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No. 361
March 2023

Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

THE STORY OF THE BIG SPRING CAFE

SERVING CUSTOMERS FOR 100 YEARS

Also in this issue: **Raiding a Moonshine Still; Monte Sano Memories; Snuffdipper's Ball; Watercress Capital; Working at the Huntsville Times; Depression Days in Dallas Village; Recipes and much much more!**

Remembering Aunt Eunice - This Column she wrote for Old Huntsville Magazine in February 2004

Huntsville Coffee Talk

by Aunt Eunice

With pearls of wisdom contributed by the Liar's Table

First of all, congratulations to Judy (Baker) White, of White Fleming Company, for guessing last month's Photo of the Month. It was J.B. Tucker, who is also Mayor of Hurricane Creek. We had so many calls and 90% of them were right - he must have a lot of friends around here! Judy gets a year's free subscription to "Old Huntsville" magazine.

I've had so many visitors here at Big Spring Care on St. Clair during January but I can always use more, so come see me!

Sometimes I think my old body is just worn out. I still have to have dialysis 3 times a week, can't get around anymore, and my arthritis hurts something awful.

But I still think I'm one of the luckiest people in the world. I have a wonderful family, precious memories and dear friends. What else do you need?

Always remember there is no such thing as a bad day ... if you wake up ... the day's already off to a good start!

Larry and Sue Landman have visited me so often here and called me - I love ya'll.

Delbert & Ethyl Ann Williams, Billy, Monica and Amanda Bell, and Tom and Cathey Carney have all come and brought me candy and gifts! Thank you so much for that.

Not many people know that Billy Bell, family judge of Huntsville, has **the finest recipe for pickled eggs I've** ever tasted, and he brings me some whenever he gets a chance - I just love them.

Our friend Joyce Russell was one of the hosts recently for the big New York Life blowout at the Heritage Club. Everyone was so distinguished - black tie, tuxes, formals, etc. The President of New York Life, Frederick Sievert, was honored with **an Honorary Citizen's certificate.**

Congrats to our good friends Dan and Dawn Schmit who just became the proud parents of twins - Jacob Edward and Jeremy James. Dan is the weatherman for channel 48. Boy, are their lives going to change!

We wanted to send out a big HELLO to Robert Martin, who lives at Madison Morningside Assisted Living. He is very proud of his son, Randy Martin, who is stationed at Mosul, Iraq as a Lt. Colonel since May. Randy has been accepted at "War College", a very rare and prestigious honor that very few people are offered. Congratulations to Randy and Nancy, his proud wife!

I was happy to see Dr. Craig Thorstad with his nurse Millie. They are such sweet people

Jane Smith came by and decorated my room! Others who came by include Jim Reed, Earl Walker, Jim Heard, Greg Anderson, Lincoln Smith and Larry Smith. I just wish I could tell everyone how much it means to me to have such dear friends.

We were very saddened to hear that John (Jack) Gurley died re**cently He had been fighting cancer** for some time. Tom Gurley, his son, as well as the whole family will really miss him. We love you all.

My love goes out to my good friend Catherine Wilson - she is a woman with a heart of gold. She brought me my favorite homemade jelly that she sells at Limestone Flea Market - 2 jars! Stop by and see her some time. Tell her I sent you.

Joe Whisante has been a jewel - he calls me so often and comes by to bring me pecan pie and cookies (that he bakes himself!). That man could never go on a diet - he loves his food!

Thank you all for the beautiful cards you sent me. I have saved every one and they are covering two of the walls in my room. I have a special place for the pictures I have received from so many of you - including Mark Russell's children, the Ceci triplets, Bud Cramer & family.

Well, looks like the mayor's race **Is starting. Dr. Parker Griffin came by** to see me and just happened to mention he's thinking about throwing his hat in the ring. Ms. Mayor is going to be hard to beat but it should be interesting.

General Link & his wife Judy stop by all the time to check on me. Byron and Tillie Laird, my faithful friends, come by often. And my friend Fran Hamilton is a regular visitor whom I really depend on. I'm so lucky to have these friends.

Ann and Jim Ledbetter brought **me a pretty flower. It just looked** so beautiful on a table by my bed. I was happy to see David Heard and **find out he is doing OK. Take care of** yourself. I had a nice visit with Jack and Sandra Bozeman recently. Time **just flew by.**

Roger Christopher brought his four beautiful girls with him the other day to see me. That sure is a pretty family.

It was so good to see Steve & Bonnie Hettinger the other day. They were sure looking good!

Remember, I love all of you and come see me!

Story of the Big Spring Cafe

by Lawrence Hillis

There is a sign above the front door of the building at 3507 Governors Drive stating Big Spring Cafe, Home of the Greasy Burger. "Newcomers" to Huntsville might wonder why would a restaurant named Big Spring be several miles away from the Big Spring Park? And why would a company be proud of serving up a greasy burger these days when everyone is so health conscious? Their greasy burgers just happen to be made with the same recipe for the last 100 years. My mother, Edith Warren Hillis, worked there in the 1930s. She made and ate those burgers for the rest of her life, and lived to be 96 years old. Maybe they are not that unhealthy after all? These days connoisseurs or food critics call it "comfort food."

Over the years due to their uniqueness, there have been several newspaper articles about the Big Spring Cafe which is the oldest operating restaurant in Huntsville. One article was from twenty years ago when they celebrated their 80th year of operation and again 10 years ago when it turned 90 years old. Big Spring Cafe has now completed its first 100 years of business. According to Huntsville business records, the Big Spring Cafe purchased the business license to operate at its first location -119 Jefferson Street in 1922.

Some of the downtown street names have either been changed or the streets have been rerouted. In the beginning, the Big Spring Cafe was operating out of what they called a "box car". When I first heard that term years ago, I thought it was referring to a railroad box car that had been converted to a stationary building. It was actually a step van or what we call today a "box truck or a food truck". At times, they would drive the vehicle to the various Mills to sell hamburgers during lunch. This might have been the first food truck in Huntsville.

My Grandfather Troy "Pop" Baucom purchased the "box car" from Mae Phillips, wife of Cotton Mill supervisor, Evin Phillips. Then he set up shop at the 2nd location in a small red brick structure near the canal at the corner of Spring Street and Gallatin Street, (which is now Spragins Street). My Grandmother, Hattie Dunham Baucom, told me that Troy moved the "box car/truck" to their

"A male gynecologist is like an auto mechanic who never owned a car."

Carrie Roberts, Athens

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History And Stories of the Tennessee Valley

Old Huntsville, Inc. (USPS #8510)
P.O. Box 4648
Huntsville, Al 35815

(256) 534-0502

Email - oldhuntsville@knology.net
(Website) www.oldhuntsvillemag.com

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Advertising - (256) 534-0502
Sales & Mrktg. - Cathey Carney
Editor - Cheryl Tribble
Ron Eyestone, In Memory
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L. Thomas Ryan, Jr.
Attorney At Law

2319 Market Place, Suite B
Huntsville, Alabama 35801

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backyard at 600 Ward Avenue.

Troy next built a building for the Big Spring Cafe at their 3rd location about a half block north near the back of the Russel Erskine Hotel and painted it white. My grandmother Hattie told me a couple of funny stories about the cafe business. Troy and Hattie were working long hours and very often barely getting by. One time, Hattie told Troy, "We need to increase the price of the hamburgers." Troy replied, "That might not be a good idea because it might hurt our business". Hattie said, "We are not making enough profit". Troy replied, "But just look at the business we are doing." A hamburger sold for 10 cents, French fries for another 10 cents, and a bottled soft drink was 5 cents. With tax, a customer could eat for 50 cents.

At this time Hazel Cowley, who lived in Big Cove, moved to Huntsville to work for Troy and rented a room from him. Years later she would become the owner of Big Spring Cafe.

Another time Troy's son Buford Baucom was helping Troy pick up supplies for the cafe at Halsey Grocery Store (the current BSC owner said they still buy from Halsey). As they were leaving Halsey, Troy said, "As soon as we get there, help me tote these groceries in." Buford who recently graduated from high school said, "Pop, that is not the correct word to say. You should say, "Help me carry these supplies".

Troy was a little angry by being corrected by his son, and they argued for a few minutes about the proper word to say. Finally, Troy stopped the car and said, "Get out. You will be walking the rest of the way to the cafe, and when you get there, tote these groceries in."

Troy operated the Big Spring Cafe at that location until he sold it to Eugene Thornberry, who ran the cafe for about one year. Hazel Cowley still working at the BSC married Fly Beene and she bought it from Eugene in 1947. Hazel moved the business to the south side of Church Street near the Big Spring Lagoon. This would be the 4th location and very popular.

Huntsvillians over age 60 have many great memories of eating by the lagoon. This particular block is currently the first block of Church Street. One newspaper article quoted a lady customer who said when her family went to the BSC, her dad would pull the car over to the lagoon and before it had concrete walls, he could drive it near the edge of the water and wash their car.

My cousin Joe Ellen Smith was barely a teen when her mother would give her money to go pay the utility bill. Jo Whitaker (as she is known now) lived on Hearst Street in Lincoln Village so she would walk about one mile downtown to the Huntsville Utility building on Spragins Street. Jo's mother would give her a little extra money to buy something for herself. Jo would go

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across Church Street to the BSC and buy a hamburger and a double cola. Most youngsters would prefer to buy candy or a trinket but Jo loved the "greasy burger." One time Jo went to the Ready's Donut shop and bought donuts instead. She ate all of the donuts on the way home and said she was, "sick as a dog" by the time she arrived. She said she should have gone to BSC that day instead.

Hazel's sister-in-law Doris Cowley waited tables and she and her husband Howard would become the next owners in 1970. Hazel's niece Pam Cowley Milam who would eventually own the business remembers coming into town after school at Madison County High School, pulling up a chair and doing her lessons for the next day. Hazel operated the BSC there until the City of Huntsville again wanted the land for the Big Spring Park expansion.

Later the city parking garage was constructed to aid parking needs for the Von Braun Center. This eastern section of the parking garage was used as offices for the City of Huntsville Parking and Public Transit Department. Recently the parking garage has been modernized and that particular section houses the Cozy Cow Cafe and Coffee Shop.

Before the Big Spring Cafe had to move from the Big Spring lagoon area, Howard and Doris opened the Big Spring Cafe at 2906 Governors Drive in 1970 and operated two Big Spring Cafes at the time. They called the one on Governors Drive #2 which was actually the 5th location. They operated the two locations until they shut down the one at the lagoon. Their daughter Pam Cowley Milam purchased the Big Spring Cafe in 1992 and operated it at that location on Governors until 2017. That location was always a challenge for a space to park and room to sit and eat, but that didn't really bother the customers. The faithful Big Spring patrons did not mind bellying up to the bar and devouring the wonderful hamburgers, hotdogs, chili and chili dogs. Gospel singer and songwriter Aaron Wilburn entered a review on Facebook stating, "BSC is one of the few places that I do not mind waiting to get a seat and eat and being surrounded by the most interesting folks you'll see anywhere. And I mean that with the love of the Lord."

I spoke to Pam while writing this story, and she told me a funny story about when her relatives Vonn and Robin pulled a "fast one" on police officer Aaron Wright. While Aaron was eating, they found the keys to his squad car and moved it to the rear of the building. When Officer Wright went outside, he could not find his car and thought it had been stolen. Everyone got a big laugh but that is something they could be arrested for these days. I hope the time limit has expired to a possible felony charge. Pam went on to say there have been so many funny things happen that they have a running inside joke that they have to mop up the kitchen floor quite often. Humm, did someone lose control?

This could be the final location and Pam could have retired by now, but that is not in Pam's DNA. There are times in one's life when they are subject to a challenge or they choose to take a challenge. Pam Milam designed the new modern restaurant at 3507 Governors Drive. She wanted it to be similar to the previous buildings with tables and a bar where customers could see them cooking. She switched to the popular fountain drinks instead of bottled drinks. Pam explained this project was a big gamble. They were comfortable with the costs of things and the

When a kid says "Daddy, I want Mommy", that's the kid version of "I'd like to speak to your supervisor."

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overhead at the other location. As it turned out with all of the new construction in the area, they are fortunate to be at the new location.

While I was speaking to Pam, Keith Maples who was the builder walked in to pick up an order. I asked him how things went during the construction and he replied that he would have finished a lot sooner if Pam had not been giving him so many changes. He said everyone was happy so long as the roof did not leak and the grease pit did not stop up.

Some interesting trivia - there are usually 10 to 12 employees. It is still a family-run business. Pam's son Gavin is the Vice President. Pam's nephew Todd Edwards, grandson of Doris Cowley, is the cook and has been with them since he graduated from high school in 1991. Other than Gavin, he has the distinction of being employed there the longest at 32 years. The BSC averages about 200 customers each day. Todd said he averages cooking about 250 hamburgers each day. The most popular item on the menu is the chili burger. One other interesting fact is by counting the years of ownership to include the box car owned by Mae Phillips, store owners Hazel Beene, Doris Cowley and Pam Milam, BSC has been female owned and operated for 80 years.

For a few weeks before the move to the new #6 location Pam gave updates on her Facebook Account. She called it Saturday Morning Live at BSC #5. She posted interviews with her regular customers. There were hundreds of comments posted to her site. One could tell there was a concern about the status of the cafe such as the menu and the service. Most of the comments were multi generational. Some regulars stated they were brought to the cafe by their parents or grandparents. The videos reminded me of the famous chefs on TV such as the "Paula Dean Show" and "Cooking with Brenda Gant" from Andalusia, Alabama. Pam assured her customers that the service and food would be the same or better.

One time Pam said someone used a curse word on her site and she warned others not to do that or she would block them from the site. Pam proudly posted things about some of her regular customers. They have customers who come in and sit at the same spot and order the same thing and require the same waitress. This causes a problem when the waitresses swap around.

Once when Curtis Nunn from Big Cove was eating, a new resident from Hampton Cove was there and asked Pam where was Big Cove. Pointing at Curtis, she said, "Ask Curtis, he is the mayor of Big Cove."

"Ever since then he has been referred to as The Mayor of Big Cove."

During the Covid crisis of 2020, Pam thanked her customers on Facebook while stating the obvious concerns. She said she did not have a drive-through window and suffered the hardship of staying open. She graciously summed up the challenges of operating during a pandemic, "Thank you for all the birthday wishes. This has been truly a birthday to remember. Covid-19, the loss of a dear friend just two days before my birthday, not getting to love on my (grand) babies, not getting to be with my fam-

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Inside Big Spring in 1935. Pictured are Troy Baucom, Hazel Beene and Edith Hillis

ily all at one time, owning a restaurant, and the beef prices skyrocketing, now chicken and pork. But by the Grace of God and the faith that I carry in my heart, we will make it.

Join in with me today in prayer for all of our restaurants local and chain. The hardship is going to affect us all. Wishing you all the best and praying that we all get through this. Please try to support all that you can, and I'm sure they all appreciate it as much as we at Big Spring do."

The new restaurant has plenty of parking and plenty of space to sit. The oldtimers still have a bar to sit and eat and have conversations with the staff. Framed photos of the old cafes are hanging on the wall. With so much room with additional tables and booths, Pam also added breakfast, lunch plates, sandwiches, salads, soups, Brunswick stew, chili burgers and slaw burgers to the menu.

BSC is open 6 am - 10:30 am for breakfast. Lunch is from 10:30 pm to 3:00 pm and they are closed on Saturday and Sunday.

Pam posted plans for 2023 - Selling desserts on a trial basis - fried apple turnovers, chocolate pie, and chocolate and vanilla ice cups.

Recently in December 2022, #ThreeBestRated.com named BSC in the top three cafes in Huntsville.

If you look like your passport picture, you need the trip.

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Monte Sano Memories

by Jane Barr

There was a time when milk was delivered to our house. One year we had a major snow storm. The schools and businesses closed; yet our milkman, Leo Miller, delivered when the mailman could not.

Leo followed the snow plow up Monte Sano and went behind the plow as it cleared Monte Sano Boulevard. Leo left his truck on the road and with a sled, pulled his load down the connecting streets. He didn't miss a house.

One day one of his customers asked him why a certain item was on her bill, she had never noticed it before. Leo told her every day her son would stop him and get a carton of chocolate milk on his way to school. Leo assumed she knew it, but no, she did not. The boy grew up to be a lawyer.

Over the years we've had five (5) Great Danes, one at a time. Our first one used to go around the neighborhood and bring milk cartons home. I always kept an extra carton on hand because I knew a neighbor would call missing a carton, which I'd take right over. One day I found an orange juice carton on the back porch. It had teeth holes in it. Our dog never again brought a carton home!

When we moved to Monte Sano in the 1950s there was mostly woods. Across the road was an open field. I'd hear a squawk and up from the field would fly a chicken. Another squawk, another chicken. A neighbor kept chickens, they'd get out of the coop and wander around. One day I heard a squawk, a chicken flew, followed by our Great Dane. Soon our dog was at our door, with a live chicken in his mouth!

"Mrs. Barr, you need to come get your dog." "OK, I'll be right there."

Mrs. Barr would go right over, around the back of the school was her Great Dane looking in the window of the first-grade. The children thought it was great that dogs could follow them to school, that was before fences when dogs and kids could wander around the mountain.

Not only dogs but peacocks! Our neighbor had a pair of peacocks that would fly from their roost in their back yard and wander around. Many a time I'd awaken to find the pair outside our bedroom window.

For years we've had deer, rabbits, fox, turtles, butterflies, birds, lizards that had ancestors dating to dinosaur time and more coming through our yard. When I didn't have a camera handy I'd photograph their poop and tracks. I'd put the left-over peanut butter sandwiches on the deck. A three-legged squirrel would come over, eat the peanut butter out of the bread, then come back and get the bread.

One year we had a drought. I had herbs and flowering plants on my deck. I'd water them every morning. It was a great year to photograph for there were critters that would not normally come up on our deck. We even had a woodchuck nibbling my herbs. Last year we had a mama fox (vixen) and her pups coming through our yard. The Red Fox alternated with the Gray Fox. As long as there is sufficient food, water and shelter they live in peace.

We have a stream in our yard, next to Monte Sano State Park with over 2,000 acres of woods filled with food and shelter. Truly a wild life paradise!

As director of the Monte Sano Methodist Church week-day kindergarten - before kindergartens went into the city school system - I had the children using easels to do art work. One little girl painted what looked like a big, gray mountain. It took up the entire paper. I never said "What a nice...." Because I really didn't know what the child was painting, instead I'd say "Tell me about your painting." The little girl replied, "I was going to paint an elephant, but the paper wasn't large enough so I just did his foot."

Children are amazing!

When it was "Rest Time" I had the children on floor mats while I played classic music. One favorite was "The Grand Canyon Suite," by Ferde Grofe. I told them the story of the man, his donkeys that they could hear braying, and going down the mountain. Of course, living on Monte Sano the children had no problem imagining the donkeys going down the mountain.

Years later one of the father's asked "Jane, what was that record you used to play for the children, my daughter really liked it. It was about a sweet mountain."

The Cardinal

by Gerald Alvis, the Poet of Greenlawn

Should I remain still or step closer to take the picture?

Midway through our morning walk around our neighborhood pond, my wife whispered what is that in those bushes over there? I didn't have to ask what or where, it was obvious. There was a brilliantly colored cardinal perfectly contrasted against the grey of the brush supporting and surrounding him. I'd never seen a more vibrant red. With my iPhone at the ready, I crept forward. He, however, noted my progress and spun around so that his back was toward me, partially camouflaging himself. The browns and dull hues now blended in with what had previously made him stand out in the landscape. He flew a few feet away as we got closer and then left when a female cardinal (they are primarily brown) came by and got his attention.

Humans are also an interesting species, but we tend to overthink things. We want to stand out but also fit in and blend. Varying from the norm, where it is safer and more comfortable, can be challenging. We crave that acceptance that comes with a group and the security it can provide, but we sometimes harbor self-resentment for holding back when we know the potential inside of us. Standing out can bring accolades, but it also makes one vulnerable to criticism and dangers, both real and imagined.

So can being this independent individual yet being a part of something greater be possible? Does one compromise the other? Can they coexist? If both can be achieved, then how?

We are accepted best when we are ourselves. (Actually, it's challenging, if not exhausting, being anything else.) When we acquire our own approval for a worthy goal, our actions and beliefs align. It is then we are drawn toward it and others who hold similar values. It's the law of attraction; it's powerful, not just in us but in nature.

I hope to see them again, the colorful birds. Perhaps in the coming months, if I'm observant enough, I may notice a nest, as life will begin all over again. I'm glad he took the chance.

I missed the photo but captured a memory.

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Remembering the Concession Stand in the Old Madison County Courthouse

by Louise Manning

I wrote an article several years ago which I never sent to Old Huntsville but have kept in my computer all this time. It was in regard to an article in the July 2007 No. 173 Old Huntsville about Alfred L. Clark.

As the article stated, Mr. Clark had a concession stand in the previous Madison County Courthouse (the one torn down in the 1960s). For many years, I worked in offices around the Courthouse and I made almost daily trips to Mr. Clark's stand. If it were not a busy time for him, we would visit for a few minutes. He was a most enjoyable person to talk with and would brighten your day. I was not surprised to learn of his many accomplishments. I remember that, when I wore spike heel shoes and walked on the marble floor in the lobby of the Courthouse, he would call me by name when I walked up to his stand. This always amazed me!

I am sure that there are other "old timers" who remember their visits to his concession stand and their conversations with Mr. Clark

I am sorry that I did not send this article to Old Huntsville at the time I wrote it. I do not have a copy of the July 2007 issue of Old Huntsville and do not remember what accomplishments were mentioned in the article. I do know that he was a very independent person and did many things that you would not think he could. I also know that even though he was "blind" he could "see" in many ways.

Bicyclists Helping City Budget

from 1888 newspaper

The city is now realizing a nice income from parties who are making it a habit to ride bicycles on the sidewalks.

In the past few days, not less **than fifteen or twenty cyclists** have been arraigned in the city **court on this charge; the fine they receive for the first offense** being one dollar, the second two dollars and so on.

The police wish to thank the bicyclists who are doing their part to help maintain the department's budget

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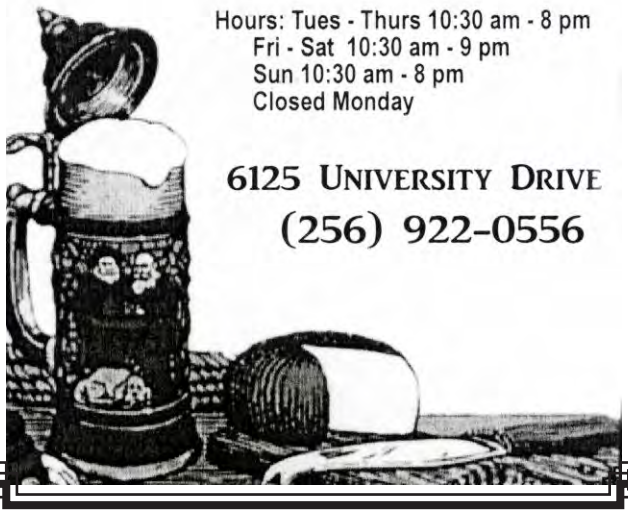

A Strange Day in March

by Elizabeth Wharry

Our minister was coming over for a visit one evening in March. I needed to pick up a few things from Sam's Club that afternoon. Before I went to Sam's Club, I made sure the house was above my usual standard of cleanliness.

I finally got to Sam's around 11 AM. After finishing my shopping in about 2 hours, I was ready for a quick lunch at the snack bar. As I was waiting in line, a young gentleman approached me. It was obvious that he was mentally challenged. He stammered..."Hey, hey...would you like a weenie?" As he shook his head, he said, "n-not m-my weenie...one from here!"

I could tell he was really struggling with his social skills. I gently replied, "How about if I buy my own and we can sit and visit?"

About that time, his care taker came up and said that she had finished her business, and it was time to leave.

That evening after supper, our minister came over. Normally, our dog Riley Bear is pretty happy to see visitors. His philosophy is "peace, love and belly rubs". For some reason, the dog took an instant dislike to the minister! Riley Bear was bristled and growling low.

I gave him the command to stop to no avail. He just ignored me. The minister pulled a dog treat out of his pocket as peace offering.

Riley Bear quickly snatched out of the minister's hand. He retreated and chewed it, all the while growling. He kept glaring the minister. This took place in about 5 minutes or less. Since it was obvious that the dog wasn't going to stop, I led him to another room and shut the door. The minister left about half an hour later, unscathed. Just weird.

Happy St. Patricks Day!

"Only in America do we buy hotdogs in packs of 10, and hotdog buns in packs of 8."

Beth Phillips, Scottsboro

Mayor Gives Orders: No More Cows To Run Loose In Huntsville

from 1909 newspaper

Since Mayor Smith gave instructions for the strict enforcement of the ordinance there have **been about fifteen or more cows** belonging to residents of Dallas Village taken up. Several of the owners have been placed under arrest when they appeared to pay the **fine for impounding and they have been fined in the city court.**

The residents of the Village allow their cows to graze on the common and they claim that the animals ought not to be taken up because of this.

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March is my happy month. Flowers are budding out and warm days are just around the corner. My grandkids are counting the days until school gets out for Spring Break.

Be sure to get the new updated Covid booster. Four of my older friends have now been diagnosed with Covid. Unfortunately, it seems like the older one gets, the harder it is to recover, especially if there are underlying health problems.

I just read that insurers will no longer be required to cover the cost of free at-home COVID-19 tests. The government has said it is running out of money to buy vaccines, and Congress has not budgeted on the president's request for more funding. Check with the Madison County Health Department to see what vaccines they have.

My husband is a real trooper. In June, he got an MFA graduate degree. This time from Seton Hall University in Pennsylvania. He is only four weeks out from surgery and is now teaching Creative Writing at University of Alabama/Huntsville. I guess I will have to start calling him Professor Smith.

I made a trip to a nursery the other day, all of the beautiful hanging baskets caught my eye, and of course I bought several. I put them on my sun porch and will take them out on the patio when the weather permits. Flowers really perk anyone's day up. Why not buy a hanging basket for a friend who can't get out because of poor health? Their smiling face will make your whole day brighter, seeing what joy it will bring them.

Now is the perfect time to start spring cleaning. Take one room a week to keep, throw away, or donate. There is always someone who would find whatever you were throwing away just what they had been looking for. If you know of a student going off to college, they more than likely could use anything you are willing to part with, such as kitchen items, lamps, chairs, end tables and maybe a couch since you have been wanting a new one. Churches have a list of high school graduates who would really appreciate your help.

I want to congratulate Owen Smith and Kimberly Fletcher on their wedding on the 25th of March. May they have many happy years together, and who knows, Owen being the eighth child in the family, I hope to see another grandchild.

Families are the best, and we have truly been blessed. Until next time, make your day a great one.

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Serious Street Car Accident Today

About 9 o'clock this morning Street Car No. 5, east bound with Dick Hatcher as motorman, collided with a two-horse wagon belonging to Hon. D. I. White and injured the two drivers. Jack Parham, slightly and Jim Fields, was seriously injured. The accident occurred at the corner of Holmes and Green Streets. The wagon and team were going south at a rapid rate and the car was advancing east in back-up fashion, the two colliding before the men in charge of either could see the approach of the other in time to avoid the accident. Both wheels on one side of the wagon were broken off. The Parham man escaped with a bruised head and shoulder. Fields was more seriously hurt, his right hip being dislocated and fractured.

Oil Men to Visit Local Fields for Work

E. R. B. Martin and J. K. Mahan, millionaire natural oil operators from Pittsburg, Pa. and who have options on more than 20,000 acres of oil lands in Madison County, left this afternoon for their home after spending a few days here in the interest of their probably local operations. The tip was secured by a prominent business man and friend of the gentlemen present, that within a very short time they expect to simultaneously start the drilling of five to ten wells near Huntsville. The gentlemen paid a visit to the Hazle Green and West Huntsville wells of the New York-Alabama Oil Co. and were much pleased with the prospects.

"Picto"

Huntsville's popular play house offers the amusement loving people this week a series of choice entertainments that will please. Spend your evenings with us in enjoyment. Admission - 5 cents

Dr. Lockwood of Huntsville passed through here to Fayetteville last week. Upon his return he did some veterinary work for Mr. Fred Baeder and also removed a large piece of cob from the mouth of one of Mr. Hense Lowe's horses that had been unable to eat for five days because of it, causing said horse and the owner to feel much better. Dr. Lockwood certainly understands his business. He spent Sunday night with Dr. McCowan.

Mr. John Mosely of Hazle Green has been adding more land to his already several acres, having purchased the Allison homestead, west of his farm on the Pike, and now has a stretch of land one mile long from the Pike west on the north side of Charity Lane.

The Allison farm will be a much better piece of property after Mr. Mosely has owned it for a few years.

Federal Aid Sought for Shoals Improvement

Within the next few days the Tennessee Valley of North Alabama will send a delegation to Washington, DC, 500 strong for the purpose of urging the Congress of the United States to take speedy and definite action in the development of the immense water power of the Muscle Shoals some thirty miles below the Decaturs. Mayor Henry A. Skegg of Decatur has just appointed 25 delegates to go from Decatur.

He Died this Morning from Typhoid Fever

Edward E. Ezell, aged 28 years, is dead. He died this morning at 5 o'clock at his home on McClung Street, where he had suffered typhoid fever for several weeks. Mr. Ezell was thought to be better until yesterday when he suffered two hemorrhages and another late in the evening, which hastened his death.

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A heart-broken young widow and two little children survive, besides the father and the mother, one sister, Mrs. J. H. Terry and two brothers, Foster Ezell and Grady Ezell, the latter a student at Auburn. The remains will be shipped to Mr. Ezell's old home at Elkton, Tenn tonight on the 1:35 train, going via Pulaski, and from there by private conveyance to his home out at Elkton, where the funeral will be held tomorrow at noon.

The news of the death will be read as a shock to all of his friends and the business world. Mr. Ezell was vice president and general manager of the Ezell Bros. & Terry Co. department store in this city.

He was recognized as one of our shrewdest business men and was always found in the lead with any movement looking to the development and building of Huntsville. The big store of which Mr. Ezell was manager is closed out of respect to his memory, but will be continued on the same big scale as he had conducted it.

The whole town is in gloom over the death of young Mr. Ezell, who, although he had not been a resident of our city but a few months, had won his way into the hearts and affections of our people.

Foster Ezell who had also been ill with typhoid at the infirmary has been removed to the home of his sister, Mrs. J. H. Terry of East Holmes Street.

Miss Willie Harris is reported to be seriously ill at her home on Adams Avenue.

Found - a buggy lap robe on Franklin Street. Owner return to this office and recover by describing the robe and paying for this ad.

For rent - three nice upstairs rooms furnished or unfurnished for gentlemen, preferably. Location, central and on the car line. Apply to "W" care of the Daily Times.

Wanted - a good nurse near to town who can do general housework and care for two small children, can get good position and good salary by applying to this office.

The Wedding Went On

A wagon crash on Holmes Street in which the bridegroom, his parents and his best man were riding and were more or less seriously injured was not enough to cancel the wedding of Philip Schaeffer to Miss Beatrice Weil. Mr. Schaeffer, his wedding suit torn and dirty and with several bruises on his neck and face, took the hand of his bride and quietly answered questions put to him by the minister.

The best man limped and was considerably shaken up, but did his duty effectively as if he had not been hurt.

The parents of Mr. Schaeffer had to be propped up in chairs, but they gave their blessings to the bride and groom.

Going out of Business - we have 10 good business show cases for sale, also one small cash register, two horses and two delivery wagons. If you are looking for a good bargain, see me at the Old Lilly Bakery Stand or call me at phone 408.

Blind Tiger Discovered

The police and Sheriff raided the soft drink stands today. The raids accomplished nothing, with everything appearing as dry as a powder horn. But this afternoon a new order of things showed up when a regular blind tiger was run into on West Holmes Street in the Goldsmith Building. The room adjoining the Old Lilly Bakery was found to be a regular joint. Chief of Police Bullard and officer Carmichael made the raid, capturing a 38-gallon barrel of brandy, several gallons of Liqubrand and a good quantity of beer. The proprietor of the establishment, a Mr. Carrol, was arrested and placed in jail. He is said to have a partner who will also be arrested.

The prohibition laws will be enforced to the letter, and those who are breaking the law can expect a visit from the Mayor and the Sheriff.

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My Arrival in Huntsville

by Placide D. Nicaise

My journey from South Mississippi to North Alabama in March 1958 was more than a journey through space and time. It was a break with my past and the beginning of a new life in a place I would ever afterward call home. Huntsville is where I have lived out most of my life among family and friends. Like most lives, mine has been one of ups and downs, of happy times, and adversity. In spite of the stressful years, I have always felt that I belonged to this shining city that sits at the foot of the flat-topped mountains. The twinkling city lights have often welcomed me home when I was returning from a long journey. I never felt completely comfortable anywhere else once I settled here. The friendly, optimistic people have provided a cultural climate that suited me. My strong attachment may partly be due to the city and I growing up together. Huntsville was just beginning to change from the old farming and mill based economy when I arrived. We made the transition together into the space age.

I traveled to Huntsville during that memorable springtime in 1958 on a passenger train. Like so many others during those years of expansion, I was a recent graduate who was drawn here by the fabled von Braun Rocket Team. I was 23 years old at the time and was looking forward to starting out in a new environment.

The countryside and the solid rock formations visible from the train after we got to North Alabama were a surprise and a delight. The flat-topped mountains, the hardwood trees and the red soil were all so much different from the sandy lowlands of the Gulf Coast that it aroused my curiosity. I wondered how the mountains were formed and why this area was so different from Mississippi. I knew almost immediately that this was the place I wanted to live for the rest of my life. However, my work was to take me away, and back again, before I was to settle down, and a while longer before I found out the secrets of the mountains.

The L & N railroad did not pass through Huntsville, so I transferred to the Southern Railway in Decatur. I remember seeing the sign beside the railroad as we passed through Greenbriar, and wondered at what a strange name that was for a town.

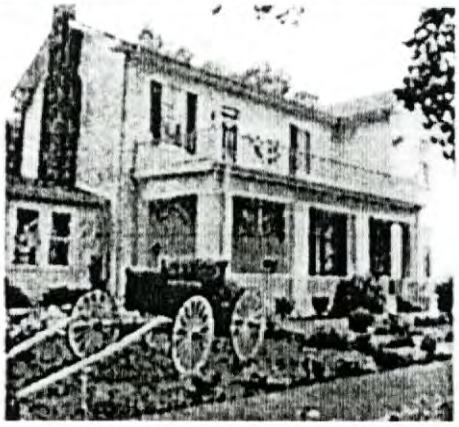
As we pulled into the old Huntsville Depot, I noticed a sign that read: "Huntsville, Alabama - Watercress Capital of the World". I wondered why a city with a great rocket development facility would identify itself with watercress. Others must have been wondering about the same question, because it was not long before the old signs came down and the new ones read: Huntsville Alabama - Space capitol of the world!

I spent my first few nights in Huntsville at Kay's Motel, located near the northeast corner of Meridian Street and Fifth Avenue (now Governors Drive). This was near the present site of Huntsville Hospital East and next door to Nolan Roper's old home—a family I was to meet much later in life.

From the motel, I walked down Meridian Street to the Town Square and along Franklin and Echols streets through what is now called the Twickenham district. I was surprised to" see all the old expensive homes but the square was just like so many other small southern towns: a Courthouse surrounded by small stores and cotton markets. Old men sat around on benches while they talked and whittled.

I didn't realize it then but I was seeing the last of a way of life that had existed here for generations. In a few years the cotton markets and even the courthouse would be gone, replaced by a shining black tower that dominated the landscape and proclaimed the transition to the space age.

The white marble towers of the city administration buildings would rise on the other



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side of the Big Spring to form the heart of a new modern city. In spite of these dramatic changes, the area around the Square was gradually dying out as a social and commercial center. Businesses moved out to shopping centers along the new Parkway to accommodate housing developments that were springing up around the old city.

People were pouring into the city during those years. The city streets were already overcrowded, and new roads were being constructed to move traffic around the outskirts of town. The influx of people from all over the country and the new money coming into the local economy was creating growth and vitality.

Native landowners and businessmen were becoming wealthy. You could see and feel the expansion everywhere.

I did not settle down in the midst of all this activity, but over in the quiet streets of Dallas Mill Village at the corner of Dallas and Humes Avenues. I rented a room from Mamie Holland - a good, cheerful lady that had spent much of her life working in the Mills before they closed. The red bricks of Dallas Mill was still visible a couple of blocks away. A pretty Jersey cow grazed on the green beside Dallas Avenue where the 1-565 overpass now runs. Chickens ran around in a yard across the street.

It was a place where people walked around and visited their neighbors. People still hoped that the Mill would reopen. They were a bit curious about a young man that would move here to work for the rocket program. They warned me that it wouldn't last.

But the Mills were gone for good. Dallas Mill would soon burn to the ground. Lincoln Mill would be converted to office space. Huntsville was in a period of growth like it had never seen before and probably would never see again. It would become the stage for the Army's ballistic missile program and then NASA's rocket booster program that would take men to the moon. The industrial giants would move here and many startup companies would call this their hometown.

Even after all these years of change, the quiet streets around Five Points still preserve something of the city before the coming of the space age. They still reflect something of the town that I saw when I first arrived.

"The biggest joke on mankind is that computers have begun asking humans to prove they aren't robots."

Ted Jacoby, programmer

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Heard On the Street

by ***Cathey Carney***

Did you recognize the little girl in last month's Photo of the Month? It was none other than **Lynda Hall,** who served as our Madison County Tax Collector for years. Our first caller was **Gerrianne Boatright** of Harvest, who just recently retired from Huntsville Fire and Rescue as a dispatcher for the past 42 years! Congratulations to you Gerrianne!

And the little hidden item was a small antique clock I hid in honor of **Austin Miller**'s feature story in the February issue. Our first caller to tell me they found it was **Sandra Denby** of Huntsville. Many probably know Sandra because she is the one who makes those fabulous hot cookies every morning at Pharmacy First on Whitesburg across from CVS. She told me she makes 4-5 different types and macadamia white chocolate is heavenly, sugar cookies, peanut butter, yum. Plus last I heard they make homemade biscuits too. Anyway congratulations to Sandra, you win a year of Old Huntsville! The little clock was on p. 40, on Tom's shoulder.

This is sort of a crazy world now for those of us who have been around for a while. A year or so ago I decided to write up a **"Worry List"** about a few things that were on my mind. It actually makes you feel better to see it on paper rather than just mulling over it. Anyway it was interesting to re-read that list after a year, and see how things that I felt anxious about back then had resolved themselves for the most part, and I had a few new items to add. Try it, it's a pretty interesting exercise.

Brice Connor has been working at the Madison County Sales Tax Dept. for the past nine years and he is so knowledgeable about complicated taxes and is able to break it down so that the normal person understands. I was happy to meet and talk with him recently!

After eating lunch recently in Madison at Main Street Cafe with friends **Karen** and **Carolyn**, a store across the street caught our eye and we decided to pay a visit. It's called Noble Passage Interiors and had really unusual home accessories, was really well staged and larger than it looks on the outside. I noticed a furry pair of slippers and upon investigation - they are for people with cold feet! The way they work is you put them in your microwave for 60 seconds and they stay warm for over an hour! I had to get a pair and they are heavenly on cold nights, so I had to get a 2' wrap made the same way. It seems the older you get, the more important light and heat becomes. So with my wrap and slippers (and electricity for the microwave) I feel I'll stay warm for years to come!

Ianthia Bridges of Truist Bank has some special days in March. She wants to wish Happy happy birthday to **Kaneshia**, her niece on March 5th. Her cousin **Alexis** will have a March 3rd birthday and cousin **Calvin** celebrates on March 15th! We say happy birthday to you all from us too!

One of the most loving and optimistic women I've ever known passed away Feb. 4, 2023. **Janet Brinkerhoff** had been battling cancer for a few decades and lost her battle at 78 years old. She was the lady who would be going through alot of pain but when she saw you, would always ask how you were doing. Janet was raised in Louisiana where she met the

Photo of The Month

The first person to correctly identify the youngster below wins a one-year subscription to "Old Huntsville"

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love of her life, **Charles "Brink" Brinkerhoff** in 1967. They moved to Huntsville and worked and built their family. Janet worked at Wyle CAS Defense Contracting until her retirement in 2012. She was a member of Preceptor Alpha Gamma Chapter of Beta Sigma Phi sorority since the early '70s. She was a member of GFWC/AFWC du Midi. She had a giving heart and loved working hard on heading up committees to help others and her sorority.

She leaves her sister, **Lisa Thompson Stagg (Mark);** her son**, Mark Lee Brinkerhoff (Zorana Stricevic Brinkerhoff);** her grandchildren, **Anna Sophia Joy and Bennett Asher Brinkerhoff;** grandsons**, Aaric Rylan and Liam Carson Brinkerhoff,** and their mother**, Anastasia Maxwell;** nephew**, Joshua Stagg;** niece**, Sarah Stagg Brown (Brennon)**; their children **Hudson, Emery, and Caroline Brown**. Her husband **Brink** passed away just last November so they are together now. Janet was a hero and role model for her family and her friends as well.

Cathy Bridges called to let us know that she and her sweet husband **Ronnie** will be celebrating their 45th anniversary on March 24th. How lucky are you to have your best friend with you for so many years. Congratulations to you both and party it up!

Huntsville Fire and Rescue would like to congratulate their very own, **Chief Howard McFarlen** on receiving the award for Career Fire Chief of the Year by the Alabama Association of Fire Chiefs. With 45 years of fire service under his belt, Chief McFarlen has contributed tremendously to public safety and fire service to our community. He is known for his steady demeanor and calmness under extreme pressure. He has so many accomplishments and this is a huge achievement. Congratulations to you, Chief McFarlen!

A special hello to **David Moore** and his sweet cat companion **Leroy** who live in Logan, Al. They are longtime readers of Old Huntsville and are looking forward to warm weather just like us!

If you have a damp garage that sometimes gets water leaks, keep a small fan going at all times. The moving air will keep surfaces from molding.

Rayceil Sanderson was 96 years old when she passed away. She worked in the Madison County School System her whole life, retiring in 1990, touching many lives along the way. Mrs. Sanderson is survived by her sons, **James Allen Sanderson (Cindi)** of Madison, **Shelby Ray Sanderson (Shirley)** of Athens; seven grandchildren **Zac Singh, Rachel Bailey, Adam Sanderson, Mollie Carter, Christopher Sanderson, Matthew Sanderson, and Adam Smith.** Her nephew **John Troup** lives in Nashville, TN. She has several cousins, 3 great grandchildren and a host of friends who will always remember this sweet, loving lady.

Happy Birthday recently to **Ann Collins**, who now lives in Madison, GA but used to live in Huntsville with her family, for many many years. Ann was living at Redstone Village when her son **Ron Collins** invited her to join them in Madison, GA and she did. Ann turned 96 on Feb. 10 and celebrated in style with a party for her that celebrated Ann. She still plays bridge and doesn't miss an exercise class. We miss you here in Huntsville and send love to you!

Many readers have commented on how bleak their gardens look with perennials that usually are green having turned a **dark shade of brown**. This was all because of the severe ice and low temps we had for a week or so this past winter. According to Jeff Bennett at Bennett's Nursery, don't be too hasty to dig up/cut up your bushes and plants. Wait to see what happens when it warms for good, and you might be surprised to see much of it come back. I know my Lenten roses did extremely well and are now blooming, but my monkey grass, boxwoods and ferns all took a hit.

In honor of our ferns that may be gone for good, I have hidden a **tiny fern branch** somewhere in the pages of this issue. If you find it, and you won't, call me and if you're the first to identify where it is and haven't won before, you'll be our winner of a $50 annual subscription to Old Huntsville. But remember it'll be super tiny and I expect no calls.

Another special hello to our reader in Tullahoma, **Carl Keeton, Jr**. He has been reading the magazine for years and looks forward to it in the mail. Send us some good memories, Carl!

Time to close this column up, so have a good March, hug your family and help your neighbors if they need you.

"My imaginary friend tells me that you need a therapist."

Sherry James, Triana

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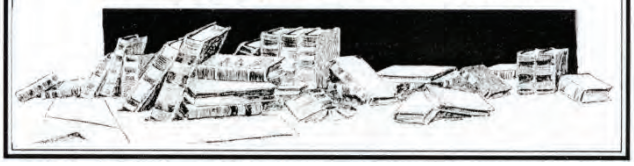

Southern Comfort

Beef Stew with Bay Leaves

1 lb. stew meat
8 small onions
1 c. celery
1 T. parsley flakes
2 bay leaves flour
2 c. potatoes
2 carrots
2 t. thyme
2 cloves garlic
Salt and pepper

Dredge the meat in salt, pepper and flour. Fry in small amount of grease til brown, add more flour and brown. Add some water or broth to make a gravy. Add the vegetables and spices and simmer til done, about 3 hours.

Cheddar Cheese Soup

2 T. butter
8 T. all-purpose flour
1/2 lb. Cheddar cheese, diced
3 c. chicken broth
2 c. milk, scalded
1 onion, sliced thin
1/2 t. garlic powder
1 c. warmed cream
Salt and pepper to taste

In a medium saucepan, melt butter and add the flour. Next add the cheese. Slowly stir in the broth, stirring constantly, add milk and onion. Sprinkle with garlic powder. Cook for a minute longer.

Strain the soup, then return to heat and simmer for 10 minutes. Stir constantly, blend in the cream, season with salt and pepper.

Catfish Fillets in Beer Batter

1 c. beer
2 c. flour
1-2 T. vegetable oil
Salt to taste
2 egg whites, beaten til stiff
12 catfish fillets

Let the beer stand open for a couple of hours. Mix all ingredients, fold in the egg whites last coat the fillets and fry. Serve with lemon wedges and chunks of vidalia onion.

Crunchy Chicken Pie

3 chicken breasts
6 ribs celery, chopped
1 -3 oz. package walnut pieces
1 -3 oz. package pecan pieces
1 -8 oz. carton sour cream
Salt and pepper to taste
1 c. grated cheese
1 9-inch pie shell, baked

Cook the chicken and cut into bite-size pieces. Mix all ingredients except for the cheese and fill the pie shell. Sprinkle the cheese generously over the top, sprinkle with a bit of garlic powder. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes at 300 degrees.

Hot Pineapple Casserole

2 -15 oz. cans chunk pineapple and juice

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5 T. flour
1 c. sugar
1 c. grated sharp Cheddar cheese
1/2 sleeve round butter crackers, crumbled
1/2 c. butter, melted

Grease a 9 x 13-inch casserole and pour in the pineapple and juice. Mix and add your flour and sugar. Next, blend 1/2 cup of the cheese, the crackers and melted butter. Mix together, add the remaining cheese as a topping. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes.

Cinnamon Cookies

1 c. butter
1 c. sugar
2 eggs, separated
1 t. vanilla
2 c. flour
3 t. cinnamon
3/4 c. chopped nuts

Cream butter and sugar; add egg yolks and vanilla. Fold in flour and cinnamon. Press dough on large cookie sheet; cover with nuts and press down. Beat egg whites til frothy and brush top of dough. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes. Cut into strips while hot and remove from the cookie sheet at once.

Banana Nut Bread

1/2 c. shortening
1-1/2 c. sugar
2 eggs
1 c. ripe bananas, mashed
2 c. flour
1/2 t. baking powder
1/2 t. baking soda
1/4 c. buttermilk
1 t. vanilla
1 c. chopped pecans

Preheat your oven to 300 degrees. Cream the shortening and sugar. Add the eggs, one at a time, beating well after each. Add the bananas. Sift your flour, baking powder, soda and salt together. Add flour mixture alternately with the buttermilk. Add the vanilla and nuts. Bake in a greased 5x9-inch loaf pan for an hour and 15 minutes. Cool; wrap tightly in plastic wrap.

This will keep for about 2 weeks and can be frozen.

White Chocolate Ritz Crackers

1 -16-oz. package of white chocolate
1 c. peanut butter
1 -16-oz. box Ritz crackers

Melt the chocolate in top of a double boiler. Spread the peanut butter between two Ritz crackers and then dip them in the melted chocolate.

Place them on waxed paper until the chocolate has hardened. Chocolate can be tinted for parties.

Almond Coconut Bars

3/4 c. butter
1-1/2 c. flour
2 t. sugar
5 eggs, beaten
2 c. sugar
3 T. almond extract
2 c. coconut

Mix the butter, flour and sugar. Press into a 9x13-inch pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 15 minutes.

Mix the remaining ingredients and spread over the pastry. Bake at 350 degrees for 25 minutes. Cool and cut into bars.

Fried Ice Cream

1/2 c. caramel syrup
6 oz. corn flakes
1/2 gal. vanilla ice cream
Vegetable oil
1 -12 oz. carton Cool Whip
12 cherries

Mix the caramel with the corn flakes til sticky. Scoop out the ice cream and apply corn flake coating to cover the ice cream.

Store any leftover coating in the fridge. Drop the coated ice cream balls in hot oil (enough to cover the balls) for 15 to 20 seconds.

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Reavis Hogan, age 85

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The Story of Zippo Lighters -
A History along with my Personal Experiences

by M. D. Smith, IV

In 1932, when Zippo Windproof Lighters were first made, they cost $1.95 each. Their motto was, and still is, "It works or we fix it free." The current price of a plain Zippo is about $16.00. Unique graphics models run closer to $30.00. The outer case was made of chrome-plated brass, and many models still are. During WWII, Zippo suspended civilian production and made them exclusively for the military. During those years, most of the cases were made of steel, which was more robust and there was a shortage of brass. They all had a crinkly black finish so that it wouldn't give away a soldier's position like bright chrome might do. The entire "guts" of the lighter slips from the outside lowercase for refilling or changing flints. You could change decorative cases regularly (for a similar model) if you wanted to without keeping dozens filled.

After WWII in 1945, Zippo returned to civilian production. Armed with the publicity of being the exclusive manufacturer of lighters for the GIs, owner and promoter Mr. Blaisdell had a special Oldsmobile built that looked like they made the middle from two giant Zippo lighters. It toured much of America and appeared in many newspapers, resulting in substantial free publicity.

I was a kid in the late forties, and it seemed like almost everyone smoked, not only in all the movies but in homes, businesses and everywhere. We had multiple ashtrays in every room in our house because my father was a big smoker. In those days, it was common to have a little cigarette box holding 20-40 loose cigarettes offered to company, not unlike the candy bowl of wrapped mints still offered in homes today. My mother didn't smoke or drink alcohol—one of the very few adults I knew who didn't.

We had ornate silver table lighters in the living room and other types of desk lighters in the den and other spaces. When my father wore his suit to work, he often carried a very slim silver Ronson lighter that you depressed the lever on top, and the cap covering the wick popped up at the same time it produced a spark to ignite the highly flammable lighter fluid in the wick. The Ronson motto was, "Always lights the first time." But he always used his silver Zippo whenever he was outdoors doing any sort of work or fishing. It worked great in the wind and held a lot of lighter fluid, so it didn't have to be filled often.

I have a perfect picture of my father sitting in a small rented wooden outboard motor boat in khaki pants and a white short-sleeve shirt lighting up a Camel or Lucky Strike cigarette. I was in the forward seat and we fished on a calm, sunny day for Bass in the Homosassa River in Florida.

Of course, there were always the old standby matches available to adults and kids. I could buy a small box for a penny or get book matches free at lots of stores and restaurants. So when I traded a buddy a stack of comic books for a scratched and dented Zippo, it didn't alarm my folks that I had one at ten years old. I was a bit of a firebug

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and loved to burn small batches of pine straw collected from our yard. I could start a fire with a magnifying glass on a sunny day. I also did some overnight camping out in a pup tent with a buddy, and we built a small fire with my Zippo and roasted hot dogs and then marshmallows on sharpened sticks for our dinner and later went to sleep. Zippos were always around. It made us feel more "grown-up".

In my teens, most of my buddies were smoking cigarettes, and I tried inhaling and coughed so severely that I decided it wasn't any fun. But I wanted to be "cool" with the rest, so I learned to puff with my cheeks and act like I was inhaling, while I sucked in a breath through my nose, then exhaled, letting the smoke out, and it looked the same. I could even make it come out of my nose on the exhale, and no one ever knew or suspected. But there was the matter of taste. Then when I was sixteen, I had my own car with a "push-in" cigarette lighter in the dash. I tried some menthol cigarettes and, before I went to college, was smoking Newports in a box. I liked the little double swish that was their logo. If I wasn't using the car lighter, I was using my trusty Zippo in my pocket. I kept a can of lighter fluid in my glove box for refilling when the flame got small, indicating it was going dry.

If you didn't stop when the fuel was out, it'd burn up the wick, and it could be hard to get tweezers to pull out more wick, but I never used all the wick up. But they said it was easy to replace. Flints had to be loaded from inside the bottom when you pulled the innards apart, like when you filled it. I always kept two inside, so when one was used up, I had another behind it until a later time to add my backup flint.

Zippo never forgot the Veterans after WWII, and they've produced special editions dedicated to other wars. For example, you can find Korean War lighters. One has two US Saber Jets and the year, 1950-1953.

There were models manufactured commemorating Vietnam. One example is "The Battle of Khe Sanh" edition showing a US soldier in the field with straw camouflage covering his helmet.

Some versions commemorate the entire war from 1955 to 1975.

Another Veteran model has the American Eagle, flag and slogan, "I Served My Time in Hell."

Hundreds or maybe thousands of unique designs have graced Zippos's cases, which explains why so many people are collectors and never seem to own enough.

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My Brother, Hestle "Hardrock" Johnston

Originally written years ago for Old Huntsville Magazine

by Johnny Johnston

On a cold day in November 1926, he was born in a shack located in the woods near Princeton, Alabama. His Father worked at the Sawmill down by the river along with a hundred other men, when there was work to do. Lumber didn't sell well during the Depression. No one was building houses or businesses, they were just trying to find food to put on the table for the families. If you could find work in Princeton you would get paid $.50 per day or $.25 for half a day. Many of the people had resorted to making illegal whiskey to be sold in Huntsville, Scottsboro or joints around the valley. That at least brought in some money and the Sheriffs of Madison County or Jackson County would not usually go that far to catch a moonshiner who could not pay a fine anyway.

His Mother wrote out the information for a Birth Certificate which she would mail to the State of Alabama where he would become a registered resident and hopefully live a good life providing he could survive the poverty of Paint Rock Valley. She knew and admired a man in the community named Hester so she and John decided to call him Hester. The Birth Certificate however came back Hestle and stayed that way.

Hardrock found himself a job at age 7, working at the local country store making $.10 cents per day sweeping the floor, filling in the shelves he could reach and keeping the cat away from the cheese. His earnings went to help feed his family while living in first one shack then another. Whatever shack or outhouse people would give them to live in. They had no funds to pay for a home.

Thank goodness for John obtaining a job in 1940, while delivering wood to Huntsville. He found work at the Stave Mill located near Church Street and Wheeler Avenue making $.75 cents per day and lived with a brother until he could find a place to live with his wife Daisy and five children. He located a Chicken House he could rent on Maple Street, cleaned it out and sent for the family. The location was just across Maple Street from the famous Tip Top Cafe.

Hardrock attended Princeton School for a few years starting in the second grade to not interfere with whatever work he could do to help feed his family of seven people. His best friend at Princeton was Bill Penney who many years later got into the car business in Huntsville.

Hardrock went through Lincoln School, graduating in 1944 and volunteering for service in WWII. He was turned down because of a heart murmur. Later in life he was employed at Redstone Arsenal and moved through ABMA then into NASA on the day they were formed being one of the first NASA employees. Throughout all his life whenever checked by Doctors or technicians they told him he had a serious heart murmur and should see that it was taken care of.

He was always building trailers or modifying cars in his spare time, having a very high aptitude in mechanical design and repair.

At NASA he started out working on vehicles driving them and eventually other major projects since he was super sharp on mechanical items of any type. The space program developed into a massive program epically involving fuel development. He saw that as good work and began studying all phases of space travel. His particular interest involved quality control and centered on the development, transportation and storage of fuel. His involvement took him to the Apollo Program and a part in the trips to the Moon.

When the Saturn 5 was ready it had to be transported to Cape Canaveral which would be by river barge. A barge was obtained and several plans were designed to load the missile onto the barge. Hardrock played a massive part of this transportation program since he implemented the procedure for loading the missile onto the barge. It was a process of rising and lowering the barge by pumping water in and out of

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it to match the ramp as the missile was being driven on. Hardrock actually drove the tractor to get the missile in place. He utilized a radio connected to several workers who all had their assignments. As a set of wheels rolled onto the barge it was necessary to pump out some of the water to raise the barge to meet the next set of wheels. Hardrock coordinated this strenuous program from the seat of the large tractor while backing the missile into place on the barge.

He wasn't through yet. He was assigned to ride the barge from Redstone Arsenal up the Tennessee River to the Ohio River then west to the Mississippi River. From there they pulled the barge down past New Orleans into the Gulf of Mexico and around Key West, Florida then up to the Cape. The trip took several weeks.

Remember, the barge was a river barge with a flat bottom and square front. Each wave, each turn, each wind made the barge buck and kick the inhabitants like a mule. The rough and tumble trip was also aggravated by a foreign ship that rammed the barge near New Orleans.

Hardrock was employed at Redstone Arsenal first as a laborer removing stumps from land which had been cleared. He advanced to a warehouseman then millwright, mechanic, then promoted again to supervisor and then to Special Equipment Handler.

Hardrock was sent to Cape Canaveral several times to make things work for which he got several commendations. On one occasion he was called from the Director of the Cape to get two trailer loads of liquid Nitrogen to the Cape within 24 hours. It had to be done or miss a scheduled launch of the Saturn 5. He called in a lot of help, called police in each city and town on the way and within two hours they were on the road. With police clearance at each crossroads they made it in 20 hours with 4 hours to spare.

While in the shipping department in Houston, he handled nearly every piece of hardware that went on the Apollo mission. When the moon visitors returned to earth they were quarantined to a trailer which is now on display at the U.S. Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville. His job was unloading the trailer after quarantine was over and the Astronauts were leaving. He cataloged each item found, numbered it, carried the moon rocks to the lunar receiving lab.

He has told me several times that the clothing abandoned by the Astronauts plus the other material was the dirtiest and smelliest thing he had ever encountered. The Astronauts wore the same clothing for weeks. Among the dirt he had to deal with was the moon dust which covered everything. He washed it off and put his clothes in the washing machine. Had he known the future value of moon dust he would have saved all of it.

Before retiring, Hardrock worked for NASA in Huntsville, Houston, California, Mississippi, Louisiana and Florida. After retiring he has been busy in the flea market business, in boat sales and service and in the tire business.

Tragedy strikes all of us in one form or another. In March of this year he lost one son on Friday and another on Wednesday of the following week from different medical causes. Those were his only descendants.

Hardrock attended the Apollo reunion a few years ago and had a wonderful visit with his fellow workers especially Mr. Gillespie who has since passed. He was thrilled to see the Airstream Trailer on display and had many stories to tell about his experience. That was before NASA put his picture on the side of it. Now the stories are backed up with just one glimpse of that picture.

My brother Hestle "Hardrock" Johnston will be 91, in November and is healthy enough to live alone in Central Alabama while his wife resides a distance away in a nursing home.

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A Cause for Graying Hair

by Ernestine Moody

Remembering 1966, it was another joyous year for this household.

Arriving on September 2, after three days of struggling to get into this busy world, our big baby boy announced his appearance with a loud cry of success. He had been in no hurry to make this adventurous trip. Hospital bags had been packed and sitting by the door from the previous month.

Preparing for a change in profession, my husband had been traveling daily to a nearby city, and postponing the move until baby number three had joined us. Now, with all things normal, or as normal as things would get in the Moody household, we "settled in" our new home in the new location.

Trying to unpack, make decisions on placement of items, a two-week-old baby, with his older sister and brother, was exhausting to this new mom. However, with slow movements and much heavenly guidance, the ending tasks were in sight.

Teaching night classes as well as daytime courses consumed much of Tom's life. Tom, as you probably have guessed by now, was my husband and a playmate and hero to the kids.

On this evening, around 7 pm, I began the serene task of rocking my sweet baby boy to sleep. As the rocker squeaked slowly back and forth, back and forth again, my six-year-old daughter and five-year-old son obediently were retrieving their scattered toys. Oh, I was enjoying the peacefulness . Tilting my head, I even hummed a tune as I gazed into the angelic face of my new born child.

Well, the words, "Be prepared" should have been exploding in my brain. There was a screeching cry from the playroom. Then came the jolt to reality. "Mom, Mike got hurt". As quickly as a shaking mom can move, I deposited Chris, the baby, into his crib. The trip from the nursery to the playroom is a forgotten memory.

Mike, with this expression of extreme fright, was experiencing a bloody flow from his mouth: In this child's hurry to end his cleanup, he had fallen on an upright tinker toy which had slightly penetrated the roof of his mouth. Panic is such a small word to express an enormous feeling.

Adding to the horror of this event was Angie, his six-year-old sister, questioning, "Mom, is Mike going to die?" "Is Mike going to die?" Of course, this did not soothe Mike's emotions at all. The extreme fright on my son's face had now turned to a ghostly pale. Perhaps he was thinking, after hearing his sister's proclamation, that this was it, the big IT! The big IT, the IT that had taken the life of his friend's pet.

I asked Angle to gather a towel so that I could remove the excess blood and view the injury. Not only did my sweet daughter bring me a clean diaper, she ran and gathered every clean diaper in the drawers, on the beds, in the chairs, etc. Blood soaked diapers were everywhere. To my relief, the baby was not in need of a diaper change anytime soon.

As I understand it, without any medical knowledge at all, wounds to the head seem to bleed quite freely.

Now fifty-one years ago, there was no 911 service to call.

Of course, Tom was teaching his night class and could not be reached by phone. New to the area, I had not met nor knew anyone, and Tom had driven the only car that we owned.

Running for the phonebook, I called the first pediatrician's name listed. Trying to hold back tears, as I didn't want to enhance the situation for the two little ones, I frantically explained my problem to a listening receiver. I do remember asking him about twenty times "To whom am I speaking?" Thankfully the doctor stayed on the phone as I followed his instructions.

I was to wet a face cloth with cold water, put ice in the cloth, and hold it in my child's mouth and the bleeding would cease. I do believe I did have heavenly help directing my hands, and calming my state of mind. After several minutes, though it seemed like an eternity, the bleeding subsided. I was given follow up instructions and life returned to normal.

Later that night when Tom came home, he popped himself in the room cheerfully exclaiming, "What's for supper?" Well readers, I feel as if you might have helped me answer that question!

Now my hair is gray, and my steps are much slower, I feel as if days like the one described helped to develop this noticeable aging process!

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Never Raid a Moonshine Still Alone

by Chuck Bobo

This story was told me by my father and any time I raised questions about it with my Uncle Joe Bobo, he got furiously angry. One time he reluctantly told me about the incident and warned me never to mention it again.

In the late 1930s, Uncle Joe was a deputy sheriff in Madison County. Following a tip he found a moonshine still back in a cove in southeast Madison County and reported it to the sheriff. They told him to hold off a couple of days and that he, Uncle Joe and a couple of deputies would raid the still.

Uncle Joe feared that the sheriff would tip the still owner and decided to go by himself the following morning and end the illegal operation and arrest the owner.

He drove to the cove, parked his car about half a mile from the still and slipped carefully through the woods. When he got close to the small opening where the still was located, he could smell the aroma. He peeked from behind a tree and saw the operation was going full blast.

He crept closer and was ready to draw his pistol when he felt something jab him in his back. He turned his head and saw the moonshiner holding a double-barrel shotgun on him.

The moonshiner ordered him to drop his gun, gun belt and holster, which he kicked away. He then ordered Uncle Joe to drop his trousers and put his arms around a gum tree. Using Uncle Joe's handcuffs he handcuffed him to the tree and walked away.

By early afternoon Uncle Joe had hugged the tree for four or five hours. He was desperate, but there was nothing he could do. Uncle Joe was a big man, standing well over six feet tall and weighing around 300 pounds. He was tiring and had slipped down the tree trunk as far as he could to sit on the ground.

Back at his office, the sheriff had noted that Uncle Joe had not reported in, and decided that he had taken it upon himself to raid the still alone. He got a couple of other deputies and proceeded to the cove where they found Uncle Joe's car parked by the road. Slipping quietly back into the woods, they found Uncle Joe hugging the tree.

But the still was not there. The moonshiner had broken it down, hauled it away and left only a few of the embers from the fire which had been under the cooking pot.

The sheriff and the deputies laughed, whooped and hollered for several minutes before they opened the handcuffs and freed Uncle Joe. He was furious at them for laughing at him.

On the spot, Uncle Joe resigned as a deputy and turned in his gun and badge.

I learned never to again ask Uncle Joe about his stint as a deputy sheriff, for he would get so red in the face that I would think he was going to explode.

"Last night our internet went out and I spent a few hours with the family. They seem like nice people."

Larry Jacobs, Athens

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100 Years and Counting

by Jan Willis Kratohvil

Kitty and Jim the year they got married, 1944. They were standing outside a factory in Oak Ridge, Tennessee where one of my dad's sisters was working. Mama said this is where parts for the atom bomb were being manufactured but no one knew it then.

Huntsville has a new centenarian who has called the Rocket City home for 69 years!

Born January 17, 1923, in Whitmire, South Carolina, Kathryn "Kitty" Hamilton was the third of four children born to John Gary Hamilton and Mary Ruby Corley Hamilton.

In her early years, Kitty lived in the small town of Iva, South Carolina, where she has memories of playing with her siblings and cousins, watching chickens walking around their yard, investigating an outhouse in their neighbor's back yard, and waiting on ice to be delivered by the ice man.

True to another nickname, "Kat," she used one of her nine lives to survive secondary rat poisoning. "I've never been so sick as then, and Mama was very worried," she recalled. The source of the poison was a rat that had gotten into the family flour bin.

When Kitty turned eight-years-old, the family moved from Iva to Anderson, South Carolina, a mill town where her father worked as a mill operator at Sullivan Hardware Company. Kitty began fourth grade at North Fant Street School. Even though studying wasn't her favorite thing to do, she loved school for the great friendships. During her years at Girl's High School in Anderson, she and her friends would go after school to the soda shop downtown to share a soda and dance. Young students from Clemson Agricultural College, an all-male military institute at the time, would drive 17 miles to the soda shop to plug the jukebox in order to enjoy Kitty and her friends dance the jitterbug.

Graduation from high school took place at the end of the eleventh grade. After high school, Kitty attended Anderson College for a year where she studied Business Education. At Anderson College, she was encouraged to try out for the well-known play, "Hansel and Gretel." She was selected for a part, but it wasn't the role she wanted. She wanted to play Gretel but got cast as the witch because she was a great dancer. Playing the witch turned out to be the most exciting part!

Kitty first met her future husband James "Jim" Willis at a Halloween Party when she was 14. Jim was a couple of years older than Kitty and spent most of his time after school and on Saturdays working in his father's machine and automobile shop. Their dating picked up in their late teenage years, however, all relationships and families were deeply changed by the U.S. entrance into World War II. Most of Kitty's male friends including Jim and her brother Herman "Bo" Hamilton, were drafted. Jim and Bo served in the U.S. Air Corps with Jim building aircraft stateside and Bo flying B-17 fighter bombers in Europe. Several of Kitty's childhood friends did not make it home from the war.

Kitty and Jim married in May of 1944 and moved to Newport News, Virginia, where they worked for the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA) at Langley Research Center in Hampton. Kitty worked in the Stability Research Division at Langley Research Center as secretary to the division chief. The division ran

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tests on planes using a 7' x 10' wind tunnel on their second floor. Kitty recalled the Lockheed Lightening P-38 fighter plane being tested and piloted by Chuck Yeager, a Brigadier General and U.S. Air Force officer. Yeager would thrill the workers by flying over their building and tipping his wings at them, "Working at Langley was the best job I ever had and the most fun, too," Kitty said with excitement.

After the war, Jim heard Dr. Wernher Von Braun speak in a public school in Virginia. Jim was so inspired by the vision of aerospace work beginning in Huntsville, Alabama, that he wanted to be a part of it. The first time he brought Kitty to see Huntsville, she was shocked to see a small cotton mill town and farming community, completely different from metropolitan Newport News. She told Jim, "You'll never get me here," but the dream of working on the moon shot was too much to resist.

In 1954, Kitty and Jim came to Huntsville with a five-year-old daughter and six-rnonth-old baby girl. A third baby girl arrived in 1955. Kitty described that the only housing available was in Darwin Downs which was surrounded by pasture and livestock owned by the Chapman family. She recalled the cows walking to the barn to get milked on what is now Bide-a-Wee Drive. Huntsville Hospital was just a "little box" at the city limit, and everything south of it was Fleming property.

The Russel Erskine was the tallest building in Huntsville and the only place to stay overnight. First Baptist Church was downtown before it was rebuilt on Governors Drive. Testing of Saturn rocket boosters at Redstone Arsenal was normal activity. Dallas Mill burned down.

Loving to read and do research about history, medicine and DNA ancestry, Kitty caught genealogy fever around 1980 and is still looking for ancestors today.

Kitty has witnessed and experienced so much in her 100 years. When asked about her secrets for reaching 100, she responds that she doesn't have any. Her girls believe it is her endless curiosity and passion for life, taking care of her health with a great doctor, and being blessed with good genes.

"I don't know why I'm here, but I am, and I'm glad!" We're glad, too, Mama.

"I see people climbing rock walls and zip-lining and skate-boarding. Here I am feeling good about myself because I got my leg through my underwear without losing my balance."

Harry McPherson, Gurley

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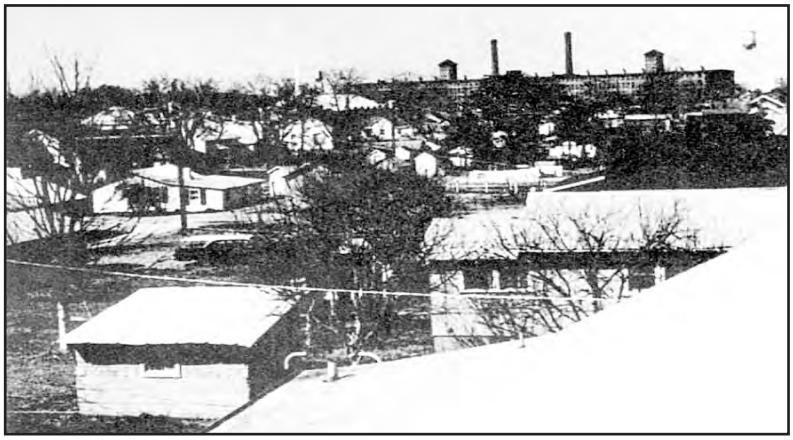
Remembering Depression Days in Dallas Village

by Ruby Crabbe

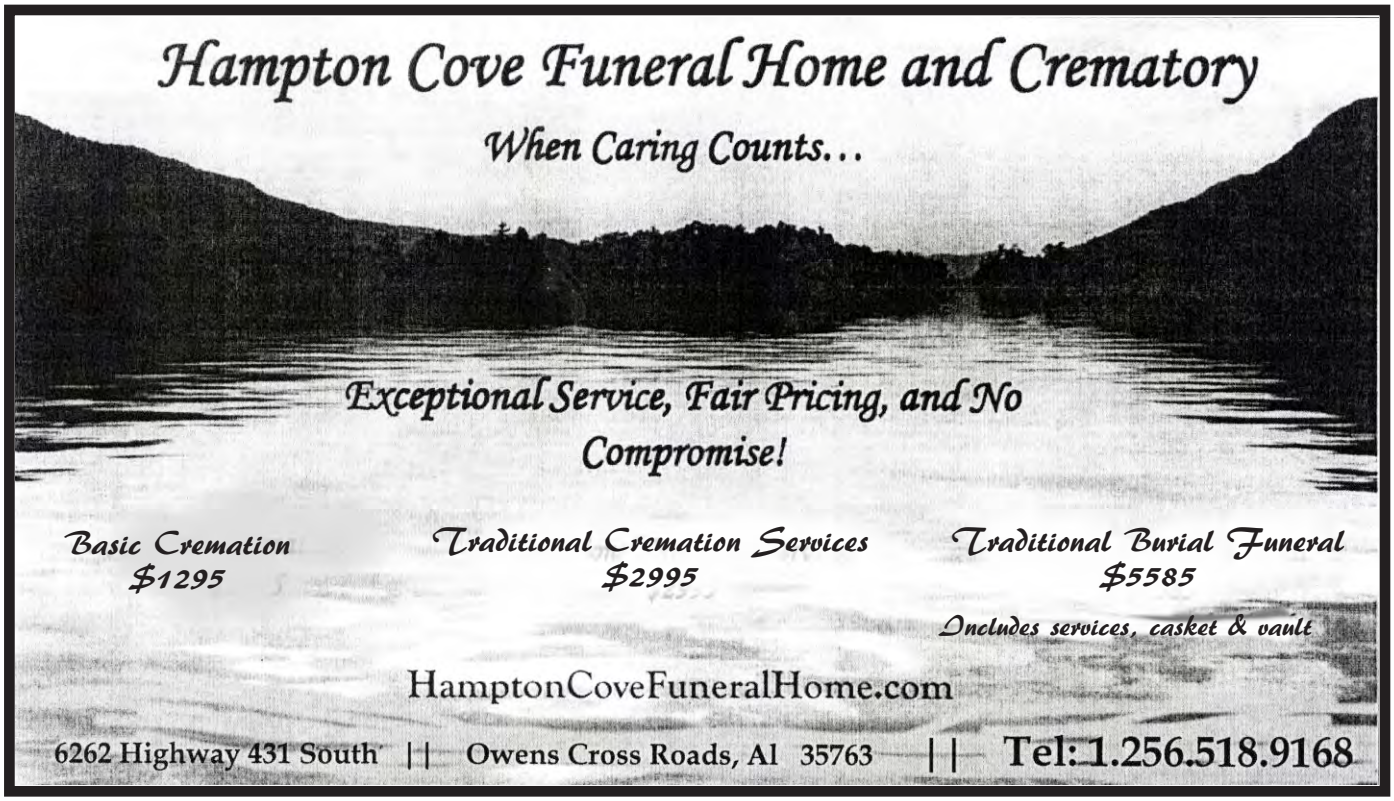


I remember during the Depression days how hard it was for people to provide for their families. Survival was on the minds of everyone and a prayer in their hearts that God would provide them the knowledge and the strength to stay strong and not to give up hope that tomorrow would be better. Most of the children wore hand-me-downs, and a lot of the clothes were made from feed sacks. There was coal and wood to buy for the cook stove, and the open fireplaces provided warmth for the families. Many a pot of beans or soup has been cooked over the flames of those fireplaces. The hearth was used in roasting corn and peanuts.

Even though times were hard in those days, and despite the hardship everyone experienced, there was fun and enjoyment to sort of break the gloom of those dark days.

My mother, Josie Allen, along with half the kids from Dallas Village following behind her, would walk to Sharps Mountain to pick watercress. Sometimes she would cook it and sometimes she made salads with it. Either way, it was delicious. Also it was a supplement to the rest of the food on the table. The watercress came from a natural spring of water flowing from beneath an old wooden shed that sat on the north side of the mountain.

Sometimes Mama would walk around the foot of Chapman Mountain and gather wild polk sallet. While Mama hunted for wild sallet we kids would climb trees, play hide and seek, and hunt for wild animals. Somehow we never found any wild animals but we did sport a few skinned knees and a case or two of poison ivy.



About that time the "itch" breezed in. Don't know how many people caught it but I think it's safe to say, more people caught it than didn't. Most everyone was busy at the same time SCRATCHING. Even the dogs caught the itch. Maybe it was the mange they caught.

Nevertheless, they did their share of scratching along with us. They would walk awhile then sit and scratch for awhile. Some of them had already scratched off most of their hair so we had a few bald dogs walking around.

Word got around that if a person would boil polk root and take a bath in the water, it would cure the itch. One brave soul dared to try it.

The month was January and the big ditch on Rison Avenue was half full of water with a thin coat of ice on it. That brave soul came out of that polk root bath and hit that ice coated ditch with a wild dive. The bath had made his itch worse and all that man could do was sit in the ice water and do his scratching.

And scratch he did! He was stirring up that water as if a thousand demons were after him.

Then there was the WPA. My brother. Earl Nelson, worked on the WPA and he would take his lunch with him. He carried his lunch in a cloth sack so he could tie it on to a tree limb to keep ants from getting into it.

One day at lunch time he went to get his lunch but an old cow had beat him to it. There she stood, chewing that sack for all she was worth. Earl said the old cow had chewed on that sack so long that the sack was longer than his leg.

A lot of the men took their lunches with them in paper sacks. They would sit their sacks under a big tree til it was time for lunch. One of the men said that since all the paper sacks were just alike someone had grabbed his sack by mistake.

He said he was sure glad they did - there was one sack left and it had delicious biscuits and pork chops in it.

He didn't know who got his lunch but he did know that whoever it was had biscuits and gravy for lunch.

Yes, the Depression days were bad, but it didn't dampen our joy and excitement of just being alive, to enjoy the laughter and pleasures of life that God had so freely given us.

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Sue Campbell

Highlights of living for 105 years so far

by George & Glenda Humphrey

1. Mother drove until she was 97 when she wrecked her car at Southside Baptist Church while attending Bible study.

2. While her daughter was on vacation, her granddaughter was checking on her (Kim), and she called and said she couldn't find Mama Campbell. I knew where she was - she was slipping and cutting her grass at age 99.

3. She lived in her own home, attended her beautiful garden, did her own cooking, took care of herself when at age 100, she fell going into the house after picking flowers for her ceramics teacher at the Senior Center where she was getting ready to go for ceramics. She broke her arm in three places and after getting it set, she was sent to rehabilitation. She was there at Easter when she came to our house for lunch and was not feeling good. We took her back to rehab and at 10:00 that night they sent her to Huntsville Hospital by ambulance. The trauma doctor came in and said that if she didn't have surgery that she would die. If she had surgery, she had very little chance of living through it. Her son said that if she had any chance, she needed to have the surgery. She agreed. She made it through the surgery, through sepsis, and was sent to Regency Retirement Center at the end of May 2018 with six months to live under Hospice. She lived on the floor where she got extra care until she was getting around, and we moved her to the Assisted Living floor where she got involved in crafts, BINGO, concerts and anything else they offered.

4. While at Regency, she fell and broke her right hip and right arm. It was back to rehabilitation again because she could no longer walk. When she left there, she was walking with a walker which she still uses at home.

5. When the pandemic hit and they closed Regency, she went home with her daughter because she would not have survived locked in her room which was happening at the time. That was March 2020.

6. Her daughter and her husband decided to let her live life to the fullest, and they welcomed anyone into their home (as long as they were not sick), they took her to visit friends, out to eat and anywhere she wanted to go. She thrived and had two mild cases of COVID - once she was tested and once she was not tested but had the same symptoms as the son-in-law. She had had two vaccines and two boosters.

7. At her daughter's, her friend and her husband pour ceramics for her and bring to the house for her to paint. She has painted ceramic angels, Christmas trees, Santa's, Snowmen to give to friends and family.

8. She goes to the beauty shop every week as she still takes pride in her appearance.

9. She attends Sunday School and church with her daughter and her husband every time the church doors are open. She sits on the front row in her wheelchair and sings the songs that she remembers from childhood. She has macular degeneration and can no longer read but remembers. She loves to go to church.

10. She is a charter member of Southside Baptist Church. It first met in a tent until it moved to a building on Marsheutz Avenue. She attended church there even as a resident of Regency and her daughter took her to church there. After Southside merged with Rivertree, and she was living with her daughter, she moved her membership to Westlawn where they are members.

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References Available

11. She graduated from Riverton High School in 1935. She walked to school and also lived with relatives at the time to attend school. She wanted to go to school. In 2022, Riverton staff recognized her by letting her tour Riverton (which is now an elementary school). They had a special recognition for her. They rang the bell at the entrance of the school for it. It was only the third time that it had been rung. It was rung when the War ended and when the troops came home. It was an honor for her.

12. She and her husband ran a "mom and pop" grocery store and made many friends with their customers. She still keeps in touch with them.

13. She has outlived all of her friends, but the children of her friends keep in touch with her. She has outlived all of her siblings also. The nieces and nephews also keep in touch with her - probably because she keeps in touch with them and they know that she loves them.

14. She lived through the Depression and her family had a very hard time. Her daddy was sent to Tuscaloosa for a year after suffering from a nervous breakdown. Her mother asked her daddy if they could come live with them (she and her four children), and he said that she had made her bed and she could lie in it. She asked her father-in-law who was an alcoholic if they could come live with them, and he took them in and fed and clothed them until her daddy came back from Tuscaloosa. I had to sleep at the foot of the bed. I was about five years old.

15. She quilted at quilting bee's in Plevna until the pandemic hit and they quit quilting there. She developed macular degeneration and can no longer quilt. She was always active in church, Bible study. Senior Center taking ceramics. At age of 99, she used to visit the "old people" in the nursing homes and take them flowers that she had raised in her yard.

"I think the proper name for senior ladies should be 'Queen-agers'. That is all. Carry on."

Diana Whitmore, Huntsville

To the Editor:

Good afternoon. My mother and I look forward to purchasing Old Huntsville at the start of each month. We moved here from the Washington, DC area, and Old Huntsville has been our method of learning the treasured history of our new home.

We also subscribe to the Huntsville Times and are very disappointed that they are stopping their printed version. Neither of us are willing to go digital and want to hold onto paper when we read. That being said, the treasure that is Old Huntsville magazine will become even more special and will surely see a boost in popularity starting with the March issue.

Thank you for all that you do to produce this beautiful magazine each month, and we hope it continues on paper for many years to come..

Diana Richey, Owens Cross Roads *(Used with Permission)*

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My Tail's in the Gravy (The Heart and Soul of an Ex-Alley Cat)

by Cynthia Cabiness Brown

They sure didn't need that animal, and looks like to me, our feline vote might convince the kids. But that woman did it this time. She finally gave in to claiming a yard dog, and the sneaking varmint's weaseled his way straight to her naive heart. I didn't need this in my golden years.

I've paid my dues - done my time in the street, lost a few lives in my prime, and was seasoning quite well out on the edge of town, when up he waltzed, claiming to be some Huskey half-breed. More like the devil in sheep's clothes.

Then if the white fur and blue eyes weren't enough, there was some story following him about how his family had abandoned him, moved off to South Carolina. (Isn't that always the way?) I tell you, those kids ought not repeat sheer rumor.

Besides, there's mighty strong misinformation in that tale. I hang out with some fairly acute felines, but it's common knowledge that there's not one ounce of pedigree to that pooch. Besides, if he were a true thoroughbred, I'd be at ease. Immediately.

I have my own aura of blue bloodedness. My meow's as eloquent and concise as a telegram, tailored coat's fairly clean and nails razor sharp. And I'm well-rounded for a critter. Being sports minded, I enjoy hunting. Indoors and out. I'm an expert fisherman and trapper (goldfish and hamsters are choice catches).

Pushing good looks and intelligence aside, I have morals, scruples and principles - qualities that a degenerate dog could never understand. And I have connections .... down at the pound. It wasn't mere coincidence that caused the mangy mutt to get a ticket last Monday. Vagrancy is a serious offense, and I intend to do what I can to stop crime in the streets, especially when it can be traced back to a no-good canine.

Every Sunday morning the sleazy scalawag flatters with an embezzled, hot-off-the-press paper. He's a downright thief. Shoes are his specialty and may be his downfall. He even knows the name brands. Fit the little one right into a pair of brand new hi-top Reeboks. But where in these parts did he sniff out the Gucci loafers?

He's got 'em fooled all right. But we cats know, by instinct, that things and creatures aren't always what they seem. So, despite the so-called loyalty of the dog, despite many things, we cats can outwit them and we show how it's done aristocratically, effortlessly, with our own private power of suggestion. For all they know, I may hold the secret thoughts of an entire country.

Here's the plan - one cool moonlit night, when they're all settled in, thinking everything's in place (they should know better) that's the night I'll steer a different course. I'll live up to a tom cat's reputation and disappear for days. I'll lie low out there somewhere until it comes a downpour. It'll be raining pitchforks, as they say.

And then I'll make sure I'm thoroughly soaked before I stagger to their front step. A wet cat will always garner sympathy. I'll let out my famous "Rraow" and they'll all light up, rush to meet me, feed me, hold me the way they ought to right now. I'll get the full attention I deserve.

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The Glider

by Iolanda Hicks

I will begin this story of the The Glider by a direct explanation from the Huntsville VA Museum's Director of how this particular glider ended up in Huntsville. "About four years ago, a visitor to Huntsville's U.S. Veterans Memorial Museum mentioned that members of his Marine Corps League, in upstate New York, had found and recovered the remains of a World War II Waco glider. The glider was covered with tar paper and had, at some time, been used as a hunting shelter. He told the Museum Director that he didn't think that they were going to be able to do anything with it and that the Museum could have it, if they came to get it.

As the Director and longtime Museum volunteer, the late Larry Gillespie, were due to take a load of parts to New Jersey for the restoration of the Museum's M36 Jackson tank destroyer (but that's another story), they decided to go "take a look".

Upon inspection, the Director determined that the tattered canvas would subject them to being fined, for littering, if they tried to trailer the glider down the highway. Larry and the Marine Corp League members convinced him that they could disassemble the glider and cover the frame with a tarp and that it could be reassembled back in Huntsville.

OK. Once back home, Larry Bayer, Museum volunteer of 20 years (and retired Lt. Colonel, pictured at right) began faithfully restoring this once combat flying machine with the help of other conscientious volunteers.

More on the history of the WWII glider and this particular glider's journey, can be read in the Redstone Rocket cover story, January 26, 2022 issue.

"The first combat glider was German built and could carry combat-ready paratroops. One famous German victory, using the glider and paratroops, "neutralized the impregnable Ft. Eben-Emael" (located in Bassenge, Belgium). This encouraged the U.S. Air Forces to consider these flying machines as a possible means to access, otherwise unapproachable spaces, to quietly surprise opposing forces. U.S. General Hap Arnold (taught flying by the Wright Brothers) ordered combat gliders to be built."

"The winning glider design was manufactured by WACO in Toledo, Ohio. Other companies manufacturing gliders in the U.S. were also used during the war but the Waco CG-4A glider was more commonly used because it could accommodate a jeep or a loaded 75mm Howitzer, or thirteen combat troops with two pilots at the helm."

Today, there are less than two dozen fully restored gliders in the country and less than three dozen gliders partially restored out of 14,612 produced in the U.S. between 1941 through 1945. The glider at the Veterans' Museum is still in the restoration process. At present, it is located at the right of the museum as you enter the main floor, at 2060 Airport Rd. SW.

Here is a little bit of trivia about one of the glider pilots who flew those vehicles: Uncle Fester (Jackie Coogan, actor) of the 1960's TV series "The Adams Family", enlisted in the Army on March 4, 1941. When Pearl Harbor was bombed by the Japanese, Jackie transferred to the AAF (Army Air Force). He had civilian flying experience, so glider training was not hard at all. As a Flight Officer, he volunteered for hazardous duty. On one mission his unit airlifted British troops behind Japanese lines, during the March 5, 1944 aerial night invasion of Burma.

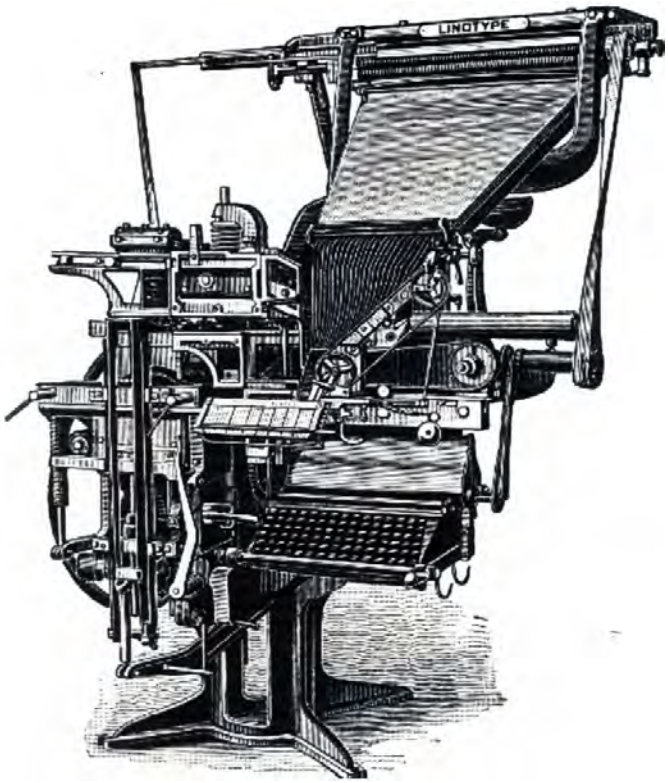
If you have the opportunity to check out this WWII glider, imagine yourself inside, as a combat ready soldier. Imagine being pulled by a larger aircraft and then released to glide towards your destination.

Then look around you at what is keeping this particular flying machine together: friction tape and a particular type of string. What our soldiers did during that war is all but amazing and heroic!

Hopefully stories of a few of the special war memorabilia, large and small, found at this special museum will make all of us appreciate the dedication and sacrifices that our men and women have made throughout history. Remember: "Freedom is not free!"

Working at the Huntsville Times

by Jerry Keel



I am sure by now everyone knows The Huntsville Times will no longer be available in the printed form. The Huntsville Times was established and the first edition printed on March 23, 1910. Of course I was not around to witness that event but I did see many editions in the 44+ years I was employed at The Times.

Over the years one of my jobs was to prepare the datelines that went at the very top of the pages. The pages were first set up in lead type and were transferred into a large semi-cylindrical plate that was attached to the printing press. The paper used to print the pages on was delivered to The Times in the form of big rolls of newsprint which weighed between 1200 and 1500 pounds.. The rolls were sent to Huntsville by train from the various paper mills The Times purchased the paper from.

From the railway office the paper was delivered to The Times building in an enclosed trailer. One time there was a little excitement when the delivery was being made. At the back of The Times parking lot there was a sharp turn in the street. The driver of the truck came into the turn a little too fast. The newsprint rolls shifted in the trailer and caused all the weight to go to one side. When the load shifted all the weight transferring to the side caused the trailer to turn over and slide down the street on its side. Many of the rolls of paper spilled out of the trailer. Thankfully no one was injured but the driver was surely frightened!

After that episode another driver was assigned to drive the truck. The original driver suffered much humiliation from that fiasco. Almost all of the employees at The Times enjoyed a good laugh at anything even remotely funny since we had all worked together for years.

The Press Room of the paper was a fascinating place. When The Times was located downtown the printing press at that time was old, very old. When a roll of newsprint was used up the press had to be completely stopped so a new roll could be put on the press. A pressman had to manually glue the end of the new roll onto the tail end of the old roll.

All that changed when a new press was installed in the new building on Memorial Parkway. This machine was much larger than the old press. The number of pages which could be printed was much higher than the old press. I will try to describe some of the functions of the new press as well as I can.

As I said, the old press had to come to a complete stop for a new roll of newsprint to be installed. The new press had a system in which 3 rolls could be loaded onto each unit of the press. The new rolls were pre-glued with a particularly tacky glue. When an old roll was almost empty a new roll rotated into position for the transfer to be made. The press was slowed slightly as the new roll came into position. Then the new roll began to turn until the speed of the old roll and the new roll were the same.

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When the new roll was moving at the same speed a large arm dropped suddenly onto the paper. This arm cut the paper from the old roll while at the same time it pressed the paper from the old roll onto the pre-glued end of the new roll. Then the press went gradually back up to its former speed. I realize I did a poor job of describing the process but that was just one of those things that needed to be seen to be fully appreciated.

Occasionally the transfer failed and the press stopped very quickly so the paper from the two rolls could be joined by hand. This was an anxious time for the pressroom guys but thankfully it didn't happen very often.

Some of the pressroom personnel I can remember were Cliff Wilkerson who was foreman for many years. After Cliff retired Jimmy Stolz became foreman. Some of the other pressmen were Tillman Hill, who quit after being elected as County Commissioner District 1, which covered the Hazel Green-Meridianville area. After Tillman passed away a branch of the Huntsville-Madison County Library located in Hazel Green was named in honor of Tillman.

Others were James "Jim" Winston, whose brother was T. A. Winston. Mike Anzek, Ronald McDonald, Jimmy Musick, Jeff Bell and others I can't recall made up the pressroom roster. I'm sorry to leave anyone out but it was not done intentionally.

The Composing Room boss was Mr. T. A. Winston, a long-time employee there. T. A. acquired the nickname "Boogerman". One day Mr. Jack Langhorne, the publisher, saw T. A. pull in to work in his car. T. A. wore his a hat cocked to one side, a dapper gentleman. Mr. Jack saw him from a second-story window of The Times Office Building and remarked to someone "Look at him. He's a booger, isn't he?"

Well the name stuck and he became "Boogerman". I recall others who worked many years and had nicknames, some of which were bestowed for unknown reasons. One was Paul Phillips, who liked his hair cut in a flat-top style. He acquired the nickname of "Flat-top".

Many of the others had nicknames that came from who knows where. Nelson Allen was "Hong Kong", Richard Dahlke was "Sow-belly", Don Irwin was "Flat Rock", Puryear Johnston was "Doc", E. W. Logan was "Dub", Bobby Westbrook became "Silly Rabbit". Many more had nicknames but I can't recall some of them.

I cannot leave out our proofreaders who had to read all the articles which went into the paper. Sally Nance, Virginia Bowers, Marguerite Owens and others whom I cannot recall made up the group who tried to keep the typographical errors out of the paper.

We were all one big happy family. Each portion of the Composing Room had their respective jobs. Some were typesetters while others put the advertisements together. We all worked together to provide a newspaper with as few mistakes as possible. We took pride in our newspaper and wanted the community to be proud of it also.

Those days are gone never to return. Progress has taken one more victim. What will be next? Who knows. The building which housed The Times was torn down and replaced by a big glass-front building which now houses doctors' offices, several eating establishments and more.

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Interesting Love Superstitions

- According to superstition, one of the luckiest things to find on a couple's wedding day is a spider in or on the bride's wedding dress. The spider on the wedding dress is a good omen and means that the couple will be happily married for years to come. Why the spider was chosen as the harbinger of good fortune is unknown. It may have to do with the strong, beautiful webs they spin symbolizing a strong bond between spouses. It could also have simply been a frantic fib in order to calm down panicked brides who found something with glittery eyes peeking at them from the folds of their dress.

- Bridesmaids were originally meant to protect the bride from demons, evil spirits and curses. Bridesmaids looked like the bride, so the ill-intentioned creatures or hexes became confused, and the bridesmaids absorbed the nastiness in order to spare the bride. If a woman went through this three times, however, she was believed to have internalized so much evil energy that she would never be able to find a spouse for herself.

- Nice knives are expensive, and most people would be delighted to be given a good set, especially if they enjoy cooking. According to superstition, however, accepting a knife as a gift is a terrible mistake. It might save your wallet, but it will doom your relationship, accepting a gifted knife meant that your relationship would be severed, and you would be cut off from your partner.

- A single or unmarried girl should never sit at the corner of a table. If a girl sits at the corner of the table she will not marry for at least seven more years.

- Orange flowers signify the end of a relationship or betrayal. It is a sign of bad luck and giving them to your loved one should be avoided at all costs. Interestingly enough, it always should be an odd number of flowers in a bouquet. An even number of flowers is for funerals.

- If you accidentally step on your partner's foot, let them gently step on yours or the other way around. Thus you prevent a risk of a future conflict.

- A couple should not use the same towel to dry their hands or bodies. Doing that can bring major disagreements in the relationship.

- Never give a watch as a present to your partner. Watches and clocks are an omen of parting. It would also be a wise move not to give, as a present, a scarf (an omen of tears) or knives (omens of enemies).

- As a couple, do not bite the same apple, do not eat from the same spoon. It will cause arguments and bickering in the relationship.

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Pet Tips from Angel

Spring Pet Tips

Easter Treats and Decorations

Keep lilies and candy in check—chocolate goodies are toxic to cats and dogs, and all true lilies can be fatal if ingested by cats. And be mindful, kitties love to nibble on colorful plastic grass, which can lead to an obstructed digestive tract, severe vomiting and dehydration. Moreover, while live bunnies, chicks and other festive animals are adorable, resist the urge to buy them—these cute babies grow up fast and often require specialized care!

Screen Yourself

Many pet parents welcome the breezy days of spring by opening their windows. Unfortunately, they also unknowingly put their pets at risk—especially cats, who are apt to jump or fall through unscreened windows. Be sure to install snug and sturdy screens in all of your windows.

Buckle Up!

While most dogs love to feel the wind on their furry faces, allowing them to ride in the beds of pick-up trucks or stick their heads out of moving-car windows is dangerous. Flying debris and insects can cause inner ear or eye injuries and lung infections, and abrupt stops or turns can cause major injury, or worse!

Pets riding in cars should always be secured in a crate or wearing a seatbelt harness designed especially for them.

Spring Cleaning

Spring cleaning is a time-honored tradition in many households, but be sure to keep all cleaners and chemicals out of your pets' way. Almost all cleaning products, even all natural ones, contain chemicals that may be harmful to pets. The key to using them safely is to read and follow label directions for proper use and storage.

Home Improvement 101

Products such as paints, mineral spirits and solvents can be toxic to your pets and cause severe irritation or chemical burns. Carefully read all labels to see if the product is safe to use around your furry friends.

Also, be cautious of physical hazards, including nails, staples, insulation, blades and power tools. It may be wise to confine your dog or cat to a designated pet-friendly room during home improvement projects.

Let Your Garden Grow—With Care

Pet parents, take care—fertilizers, insecticides and herbicides keep our plants and lawns healthy and green, but their ingredients may be dangerous if your pet ingests them. Always store these products in out-of-the-way places and follow label instructions carefully. Many popular springtime plants—including rhododendrons and azaleas—are also highly toxic to pets and can prove fatal if eaten.

Ah-Ah-Achoo!

Like us, pets can be allergic to foods, dust, plants and pollens. Allergic reactions in dogs and cats can cause itching, minor sniffling and sneezing, or life-threatening anaphylactic shock to insect bites and stings. If you suspect your pet has a springtime allergy, please visit your veterinarian as soon as possible.

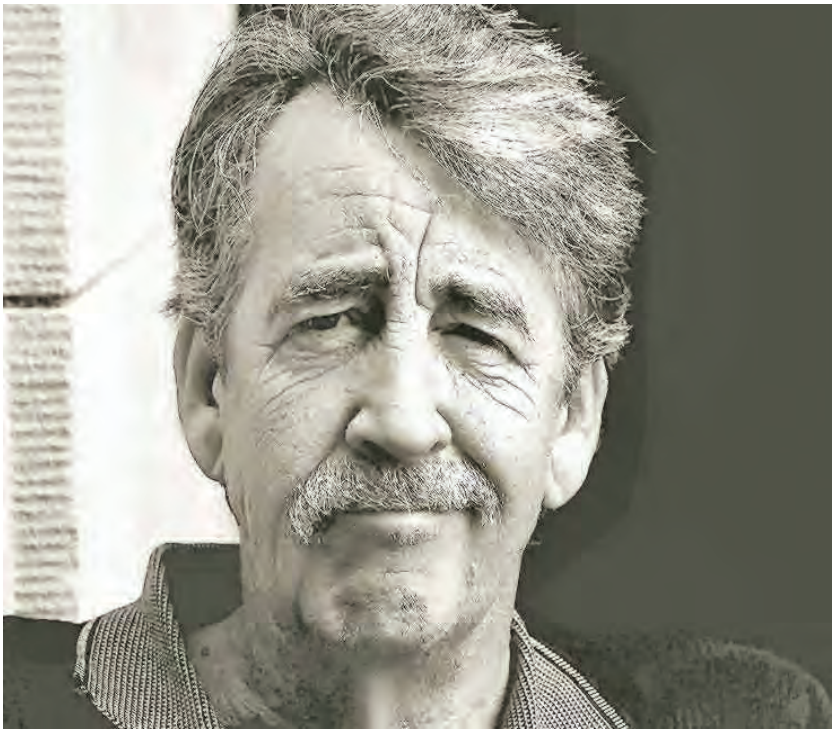
Pesky Little Critters

April showers bring May flowers—and an onslaught of bugs! Make sure your pet is on year-round heartworm preventive medication, as well as a flea and tick control program. Ask your doctor to recommend a plan designed specifically for your pet.

Out and About

Warmer weather means more trips to the park, longer walks and more chances for your pet to wander off! Make sure your dog or cat has a microchip for identification and wears a tag imprinted with your home address, cell phone and any other relevant contact information.

The Watercress Capital of the World



by Tom Carney

Almost lost and forgotten in our city's history is the fact that Huntsville at one time claimed the crown as "The Watercress Capital of the World."

Watercress cultivation began in New Market in 1907 when Foster DeWitt visited the area and became intrigued by the "wild" watercress growing along the banks of streams. This was one of the few places in the country where an abundance of fresh spring-water and limestone, combined with moderate winter temperatures, caused watercress to grow wild. DeWitt had spent much of his early life in Great Britain and while there was exposed to the plant.

Green vegetables in Great Britain were hard to come by in the winter months and watercress was one of the few plants available year-round. According to legend, an English officer started the custom of having watercress served in salads and within a few years it became a staple in every household. New York and Baltimore restaurants began serving watercress in salads in the early 1800s, but the cost of importing it from Great Britain was too prohibitive for it to become a widely used commodity in this country.

Foster hired local labor to dam a small stream on the land he had rented, creating a series of shallow ponds, much like rice paddies. By experimenting with water levels he found that a level of six inches was the most favorable for cultivation. In cold weather the water would be raised, with the constant temperature of the water protecting the plants from damage.

Where at first the local populace had been skeptical about the whole idea, they soon became enthusiastic supporters as orders for the watercress began pouring in from Northern restaurants. Within a few short years Madison County became the major supplier to the world's markets.

An interesting sidelight to watercress cultivation is that as the plants flourished, so did the snakes. Some of the ponds became so infested with water moccasins that laborers refused to work around them. John Derrick earned the dubious distinction of being the only "bounty hunter" of snakes in Alabama's history when he was hired by the landowners.

Colder winters and the expense of shipping were cited as the two primary reasons the business declined here in Huntsville. With the advent of air freight the railroads discontinued most of their express freight trains. Watercress became too expensive to ship by air and too perishable to ship by regular freight train.

As late as 1960, one could still see a sign at the edge of the city limits proclaiming: "Welcome to Huntsville, Watercress Capital of the World."

The nuclear generator of brain sludge is television

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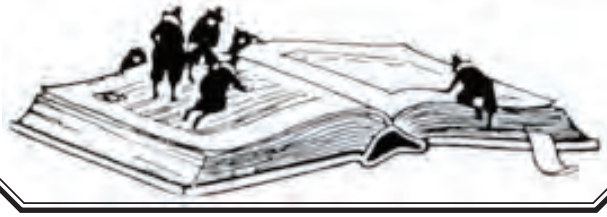

My Experience at the Snuffdipper's Ball

by Malcolm Miller

When I was a teenager my friends and I heard a lot about the Snuffdipper's Ball in downtown Huntsville. The Snuffdipper's Ball was located on Jefferson Street in a building called the Labor Temple. Every Saturday night there would be music and dancing on the second floor of that building.

I was sixteen years old in 1943 and my friends and I could not wait to see what the action was. Also I had heard that they had plenty of hillbilly music and that was my love. Many nights you could hear the great sounds of the music on the streets below.

As my friends and I climbed the long stairs to the second floor we were very scared. However, we were able to get in and for the first time we saw a lot of dancing going on and heard some of the best music we had ever heard before that time. For the first time we saw musicians with microphones and a sound system and their music could be heard loud and clear almost bouncing off the walls. I still remember many of the songs played that night. Music was my love and I loved this type of music.

It was at this ball that I met my long time friend Monte Sano Crowder. Monte was named after the mountain where he was born. I never played at the Snuffdipper's Ball but I got to know most all the musicians who played there.

There was Buster Holloway, Luther Maze, Charlie Hanes, Gene Jennings, Joe Sharp and sometimes Monte's brother Leon would join with his tenor banjo. I understand Monte's dad was a musician and all three of his boys - Monte, Leon and Arlie - were very talented musicians. No doubt Monte was known as one of the best old time fiddlers in the business in this area.

Back to the first time I ever set foot in the Ball, it was a sight to behold. There were the folks from all the Mill Villages ready for some fun after a long hard week of labor in the Mills. There were country folks, who left the fields early to get out and kick up their heels; and kick up their heels they did. There were cuspidors placed all around the walls for dancers to spit their snuff and tobacco in but you know when you are swinging your partner and dancing around the dance floor it's awfully hard to aim at a cuspidor and most of the time it went onto the floor. Oh well, a bit of snuff just made it easier to glide across the floor.

The security officer at the Ball was a large man who only had one arm but he carried a slap stick with a chunk of lead sewn in a piece of leather and he could really get someone's attention with that. I saw him hit a man in the head with that thing because he was causing trouble and the man rolled all the way down that long flight of stairs. This was quite a sight for several teenage boys to see.

I would venture to say that Monte Crowder made more money playing music in Huntsville than anyone before or since. He only worked one night a week for between thirty and forty years paying for his home on Washington Street and a farm in Tennessee.

There will never be another like Monte Sano Crowder and I feel proud that he considered me a good friend.

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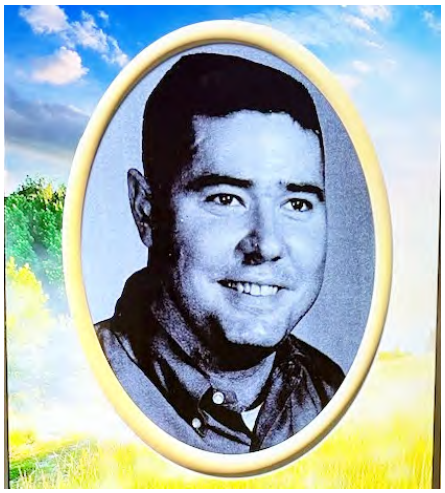
In Memorium - William Sibley

by Bob French



My first cousin Robert Louis Broad, Jr. ("Bob Broad," the family called him "Louis Jr.") was a true genius in every sense of the word. He was the first, and maybe the only student at the University of Alabama to make all "A's" through engineering school and law school. I was told that after graduation, he became President of Mensa, the American genius society as he had an IQ of 160+. Certainly, he got the brains of the family. He died July 25, 1999.

His burial was scheduled for the Big Cove. Beth, his widow, asked me to say a few words at the cemetery. Before mass communications, funeral speeches were well attended as they were a source of pretty accurate information. It was an honor for me to speak as I considered some of the cemetery speeches having an ancient unbelievable history, i.e. Marc Antony at the funeral of Julius Caesar, Abraham Lincoln at Gettysburg, etc.

After I finished speaking, and the crowd had thinned, a gentleman came over and said, "I'm a close friend of Bob Broad's, and I think you and I are kin. I'm William Sibley and you are a Sibley, aren't you?"

"Well, Ira Taylor Sibley, 331 West Clinton, was my grandfather. So I'm at least 1/4th Sibley. The other three are the Maples from New Hope, Anna Loper and Rev. Neal Robert French from Gurley."

"I thought so, we are kin," he said, "Here's how it works. You are the son of Nina Lois Sibley of New Hope. My father was Romie Sibley, the brother of Mills Jenkins Sibley, her grandfather and your great grandfather. So that makes us what? Fourth cousins?"

"I don't know, but I'm glad to claim kin to you."

After a little more than an hour, the crowd had gone, and we had raked as much of the family as possible over the coals. It was then that I learned that he was a genealogist. I had a strong interest in family history and he was a wealth of knowledge. He named all 5 of our ancestors who were Revolutionary War Veterans and buried in and around the Big Cove. A little later, I wrote to William inquiring about William C. Maples. I had always been told that this Revolutionary War Veteran was my grandfather many generations removed. He didn't know about Maples, but he pointed out that our mutually distant grandfather, Abram Sibley, was a Madison County Revolutionary War Veteran.

After that exchange, we corresponded monthly and finally more often than that. William influenced me to the point I researched my genealogy back to the 1600s. I learned that all human life is a miracle. I found that due to elderly pioneers, I am related to a lot of people in Huntsville and Madison County. William and I enjoyed discussing people with whom we are related and they know nothing about it. He introduced me to Old Huntsville magazine, a periodical that I read cover to cover each month and have contributed many stories.

I read his most interesting book about the Big Cove, and visited him on occasion. We were planning a cemetery tour this spring. He just passed away on Jan. 19, 2023. I will truly miss him. Our correspondence stack of letters is more than a foot thick.

He was an educator, a neighbor, a pillar of the community and a true gentleman. We will miss him and his very informative articles in Old Huntsville.

Rest in peace William David Sibley, your legacy will live long after you.

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The Frugal Reader

- Shop the baby aisle for inexpensive skin care products for yourself. Baby lotion is great for the face and the shampoo is very mild.

- Office paper is expensive. When you use a stack of paper that you would normally throw out, just flip it over and use it again. It will go through your printer and you get twice the use out of it.

- Take cash with you to the grocery store instead of checks or credit card - you'll spend less.

- Have a clothing swap with friends once a season. Everyone brings clothes they no longer wear and make an evening of it. Whatever's left goes to charity.

- Host a "plant exchange" where friends bring dug-up perennial plants from their gardens - everyone gets a new plant!

- If you want to save money on magazine subscriptions, exchange magazines you've read with friends. You each get to read the latest and only pay for one.

- If you unwrap your new bars of soap and allow them to sit opened in your linen closet, they will harden and not turn to mush in the soap dish. Also, the linens will smell great!

- For an inexpensive facial exfoliator, sprinkle a little baking soda onto your hand and mix with your normal facial cleanser or soap. The soda will gently scrub off the dead skin.

- Always buy frozen concentrate juice instead of pre-mixed juice in bottles or cans, otherwise you're paying for water you could provide yourself. When mixing it, add an extra cup or so of water - the juice won't be quite as sweet and you'll have more.

- Buy large packages of meat on sale, and separate them into small portions. Put them into zipper bags with a marinade and freeze. When you thaw - it's already seasoned and delicious!

- It's almost warm weather time so plant a little garden! You'd be amazed at the number of vegetables you can get in a small space - if you have no space to plant, use containers on your patio, in a sunny location.

- Fill up your car with gas in the morning rather than late in the day, and you'll get about 1 free gallon. The reason is, the gas expands in the tanks at the gas station during the heat of the day, especially in hot months. You get less for your money later in the day. A free gallon adds up at today's prices!

- Save money on groceries by shopping your pantry and freezer first. Make a meal schedule a week ahead and only buy the items you need.

- Use coupons for groceries. Watch the Buy One Get One sales in stores. Go shopping with a list and stick to it. Don't ever go grocery shopping when you're hungry, and everything looks good.

"Between two evils, I always pick the one I've never tried before."

Mae West

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Hello my name is Barney. I am a medium size Labrador Retriever Mix and am a beautiful white, tan and yellow color. The veterinarian thinks I am about 2 years old. A kind man found me wandering the streets near his home and took care of me for about a week before bringing me to the Ark Animal Shelter. All of the volunteer dog walkers like to take me for walks because I am such a good, sweet boy. I love to play and have fun and then I like to sit on the bench outside and watch all the people and the other dogs. They take good care of me here but I am ready for a home of my own. I have been neutered and have had all my shots. I am a very good dog that will give you lots of love.

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Living Hard and Dying Young

by Steve Stolz

He was young, handsome and lived life to the fullest. Twenty-four hours in a day was not enough to do everything he wanted to do. He lived on the edge. If thrills and excitement didn't come to him, he would go find them.

My brother, Jimmy Stolz, was born in Huntsville in 1947. He was good looking according to all his girlfriends, with his lean frame, fair skin and dark hair. He was charismatic and made friends easily. He was very mechanical and could fix about anything.

He despised school. By the time he reached the age of 16, he had failed school in three different years yet he was far from dumb. He genuinely dreaded school and knew exactly what he was going to do when he reached 16 and that was to quit school. That is exactly what he did.

Normally when you look within a family you see many familiarities. Generally brothers will have similar personalities. His personality and mine were different, if not the opposite of each other. He was one and a half years older than me, so I saw him as a big brother. Naturally I would follow him around when he would allow me.

As children, we would fish wherever we could find water. It is strange but Jimmy is the person that sticks out in these memories. When we were 10 and 12 years old, we went on a fishing trip with three other boys. We fished and camped overnight on Limestone Creek in the Mooresville area. It rained on us all night.

The next morning my brother heard a frog croaking. When he found where the sound was coming from he also discovered a copperhead snake. The snake had eaten the frog. Jimmy killed the snake and cut the frog out of the snake. The frog hopped away.

A year later on a camp-out in Decatur with just the two of us, it started to thunder about 8:00 in the evening. Remembering being rained on all night long the previous year, he decided he wasn't going to let if happed again. He took off walking and I was right behind him. We walked to our home on 9th Avenue. We got home at 5:00 in the morning. We had walked about 25 miles.

He loved fast cars. His first car was a 1954 Ford. He took his car to a field in Greenbrier and was out in a field cutting doughnuts, scratching off and going around in circles as fast as the car would go. His day ended when he turned the car over.

His next car was a 1956 Ford with an overdrive transmission. That car would fly. I was scared to death as he got it to 135 mph on Highway 231. He would race his car at the Huntsville Drag Strip in the late 1960s. He won several trophies with his 1957 Ford.

He was fearless. He would not back down from a fight. Once he fought a guy six inches taller that he was. He didn't win the fight but he kept coming back for more. He married at the age of 20 and had a son. Working in the heating and cooling business, one day he asked for my help with a job atop Monte Sano. After the job was finished and we had pulled his work truck out of the driveway, we ran out of gas. He coasted the truck all the way down Monte Sano Boulevard, running every stop sign and coasted into a service station across California Street.

I married on March 7, 1970. Eight days later on March 15, I received word that my bother was dead. He had died on a camping trip from carbon monoxide poisoning. He was 22 years old. True to his personality, he lived and died young. I still miss him to this day.

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Daddy's Little Girl (her words) Daddy's Spoiled Brat (her Brother's Words)

by Judith Christian-Moon

"Don't worry about anything---daddy is going to take care of everything." Words spoken to us when I was 3 years old, my brothers were only 1-1/2 and 5 years old. These words seem to be very real and relevant at any and every stage of my life.

When I was little, Daddy did that and met our every need. As we began to grow I realized that Daddy wasn't always there and that caused me to begin learning how to make wise choices. (I wish I'd always done that.)

I soon learned about God our Father—my Daddy—and that He is always with me. I made the choice to let Him guide me (most of the time.)

Now, I look back over 85 years of life and I see so many blessings on my life. There I was - that motherless child who was raised by her Daddy - that girl that did well in high school but didn't finish the University---that woman who is mom to 2 sons and 3 daughters and step-mom to 3 sons---that woman who buried 2 husbands and published a book about grief---that woman who has 28 grandchildren and over 2 dozen great-grands (so far)---that woman who has been to 23 countries and loves speaking about missions---that woman who has spoken in so many places of God's blesssings—that woman.

I see the stuff I have, places I've been, things I've done and the people I've met...I see accomplishments, failures and successes and I am amazed that God still guides and leads me in so many events. Every memory and token of my life shouts to me today that my brothers were right...I was and am DADDY'S SPOILED BRAT.

"California is a fine place to live, if you happen to be a grape."

Fred Allen

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The Great Huntsville Dinosaur Hunt

orig. printed in Old Huntsville Magazine in 1991

On December 15, 1968, North Alabama was riveted by the news of a possible major archeology find in Huntsville. William Thomas Young, a resident of 507 East Clinton Street, was working on replacing a floor in his home and upon finding a pile of loose bricks underneath his home, decided to remove them also. What he discovered next would earn his home a spot in Huntsville history for all time to come.

A skeleton, the biggest that anyone had ever seen, was uncovered. Everyone agreed that the bones were of some type of animal, but no one could imagine what kind of creature could be so huge.

Immediately speculation began about the bones. As the word spread, gawkers began lining up on the street trying to get a view. Old history books with pictures of dinosaurs were hastily retrieved from dusty attics and neighbors began talking of the Tyrannosaurus and Trachodons that once stalked this region. One person who lived on Clinton even suggested calling the Smithsonian Institute to have them fly in experts.

Unfortunately, the puzzle was quickly solved and Huntsville missed the opportunity to become the site for an archeological dig. A local historian remembered hearing tales of an elephant being buried somewhere on Clinton Street, and by putting two and two together, solved the mystery.

It seems as if a circus had come to town in the fall of 1893 and erected its tents about a half mile outside of town in a location now known as Five Points. As the circus was packing up and getting ready to leave town, one of its elephants died.

In the 1890s circuses and traveling carnivals were notorious for leaving sick and dead animals behind, so when Sheriff Murphee heard of the dead elephant, he quickly informed the circus that they could not leave town until the elephant was buried.

Mr. Bradshaw, the manager of the circus, then hired a local man by the name of Gentry to bury the carcass for the sum of ten dollars. Some people may think that ten dollars was a large sum of money, but it was also a large elephant. Mr. Gentry hitched his team of mules to the carcass, the circus left town, and everyone was happy.

In retrospect, it seems as if Mr. Gentry might have been a bit on the lazy side, for instead of digging a hole to bury the carcass, he took the easy way out.

In the 500 block of East Clinton Street there had at one time been an old brick works, and adjacent to the works was a large hole from where the clay for the bricks had been dug. It was here that Gentry dumped the carcass, and finished filling the hole by throwing in more old bricks and rubble.

And it was here, years later, that homes were built, with Mr. Young eventually buying one of them.

So the next time you go by 507 East Clinton, take a long look. It's the only house in America with an elephant buried underneath it.

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www.huntsvillehistorycollection.org

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Messengers from the Devil

by Ron Eyestone

The Right Reverend George Went Hensley (he insisted on the "Right Reverend") had a vision on a lonely mountain top in Tennessee one hot August day in 1906. For years the young Hensley had studied the Bible and was still troubled by certain passages in the Book of Mark. Verses 17 and 18 read, " and these signs shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents..."

As Hensley pondered their meaning, a vague idea for testing his faith began to take shape. Suddenly, on a mountain top in Tennessee, pieces of the eternal puzzle of demonstrating his strong belief seemed to come together. All it involved was a literal interpretation of the Scripture as written by St. Mark. He walked across the mountain until he found a rattlesnake sunning on a rocky ledge. Trembling, but resolute, he picked up the deadly snake, sure in his mind that the Lord would protect him from Satan's messenger.

Convinced that it was his faith that protected him, Hensley marched down the mountain with his snake firmly in hand. He soon arrived at a local campground where a revival was in progress. At first the group was skeptical, but after repeated demonstrations by Hensley and reassured by his rich baritone voice, more and more bold members reached out and touched the snake.

Jubilation exploded throughout the revival as the poor dirt farmers and their wives became convinced that the power of God was protecting them from the forces of pure evil. A new religion was born.

In the years following, this new religious sect spread from the foothills of southern Tennessee to the rural backwoods communities across North Alabama. Literally hundreds of rural church-goers converted to Hensley's bizarre form of worship.

In 1937, in a small church located within the city limits of Huntsville, Alabama, Mr. Ollie Beshears was bitten several times by the snakes he was handling. Within moments his body began to swell and become discolored. A cot was brought into the church and placed in front of the pulpit where members of the sect gathered around and began to pray. They prayed all night long, but as the sun began to rise over Monte Sano, Mr. Beshears died. Slowly making their way home, the only comment was, "His belief must have been too weak."

In 1941 Mr. John Pettigrew, of New Market, was bitten repeatedly on the face and cheek while handling snakes during a religious service. He died the same night. Shortly after, while conducting a revival in Florence, the Right Reverend Hensley was bitten by a large copperhead. He immediately announced to his followers that it was only a new test. The snakes may bite true believers, but God would protect them from serious harm. Apparently this was the Right Reverends' answer to the increasing number of people suffering snake bites during his services.

In July of 1949, Mrs. Mabel Porch, a native of Athens, was bitten while handling snakes during a religious service. She died the same night. Her faith had obviously not been adequate to protect her.

In 1951, Mrs. Ruth Craig, a native of New Hope, held a small religious service at her home. Midway through the meeting she pulled a writhing rattlesnake out of a glass jar and proclaimed, "I'm going to handle this snake and anyone without faith should leave." Minutes later as the horrified worshipers watched, the snake bit their leader four times in rapid succession on her arms and shoulders. Mrs. Craig collapsed almost immediately, went into a coma and died a short time later.

More deaths occurred over the years across the rural southern countryside. Many were not even reported as a part of a religious ceremony, but rather were touted as random encounters with snakes as will occasionally happen in the farms and hills.

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