of information: The Saturn V Rocket, that carried the astronauts to the moon, was designed, assembled and tested in Huntsville. The culmination of work that the dedicated employees of Nasa in Huntsville did (my Dad was one of them), helped to accomplish the landing of the Apollo 11 lunar module on the moon, July 20, 1969.

The next decade brought a decline in the population, but it was a time for other events. The U. S. Space and Rocket Center opened along with the city's first shopping mall on North Parkway, named "The

Mall" (no kidding). The Von Braun Civic Center began a key role in the city's cultural era. In 1979, the first Cotton Row Run was held.

The 1980s gave us a hard-core rock band called the Knockabouts, playing music in a thriving underground music scene. A fire at the Huntsville Industrial Complex (referred to as the HIC building) occurred in 1980, with another fire destroying Stone Middle School, April of 1983.

The Old Huntsville Magazine was published in June of 1989 with an "inaugural" 12 page issue by founders Cathey and Tom Carney. This great magazine has so many fantastic writers and stories!!

The EF4 Tornado hit in November of 1989, its direction carried that funnel through Redstone Arsenal, Airport Road and then into Jones Valley. That weather event took 21 lives along its path of destruction and caused over 100 million dollars in damages.

The 1990s brought us the completion of the I-565 highway (1991); the Big Spring Jam Music Festival; another F4 tornado at Anderson Hills (May of 1995). During this decade, there was a slight decline in the growth of our city, but that did not last long. We finally enter the 21st Century.

For the next 25 years, Huntsville grew in so many ways. I won't even attempt to spotlight the major events of the 21st Century's first quarter. I can say though, that in Huntsville of today, population growth has reached to over 249,000 residents. The city's growth has expanded into 4 counties: Madison, Morgan, Limestone and Marshall.

We are now the 27th largest land-mass city in the nation! Huntsville is continuing to grow, as we only need to look anywhere we travel around the city to see the growth. All the new housing, apartments and home rentals are everywhere we drive. There are more food places, more hotels, more entertainment venues and art attractions etc., with even MORE traffic!!!

We have entered this year in a city over 200 years old, which is continuing to grow towards the 22nd Century. There have been many changes, over so many years!

Socrates said once on growing and changing: "The secret of change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new." Huntsville has surely grown!!

"A man comes into the ER and yells, 'My wife is going to have her baby in the cab!' I grabbed my stuff, rushed out to the cab, lifted the lady's dress and begin to take off her underwear. Suddenly I noticed that there were several cabs parked, and I was in the wrong one."

**Submitted by Dr. Mark MacDonald,
Franklin, TN**

SPRING SPARROW

*by Gerald Alvis,
The Poet of Greenlawn*



It's a tradition for me each year. Perhaps it's my way of wishing Spring would come a little earlier, or it could be nature's nod that it's on the way. About this time each year, I scan the branches of the trees, searching for the first sign of buds that will soon begin producing the leaves and flowers.

But on this day, I decided to add another custom, a tradition of welcoming the new life to come.

I went outside this early morning; the sun's warmth greeted me. It was soothing even though there was still a chill in the air. I began sprucing up the backyard a little, and first on my list was the remounting of 2 birdhouses. Just a DeWalt drill and three screws a piece, and they were back up and open for business. I admired my work; the spacing and alignment were correct.

I then stepped away just for a moment to remove the covering of the outdoor faucet. This store-bought shroud protected the pipes from the severe cold of winter just a few days ago. I turned and looked back up at my completed project and realized I had a visitor; I spoke a few gentle words to

him. I called him the poofy bird, a small sparrow that was now alight of the birdhouse I had just installed. I welcomed him. He was aware I was there, but he was more concerned about sharing some of that sunlight with me as he fluffed out his feathers, enhancing his insulation.

Continuing with my chores, I glanced up, and my backyard buddy was gone. Transient, perhaps; maybe it was a good roost to recharge his batteries a little. But my next gaze proved fruitful, suggesting that we would be sharing the next few weeks/months together.

His tiny head was now peeking out at me; I smiled, believing he was enjoying the comfort of his new lodging and knowing that new life would soon emerge and this would be their first view of the world.

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Dog Play



Dogs love to play - and some of the behaviors that drive you crazy as a pet owner are forms of dog play. When your dog steals an item of clothing and plays "keep away" with the dirty sock, it's a game to your pup. When you chase your pet all around the yard, trying to catch him, in your pet's mind, the game is "tag" or "catch me if you can." Trying to get the dog to let go of the couch pillow can easily become a game of "tug", as far as your pet is concerned. While these "puppy games" can be frustrating, they can also be turned into positive training opportunities.

Playing with your dog also helps to use up the excess energy and reduces the boredom that causes adolescent dogs to get into trouble. One of the best things you can do to build a great relationship with your canine companion is to play games with him or her. The challenge is to change the rules of the game so that both people and pups win!

* The dog holding the dirty sock can play the "trade" game, where the person offers a tasty treat to the pup in exchange for the dirty sock. This game can be taught using the dog's toys, teaching "give" and "take" as well. It is an important game for all dogs to master who live in households with small children.

* The chase game can be turned around when teaching your pup to come when called. Call your puppy and then run away from him! Reward your pet when he catches you with a "good dog", an ear rub and a tasty treat, then run away again - this game can go on as long as you and your pet has the energy to play.

* Hide and seek isn't just for children. Most dogs are pretty good at playing this game, too. You can play with people hiding from the pup and then calling for the pup to find them. This also strengthens the "come" cue. Another variant is to hide one of the dog's toys in a room, then rewarding him when he finds the toy.

* Catch - Throw a small ball to the dog so that he can easily catch it in his mouth. Make sure the ball is small enough to fit in his mouth, but not so small that he can accidentally swallow it. Once your dog understands the game, make the tosses more difficult. Play this with a Frisbee, especially if you have a large play space or park area.

* Soccer - Kick the ball away from your dog and get him to chase after it. Once he gets to it, let him play with it for a bit. then kick or step it away from him again. Soccer is best played with a larger ball that is not easy to puncture or deflate. Rubber balls are quite durable and can work well for soccer. Pick a larger sized ball, so that it is difficult for your dog to keep the ball in his mouth and chew on it. Some dogs prefer chasing after squeaky balls.

* Fetch is a wonderful dog obedience game. However, it can be difficult to teach to a dog. Go in small, slow steps. Start by giving him a toy. Once he holds it in his mouth, move a few steps away and call him. Give him a lot of encouragement for taking steps toward you and praise him well for coming. When he gets to you give him the "Drop" command and give him many treats for giving you the toy.

Once he is comfortable with this exercise, try throwing the fetch toy a very short distance away. If your dog just ignores the toy, try using a more interesting squeaky toy, or coax him toward the toy with treats and lots of praise.

If your dog comes back with the toy, then there is a big celebration. However, more often than not, he will run to it and then come back without the toy. He may even take the toy and go play with it somewhere else, or tease you with it.

Have patience and treat with a high priority item every time your dog goes in the right direction. If he comes back without the toy, you can try and give a no-mark (e.g. Uh-oh) as soon as he drops the toy. Then use the "Take it" command and offer him the toy again. Once he has the toy in his mouth, walk a few steps back, call to him enthusiastically, and make sure to give lots of praise when he moves toward you.

Always listen to your dog and don't force him to play a game he doesn't really enjoy. Remember also that as much energy as he seems to have, he needs to rest too! Both of you.

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*From the Desk of
Tom Carney*

The Real Story of Abraham Lincoln's Marriage

by Tom Carney

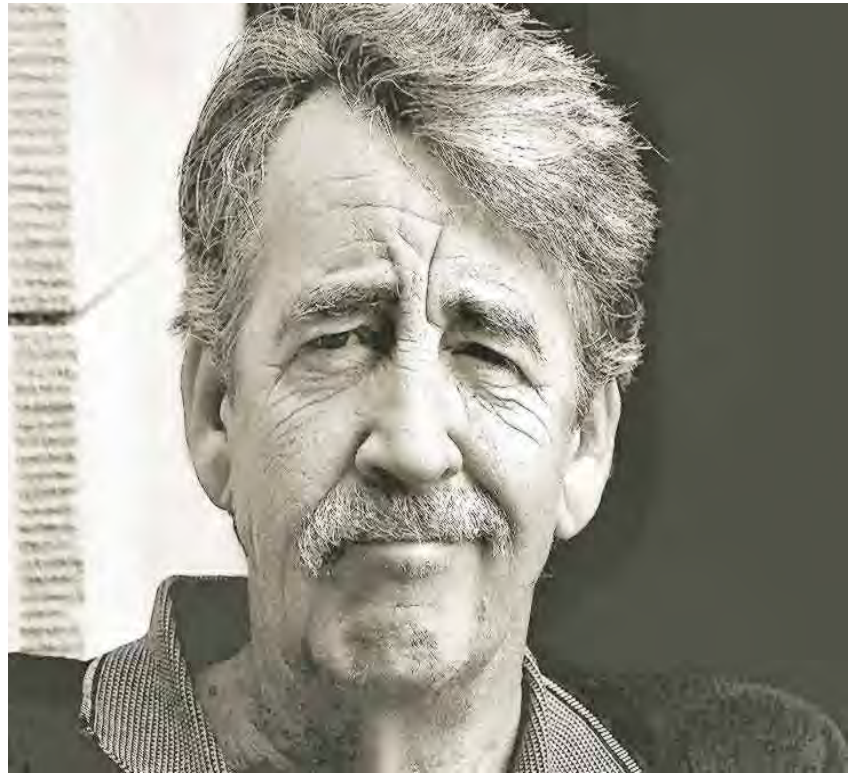
Not many people would have known this, but when Abraham Lincoln and his wife Mary Todd were married, it proved to be one of the most unhappy unions in the history of marriage.

In the early nineteenth century, the two became engaged. Shortly afterwards, Lincoln realized that he and this woman were as opposite as any two people could be. For example, Mary Todd attended a snobbish finishing school in Kentucky; she spoke with a Parisian accent and was one of the best educated women in Illinois. Lincoln had attended school a total of less than twelve months in his entire life.

Her family was her great source of pride. Her grandfathers and great grandfathers had been generals and governors, and she reminded Lincoln of this weekly. He, on the other hand, had no pride whatsoever in his family. He said that only one of his relatives had ever visited him, and that man was soon accused of stealing a neighbor's jews-harp before he even got out of town.

Mary Todd was passionately interested in dress and show and ostentation. Lincoln took no interest whatsoever in his dress, and oftentimes walked down the street with one trouser leg tucked into his boot and one on the outside, which drove Mary crazy.

She had been brought up to believe that good table manners were expected, but Lincoln had been reared in a log cabin with a dirt floor. He stuck his own knife into the butter and did other things that shocked Mary and drove her wild.

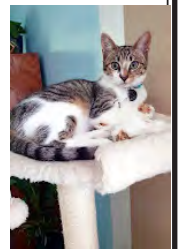


She was proud and haughty - he was humble and democratic. She was wildly jealous - would create a scene if he merely looked at another woman. It was pretty much her idea to get married. But shortly after they were engaged, Lincoln wrote her a letter saying that he didn't love her sufficiently to marry her. Giving this letter to a friend, he asked the man to bring

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the letter to Mary Todd. The friend burned the letter in his fireplace and told Lincoln to go and see Mary Todd himself, like a man. When Lincoln confronted her with his uncertainty, she burst into tears, and this upset Lincoln so that he took her in his arms and said he was sorry.

Their wedding day was set for January 1, 1841. The cake was baked, the guests were invited and had arrived, the preacher and Mary Todd were there, but no Abe.

He never showed up. His friends found him later that next day, mumbling incoherent sentences. He said he didn't want to live. He had become dangerously ill in body and mind, and had sunk into a spell of melancholy so deep and terrible that it almost unbalanced his reason. His friends took away his knife for fear he would use it on himself.

Lincoln then wrote the most pitiful letter of his life. It was written to his law partner who was at that time in Congress. This is the letter, word for word:

"I am now the most miserable man living. If what I feel were equally distributed to the whole human family, there would not be one cheerful face on earth. Whether I shall ever be any better, I cannot tell. I awfully forebode that I shall not. To remain as I am is impossible. I must die or be better, it seems to me."

"For three days after death, hair and fingernails continue to grow but phone calls taper off."

Johnny Carson

For two years after that, Lincoln had nothing to do with Mary Todd. Then a self-appointed matchmaker in Springfield brought them together again, behind closed doors, and Mary Todd told Lincoln it was his duty to marry her. So he did.

Things just got worse after that. One story of Mary's violence to Lincoln came from a boarding house where the Lincolns came to stay shortly after they were wed.

It seems that one morning, Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln were having breakfast with the rest of the boarders, and Lincoln said something that displeased Mary; she picked up a cup of just poured, hot coffee and threw it into his face. This was in the presence of the other boarders, who were shocked and silent. Lincoln didn't an-

swer her, he didn't scold her, he said nothing while the landlady brought a cloth and wiped off his face and clothing.

Similar incidents happened in the Lincoln household for years.

Mary Todd Lincoln finally went insane - perhaps this early behavior was an indication of what was to come later.

One of the most beautiful things remembered about Lincoln is the fact that he endured his unhappy home for twenty-three years without bitterness, resentment and without saying a word to anyone about it.

He was a patient and easy-going man, and forgave his wife for the pain it must have caused him for so many years.



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100 YEARS OF THE JUNIOR WELFARE LEAGUE

by Flo Boyer

The following article was written when the Junior Welfare League celebrated its first 50 year anniversary. It's still here, with members working harder than ever to continue its goal of making a difference to the families of Huntsville.

The Junior Welfare League was established in 1936 when Reverend W.E. Morris, minister of the First Methodist Church of Huntsville, asked Ms. Lelia Suggs to organize a circle of young women in the church to become the WSCS of the First Methodist Church. The group decided to devote its efforts to services for the welfare of infants and young children not already assisted by the Welfare and Health Departments.

Later the group decided to become a non-sectarian organization and enlarged its membership to twenty ladies. The meeting dates were changed to the first Friday of each month (September through May). In 1968 the League voted to increase its membership to thirty, presently unchanged.

In the early years of its existence, the League assisted in: the establishment of a recreation center in West Huntsville; sponsored numerous scouting troops and camps; helped needy families by providing food, medical attention, and transportation; and other care recommended by the Welfare or Pension Departments. Many other endeavors, too

numerous to be listed, benefitted from the efforts of the League. The largest recipient throughout the years has been the Huntsville Hospital through designated gifts that directly enabled our causes. For example, the gifts have included: a furnished isolate for the nursery; a neonatal X-Ray unit; an ultrasonic blood pressure instrument; a defibrillator; a heart rate monitor; an infusion pump; a reflectance monitor; and a Harvard Syringe Pump; all designated for the Intensive Care Neonatal nursery. In the immediate past years the League's gifts to the Huntsville Hospital have been specified for the Pediatric Speech and Audiology Clinic.

Because the League has a small membership, all of its members take turns at holding office, giving program presentations, serving on committees, or whatever is required. We may sometimes groan at our job assignments, but we all join in with enthusiasm for majority decisions. In addition to our willing enthusiasm for service commitments, our strong points have been the closeness, friendship and genuine concern for one another. This has bonded us together and made our Junior Welfare League one of which we can be proud.

There will be future articles in Old Huntsville magazine with lots more detail, reviewing the amazing history of this generous and hard-working organization.

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Do Our Pets have Souls?



by Gale Nichols

I remember bringing you home. You were so small and cuddly with your tiny paws and soft fur.

You bounced around the room with eyes flashing and ears pointed. Once in a while you'd let out a little noise just to let me know, this was YOUR territory.

Making a mess of the house and chewing on everything in sight became a passion and when I scolded you, you just put your head down and looked up at me as if to say: "I'm sorry, but I'll do it again as soon as you're not watching!"

As you got older, you protected me by looking out of the front window, just to say "I'm right here."

When I had a tough day at work, you would be waiting for me with your bright eyes as if to say, "Welcome back, I missed you."

You never had a bad day and I could always count on you to be there for me.

When I sat down to read the paper or watch TV, you would hop into my lap, looking for attention. You never asked for any more than to have me rub your head, so you could go to sleep with your head on my leg.

As you got older, you moved around more slowly. Then one day, old age finally took its toll and you couldn't stand on those wobbly legs anymore.

I knelt down and patted you as you lay there, trying to make you young again. You just looked up at me as if to say, "I'm old and tired and after all these years of not asking for anything, I'm asking you to do one last favor for me."

With tears in my eyes, I drove you to the vet. One last time you were lying in my lap.

For some strange reason, you were able to stand up really straight in the animal hospital, perhaps it was your sense of pride. As the vet prepared you, you stopped for an instant, looked up at me as if to say, "Thank you for taking care of me."

And I thought, "No, thank you for taking care of me."



RUSTY

Hello, my name is Rusty. As you can see I am a beautiful orange and white male cat. I am about 3 years old and have been here at the Ark Animal Shelter for just over two years. I have had all my shots and am neutered and micro-chipped. I've been here so long because I am very shy and hide a lot. But what visitors don't know about me is that I am very friendly to the volunteers here who spend time with me and pet me and give me treats. I get along with the other cats in the room but I get very nervous when new people come in to see us. I tend to hide under a cat tree or bed and often no one even knows I'm here. So the other cats get chosen to get a new home and I hide until the people leave. But I need a home of my own where I can feel comfortable and loved. My biggest wish is to have a family of my own in a home where I can relax and I don't have to feel afraid anymore. Please consider coming to the Ark to see me and spend some time with me. You will see that I'm a nice boy who just needs a chance. Won't you come and get to know me? Please consider coming to the Ark Animal Shelter and ask to see Rusty, that's me!

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GRANDMA LOVED APRONS

by Kathryn Kendall

Grandma loved aprons. Anytime she had an extra cotton flour sack, she made an apron. She was never without an apron as she scurried about her daily responsibilities on the farm. Her apron was her main tool for each day's chores. She carried with it, shooed with it, wiped with it, and fanned with it.

Every spring Grandpa and Grandma went to town to buy baby chicks. When they arrived home, Grandma put her apron on, cupped up the ends, and filled her apron with the baby chicks. She then gently carried them to the chicken house. Then she carefully laid down the corners of her apron and shooed the chicks inside the area prepared for them.

"Life, liberty and the Pursuit of Anyone Who Threatens it."

Bumper sticker seen on car at Redstone Arsenal

She was good at shooing with her apron. She would shoo the chickens out of the garden, shoo the cows into the barn for milking, and shoo the birds off the corn. Shooing was one of her apron's many daily chores.

Grandma also used her apron for wiping. Her apron was always handy to wipe her glasses, wipe up a spill, or wipe away the tears of a child as she said, "It's OK. It's OK." When company came unexpectedly, she quickly wiped dust off the tables, jam off a child's face, or sweat from her brow as she removed her apron and threw it into the back bedroom.

Grandma was also an expert at fanning with her apron. She would take one corner of her apron and gently fan a sleeping grandbaby on a hot, humid day. I loved the way she fanned her face when she laughed about something funny that had happened that day. She used her apron to fan flies out of her kitchen as someone held open the screen door for her. I have seen her vigorously fan a hot apple pie, right out of the oven, as we eagerly waited to devour it. Grandma was indeed an expert at fanning.

Carrying was another important use of Grandma's apron. She carried kittens from the barn to the house, with the mother cat following along behind meowing at the top of her lungs. She took a cardboard box and put old rags in it to make a bed for them. She put the box in the closet with a curtain for a door.

How I loved to go and peek at the new babies, being careful not to irritate the mom.

Carrying produce was also an important task for the apron during gardening season. As Grandma passed by the garden throughout the day, she might stop to check and see if anything needed to be gathered. Her apron was always handy for a quick gleaning of produce.

When canning time rolled around, the apron was in full use.



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It was scrunched up and used for a pot holder or wrapped around a hot jar of green beans so the lid could be tightened.

The apron may have been exchanged throughout the day for a fresh one, but there was always an apron.

At the end of each day, with all the work completed, the apron was taken off and a fresh one hung on the nail by the kitchen door. The fresh, crisp apron would be waiting and ready to start a new day.

I have come to believe that Grandma and her apron could have been one of our nation's greatest resources. The Navy could have used her to fan in the fighter planes as they landed on deck. The President could have used Grandma and her apron in Desert Storm to shoo Saddam Hussein back to Iraq.

If Grandma had been at the bombing of the Oklahoma City Federal Building, she would have used her apron to wipe tears of the children and say, "It's OK. It's OK."

Grandma's apron could have been used for carrying produce as she would go from door to door, store to store to gather surplus to give the homeless and needy. Then maybe we could say that no child went to bed hungry tonight because someone was willing to carry their load.

I guess our nation will have to do without Grandma's apron. She hung up her handmade, flour-sack apron for the last time a few years ago. She exchanged it for a pure white linen one embroidered with blue, purple, and scarlet threads. She's probably still carrying, shooing, fanning, and wiping with it.

I envision her carrying jewels in her cupped up apron for the Master, shooing the white horses to the stables, fanning her face as she laughs with joy, and wiping the tears from eyes as they come through the pearly gates and saying, "It's OK now. Everything's OK"

I know someday I will see her again. She probably will be waiting for me at those pearly gates wearing her white linen apron embroidered

with blue, purple, and scarlet threads, waving to me with the corner of it.

Grandma never thought much about what she did or didn't do with her aprons. She just loved aprons. Little did she know the impact she made on the lives of those around her. I often wonder what kind of impact I'm making. What will those who follow me absorb from my daily attitudes, actions, and deeds? Whether I realize it or not, I need to leave footprints behind for others to walk in.

Kathryn Kendall, Moore, OK, is a retired secretary. She teaches Bible study; is director of third grade Sunday School; and enjoys sewing, oil painting, and writing.

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TAKING CARE OF OUR HEALTH



Growing up in Huntsville, I was a skinny kid, very skinny - eating was not my favorite pastime! In fact, my mother would sometimes make me sit at the dining table from one meal to the next trying to get me to eat. After all, there were poor, starving kids in much of the world, as she would say over and over. I would just as soon have had my food go to all those poor, starving kids or, better still, the poor, starving kids in Huntsville in the 1940s.

As time passed, however, a pound here and a pound there, a few years ago, I found myself, if not on the obese spectrum, at least eating more and weighing more than I should for my height and level of exercise and this is the impetus for my story.

As COVID-19 struck the West Coast in January 2020 and many deaths began to occur by February in Washington State (Kirkland, a suburb of Seattle), several things became apparent. People in nursing homes, ages sixty five and older with significant co-morbidities of diabetes (often associated with obesity), heart disease (often associated with hypertension), lung disease (often associated with smoking) and autoimmune disorders were dying of COVID-19 in great numbers. Could some of those be the stresses of modern life?

The data we have, now, after several months of this infection

by Anna Gene Clift Chesnut

might suggest that obesity and hypertension, if not checked at a younger age, are great impediments to a long and healthy life, accidental deaths not included.

Obesity is a very cheap fix - we must stop eating so much (especially fast foods) and do twenty minutes of exercise each day (walking is free). In moderation fast foods would not be terrible but fruits and vegetables would be better if excess is required. How often do we hear this admonition - but life or death may, now, be in the balance.

Hypertension is very often, also, a cheap fix - either losing weight or taking a tiny little inexpensive pill that can lower blood pressure. However, one needs to go to a doctor or even a drug store and get a blood pressure reading. Neither of these fixes is painful, that is if not eating so much causes mental pain, but the results of doing just these two things can save lives.

Ceasing smoking is a no-brainer in this day and age. We all know what smoking can do to the body- if not, go to any hospital and ask to see lung x-rays of smokers.

We have all been inundated with the issues of alcohol and drug addiction but obesity and hypertension just do not seem to get on our radar, especially as we age.

My doctor husband preaches weight loss constantly, so with the impact and knowledge of COVID-19 I decided to go on a diet to be at an acceptable weight when sheltering in place orders ended. I have lost 15 pounds of my 20 pound goal and feel better already. (That little inexpensive pill might not

be needed with weight loss.)

I eat what I want, just not as much, with more fruits and vegetables included and "voila" a slow decline in weight. With weight control comes the possibility of fending off diabetes and lowering blood pressure, thereby reducing hypertension. Although COVID-19 can strike anyone, perhaps, with these lifestyle changes, fending off a visit, due to this virus, from the 'grim reaper' might prove possible - a modern miracle in the making of health and wisdom. Just think of the money saved!

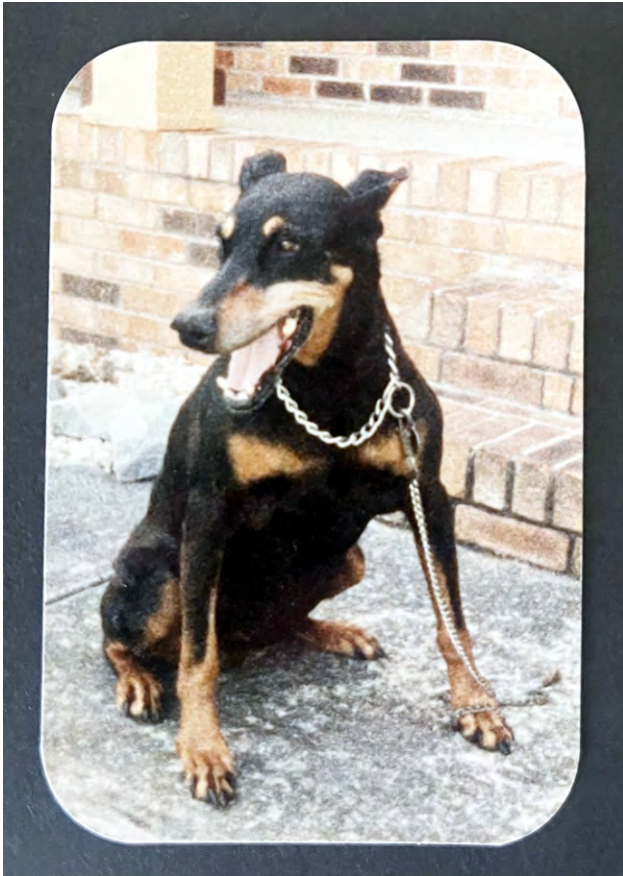
Caramel Apple Cake

1 c. all-purpose flour
1 c. firmly packed light brown sugar
1 t. ground cinnamon
1/2 t. ground nutmeg
2 t. baking powder
1/4 t. salt
1/2 c. milk
2 T. vegetable oil
1 t. vanilla extract
1 c. peeled, cored, chopped apple
1/2 c. more packed light brown sugar
1-1/4 c. hot unsweetened apple juice

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees. In a large bowl combine the flour, sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, baking powder and salt - mix well. Add the milk, oil and vanilla, mix well. Stir in your apples and spread the mixture evenly in a 9-inch cake pan that is at least 2 inches deep. This pan should be greased prior to adding the batter.

Sprinkle the 1/2 cup brown sugar over the top of the batter, and pour the hot apple juice over all - don't stir. Bake for 40-45 minutes and a cakelike layer forms on top.

Cool just a bit before serving, and this is really good with homemade whipped cream.



wanted to go to work with me. Every time I went out to my truck she would be right behind me. As soon as I opened the door she would jump in.

I didn't mind that so bad but after she got in the truck she would sit down behind the steering wheel and put both her front paws on the steering wheel. I would tell her she couldn't go with me and then get her out of the truck.

Mesha also had another bad habit of sticking her nose where it didn't belong as a way of saying hello. Sometimes that didn't go over very well.

One day I was in the front yard working in a flower bed and a lady came up the driveway. She got out of her car and asked to see my wife. I told her she was in the backyard so she headed that way. I didn't think too much about it until I heard her open and close the gate. That's when I said to myself, "Oh my goodness, Mesha!"

I headed to the back yard and just about the time I went around the corner of the house I heard the loudest scream. There was no use in going back there after that.

She had officially met our sweet Mesha!



Mesha the Doberman

by L D Rogers

We have had a lot of dogs over the years - different breeds and different sizes. The one I enjoyed most was a jet black Doberman named Mesha. My daughter and her husband had two Dobermans and Mesha was one of their puppies. We had a big yard with a fence and a nice dog house.

Mesha grew up to be a fine looking dog and had a very good personality. She always wanted to play and always

Old Ad run in Old Huntsville magazine, Issue 143, Jan. 2005



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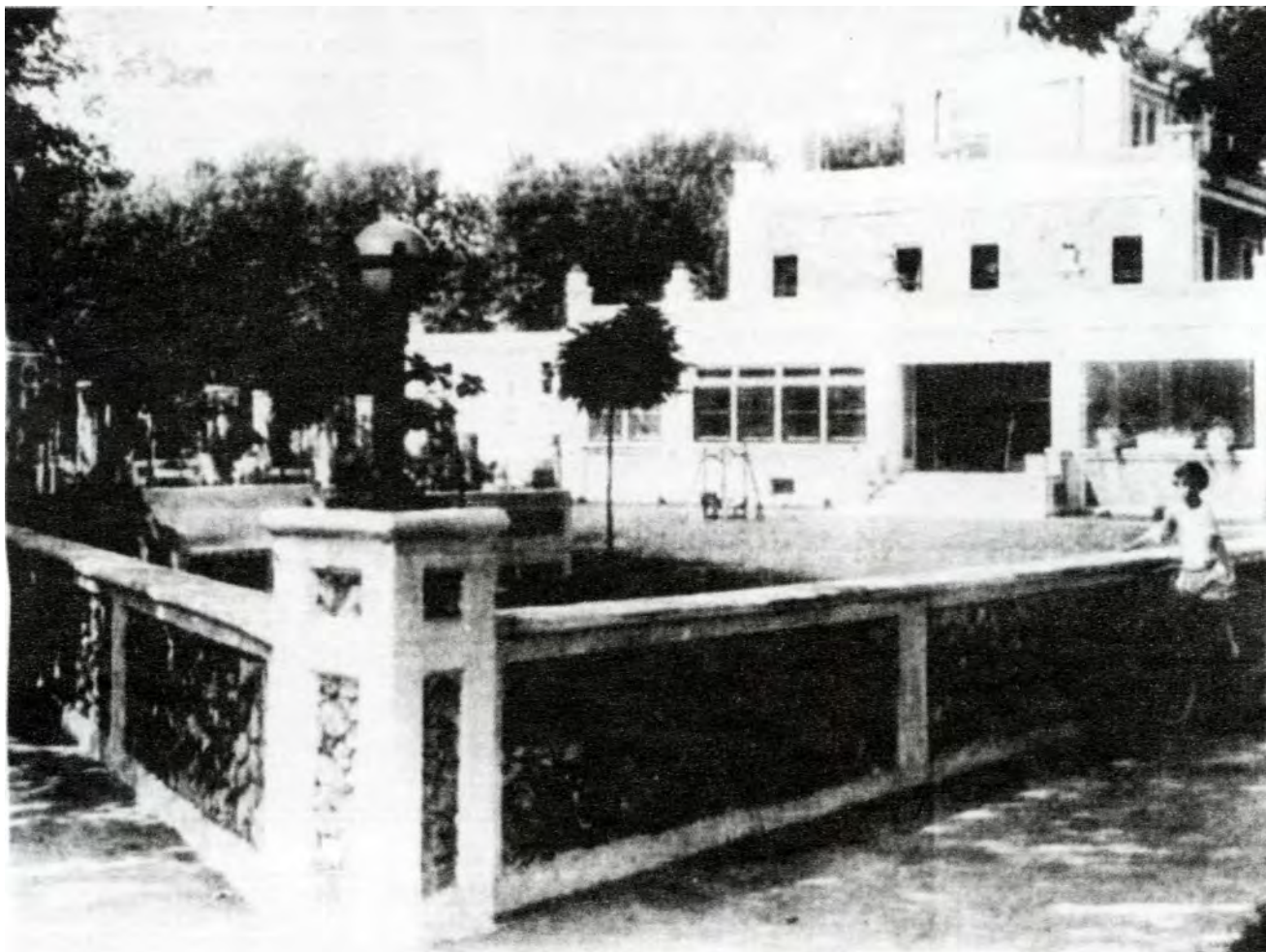


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