

All articles contributed by
David Patton,
Palmer Town Historian

January 2009

Memories of Christmas Past

By Mrs. Johnnie Jane Heard Brown as told to David Patton

“As for Christmas at the Palmer United Methodist Church, I do remember we always had a Christmas program and afterwards, the visit from Santa and we got fruit and a small amount of candy.

One Christmas I remember my dad was Santa. The only way I knew it was dad was by his shoes. They gave him away. Yes, Louie “Chief” Geary was sometimes Santa too at the church.

We didn’t get into Christmas in a big way. Mother and Dad did the best they could. Bud and I always knew we were loved. Bud had a stick horse and a cap pistol. He and Howell Gilbert Clements played together.

We always went to my mother’s parents (Goforth) in Tracy City for dinner. You might say now- those were the good old days.

Johnnie Jane grew up in Palmer in the 1930’s and 40’s and had a brother, Homer Douglas “Bud” Heard. Their parents were Homer and Veola Goforth Heard. Mr. Heard was a barber at the old train depot and Mrs. Heard later had a beauty shop there as well.

Mr. John A. “Johnny” Goforth was the patriarch of the famous Goforth family of teachers and Johnnie Jane’s grandfather. He was a teacher himself for 57 years.

A widow for the past 17 years, Johnnie Jane lives in McMinnville, TN, today. Her parents and brother are also deceased. Homer Heard’s widow, Jean Heard, also a former teacher in Manchester lives there now.

THE BOOK OF BOB

By Robert Joseph Owen

PROLOGUE

In the beginning.... was a Great Depression that covered the whole World, and the hills of Tennessee grew quiet, cold, dark and almost lifeless. Despair was spreading and it was a sad time.

Quietly and without fanfare, an event took place on November 17, 1929 that rapidly changed the lives of a "Coal Miner", his beautiful wife, and two lovely young daughters.

For unto Floyd Newton Owen and Rossie Burr Ackerman Owen a son was born and Palmer, Tennessee was changed forever! His name was called Robert Joseph -AKA Bobby, Bob, or St. Joe. The hills were no longer quiet, or as cold, or as dark, or as lifeless and it was truly a glad and gala time!

This is my story and the following events, places and people have helped shape a life that has been full, exciting and overall very wonderful. This book is dedicated to my children -mine, hers, and ours. Now if any sibling asks, "Who was my Papa Bob?" you can respond with -"Here, read this book!"

To John Newton Owen, Melinda Lee Owen James, Holly Elizabeth Ballard Winters, Kirk Brody Ballard, and Jill Marie McDaniel Owen Cline.

CHAPTER I

The Palmer Story

I was born in a very embarrassing situation. I was naked -no clothes on -nada! Red as a beet and screaming my head off in protest I greeted my world. However, that all ended soon and my Mother, Ruth, and Carolyn saw to my every need. Bobby was alive, healthy, happy and well on his way!

Palmer was the beginning and ending of my world for the next 10 years. Frankly, my memory of those {"The first few years are pretty sketchy so I'll fast forward to about age 5, when sister Mary Lillian came along to steal some of my thunder. And just as I was getting used to the competition, along comes Bettie Lou (Sweet Pea). Not to worry though, I was still the only boy among a covey of girls!

My father was a company foreman at the mine owned by the Tennessee Consolidated Coal Company -the only sizable business in the little town of Palmer. The mine employed 95 percent of the men in Palmer and surrounding towns. Daddy worked long hours and made a garden each summer, so I got about 2-4 hours a day with him. I can compare my early life with "A Bug's Life" until I got started in

school. My mother was very involved in the Palmer Elementary School and the Palmer Methodist Church -thus we all were.

My family never did own an automobile until I came home from the Navy and bought one to leave at home. Sister Mary also purchased a car when she got her {"First job at teaching school. Daddy lived to be almost 95 years old and never did learn to drive. Actually he said he could -but he just didn't want to. Hummm! Anyway, any time we wanted to go somewhere, we walked. Of course the Company Store, Post Office, Church, and School were only a hop skip and a jump away from our house. Occasionally we rode with our Uncle or a neighbor and if we left Palmer there was always the Trailways Bus.

During the summer of 1939 (I was almost ten years old) things began to change in the household and I needed to be "put away" so the birth of Martha Rosalyn could take place without the bother of "Bobby".

Exile was Birmingham, Alabama, at 1108 South 13th Street. This was the home of my Mother's brother Robert Earl and wife Ruby Ackerman. SUDDENLY, a whole New World opened up for me and I became the "adopted kid" for the summer. As the only kid in the house I was treated royally. I even learned all about "birthing babies", and all that stuff Aunt Ruby thought a ten year old boy was perfectly old enough to learn about.

I really learned to swim at the Birmingham Athletic Club and then was permitted to ride the streetcar 8 blocks to the Five Points Swimming Pool. I also attended the Mickey Mouse Club at the Alabama Theater, which was close to Aunt Ruby's Insurance Office. My cousin, Barbara Ann Ackerman, performed there almost every Saturday. I also visited often with Charles and Jean Pierce, Aunt Ruby's brother's kids who lived in Leeds, about 15-20 miles from Birmingham.

The real highlight of my "summer in exile" was a train excursion from Birmingham to Atlanta to visit Ruby's friends. I had ridden a train before, but never inside. I usually hung on the outside of a coal car! While in Atlanta, we went to the Fox Theater with the clouds and stars in the ceiling, and the world's largest pipe organ playing for us. WOW! What a trip!

Rosie was born on July 4,1939, but I was not returned to Palmer until August By then, I was a seasoned traveler!

On my eleventh Christmas I got a beautiful, ultra-modern Western Flyer bicycle with rams horn styled handlebars. It was the classiest bike in town! For the next two weeks after Santa brought the bike I sat on it about 6 hours a day in our living room. Alas, I had a good case of the Mumps!

Palmer was a great place to grow up in. The summers were warm, the winters cool and we usually had 2 or 3 good snows each winter. The mountain range behind our house was about a mile away and straight up. It had an outcropping of rocks with a cliff called "The Goat Rock" by the locals, mainly because wild goats hung out up there (as well as my friends and I). We played Cowboys and Indians and camped out there every chance we got.

My gang of friends were: Jimmy Flynn, his cousin Mitchell Flynn, "Little Everett" Roberts, J.E. Harris, R.P. White, Hershel Finch, Doyle Moneyheffer, Corky Sandlin, Charles Barker and Johnny Hill. The girls that ran after us were Hazel Grace Sanders, Emaline Pocus, Patsy Northcutt, Tootsie Cannon, and Aleene Nunley. The boys played football, basketball, Set-back (a card game), Monopoly, Rook and marbles. We also entertained ourselves by daredevil rides on our bikes, picking blackberries, and riding sleds in the snow. Our chores were mostly outside cutting stove wood, raking leaves, helping in the garden and feeding the animals.

The girls joined us for MYF, Wednesday and Saturday night movies, bon fires and wiener roasts, and of course Church on Sunday or Sunday night. Each Sunday night we would alternate between the Methodist, Christian, Holiness (2 kinds), and Baptist church. And remember -no cars! No cell phones or even regular phones as a matter of fact Just word of mouth and written notes, "Patsy wants to sit with you at church", or "Can Hazel Grace go with you to the bon fire?"

Very few of the girls would go swimming with us at the "Cat Hole" so we usually had that place to ourselves except for an occasional church group that would have a Baptizing. The "Cat Hole" was a wide and deep place in the Palmer Creek. This creek started at the Tennessee Consolidated Coal Mine, where most of our fathers, big brothers, uncles and grandfathers worked. As the water flowed from the mine, it was used to wash the dust from the coal before it was loaded in coal cars. The water then flowed through town, behind the schoolhouse and on to join the Collins River. Of course it contained lots of coal dust but I can't remember it ever making anybody sick-just a little darker skin, maybe!

I guess Johnny Hill got Baptized 2 or 3 times every summer!

One time he broke away from a visiting Holiness Evangelist while he was under water, and swam to the other side of the creek. The poor preacher got real scared that he had drowned Johnny when he didn't come up!

There was no school bus for the Grammar School (grades 1-8) so we either walked or rode our bikes. Very few families had a car and if so it was used to go to work. I loved school. Especially the 20-minute recess and we had two of them each day. Lunchroom soup was the best soup I have ever tasted. We usually had that on Friday and it was made from all the leftovers from that week's meals.

Our school, Palmer Elementary, was ruled with the heavy hand of Mr. L.D. Berry. He walked with a limp, but was definitely no wimp! He would keep a running total of all the wrong doings of the week and on Friday afternoon would dispense his dreaded "mass punishment"! He would line all the boys on his list up against Mr. Henniger's fence and use his special belt on them (us). Of course when our parents found out, which they always did, we got it again at home! My Mother's favorite punishment was to make us go after our own switch (usually from a Spirea bush just below the pantry window). When we didn't get one big enough to suit her we had to go back for another. When we finally got the right size, we got our legs striped! If the crime was really bad she would defer to Daddy who would use his razor strap.

Christmas was the most favorite time of the year and Halloween was second. I didn't know about trick or treat until I had kids of my own. When I was a kid in Palmer, there was only "trick". Our favorite tricks were turning over "out houses", as most folk didn't have indoor plumbing then. Or gathering corn stalks and depositing them all over someone's front porch. We would throw firecrackers or spit in a can of carbide and throw it against the roof of a house. It would really explode! One time we borrowed a two-horse farm wagon, took it apart, hauled it on top of the Post Office and reassembled it. Took two weeks for the city Fathers to figure out they would have to take it apart again to get it down. Another trick was to jack up the wheels of a car, truck or wagon. Then put wood blocks under the axle, and remove the jack.

During the summer school breaks I had jobs at home, mostly keeping up the yard and helping Mother with her shrubs and flowers. Seemed like our yard was about 20 acres, but it was really only about three. I also worked for our neighbors, Mrs. Swan and Mrs. Hampton. My pay was 48 cents per hour. Most of my friends made 65 cents an hour but Mother said that these were her friends and 48 cents was enough. I was the only boy in town who would work for them.

We had all kinds of animals -dogs, cats, rabbits, a goat, a cow, chickens, ducks and pigs. We, the Owen kids, took care of these as well as building and maintaining fires in our cook stove and fireplaces. We helped prepare meals, clean dishes and kitchen afterwards, churn butter, help with the washing and ironing. Try all of this and still get to school on time! Not always but any excuse is as good as none!

When I was about fifteen years old, Mr. Swan arranged for the Company "caterpillar" to be left at his house for a few days. The Flynn boys, Charles Barker and I learned to drive it and fashioned a clay tennis court in Mrs. Hampton's lower yard. Did a pretty good job too and Martha and Becky Hampton taught us how to play tennis. Kids from all over town came to play tennis on that court for years

.

Although I have been in "the mines" many times with my Dad, I never ever had a desire to work there. In fact, my Mother said it would never happen and "that was THAT"! Daddy was always taking groups of students or mining executives from other states on tours of the mine on Sunday afternoons and sometimes he would take us along for the ride. The main interest in that particular coal mine was that it was the first mechanical mine in the South and quite different from most of the others. Even though they were able to produce a lot of coal by this method and the labor was a little easier it was still a dangerous job and accidents did happen.

The only High School in Grundy County was located in Tracy City, which was about 18 miles from Palmer. You guessed it we finally got to ride the school bus. Except - during football practice when we had to hitchhike (mostly hiked) home since practice was after school and the bus wouldn't wait for us. Sometimes it was eight or nine o'clock before we got home! The driver of our bus made a habit of stopping at a store/gas station about halfway home for a coke and smoke. One afternoon most of us were in a hurry to get home so we could go to the Wednesday night movie. Ralph wouldn't listen to our plea and stopped anyway. So when he went into the store I got into the driver's seat and several guys got off and pushed that school bus about two miles down the highway! Then we all got out and started walking. Most everyone caught some sort of a ride home. And we did get into trouble, both at home and at school, but that bus driver never stopped there on his way home again!

We had a 15 ft. drop-off from our front yard to the road (Highway 108). The bank had Rose bushes all along the top and they ran down the bank. They bloomed all spring and summer and were quite a show. During World War II, lots of military convoys passed our house to and from military camps. When the roses were blooming, my older sisters Ruth and Carolyn, along with Aunt Royce, would throw bunches of roses (with their name and addresses attached) to the soldiers. They got quite a few pen pals that way.

Mother's sisters, Aunt Roberta and Aunt Royce, and sisters Ruth (AI) and Carolyn (Milton) all married military men. All were Army except Ruth's husband who was Air Force. Later sister Mary followed suite with a Paratrooper (Buddy). Bettie Lou's husband (Bill) was a physicist with NASA and very involved in the Space program. Rosie's husband (Terry) worked for a Jewish Carpenter and followed the Methodist Discipline.

We had wonderful friends and neighbors in Palmer when I was growing up and most of them were very much a part of my life. However, the following people were of great influence in the person I was to become and I am indebted to them for their love and guidance.

DADDY -was pretty much a no-nonsense person who loved his family and worked long, hard hours as a Company Foreman in the mines. He was a pretty good

gardener who always had a garden and loved doing landscaping projects in the hilly yard around our house. He was one of the "pillars" of the Palmer Methodist Church.

MOTHER-was "kinda" partial to her only son, but didn't hesitate to use the Spirea bush as needed! She and daddy would take long walks in the woods on Sunday afternoons. She was a major force in teaching me right and wrong. She would say, "If you wouldn't say or do it around me, then it's wrong!" I used that advice a lot into adulthood and found it to be a good measure. She also taught me to wash and iron my clothes -and I still do.

UNCLE REYBURN ACKERMAN -was my mother's brother. He was severely injured in a mine accident in the late thirties and was paralyzed from the waist down. He learned to walk with a cane and wore braces on both legs. We would wrestle and I would hit him and try to get away but he was fast and would catch me with the crook in his walking cane. Then I would get a bruise from a knuckle lick or a pinch, etc. He treated me pretty rough at times and teased me a lot, but I loved him dearly and would visit him every chance I got. Oh yeah, he roasted my billy goat on an open fire one fall-I did not eat any! I think my admiration for him stemmed from his determination to live as normal a life as possible. He got a job delivering Dry Cleaning as he had learned to drive a car again. I would help him during the summer and he would let me drive his '39 Chevy. Once his dog, Penny, bit him and he grabbed the German Shepherd and bit him right back on the neck. Penny never bit him again. Later in life he was the official Mayor of Palmer, whatever that means.

RUTH -was my oldest sister and more like a mother than a sister. She was always sweet and kind to me (except when I heard her whistling and thought she was a bird -I was a good shot with my BB gun).

CAROLYN -Beat up on me a couple of times but all in all was a pretty good sister. She wouldn't tattle on me, nor I on her and that was a priceless attribute!

MARY -was always a Sweetheart as was BETTIE (Sweet Pea). They were younger sisters and I went away to school at age sixteen, so I remember very little interaction with them. However, I have been "told" that I was a pretty pesky big brother in my heyday!

ROSIE -was always the baby and I treated her that way until she got married (and I still do really).

All together we had a good and loving family and I really missed them when I went away to school. Mother and Daddy were a little worried about the influence of some of my "buddies" who were a little rough around the edges and decided to send me away to high school. They chose a boarding school with an excellent reputation for

building character as well as a strong work ethic and academics. Baxter Seminary became my home away from home and I never lived at our home in Palmer again. Others in the community who were a large part of my life in Palmer were: MRS. SWAN -Our close neighbor and without a doubt my "Fairy Godmother" who thought I could do no wrong.

BURTON CAGLE -The Cagles (Mr. & Mrs., Eston, Bonnie and Burton) could fix anything. They helped me keep my bicycle going. When World War II started Eston and Burton went to Hawaii to help rebuild our Navy in a civilian work force. They became real heroes to my gang.

DR. HARRIS -The "Company" pharmacist gave me advice on how to be a nice person. He always took time to talk to me anytime I came into the Company Store and showed interest in my interests.

MR. BURNETT -Mr. "Boggie" lived just up the hill from us and shared our garage. He had a car and no garage and we had a garage and no car -go figure! He was very interesting to talk to and was the only Republican I can remember from my Palmer days.

Rev. P.M. CLAYTON -was the Methodist Preacher. He was famous for the remark to his congregation, "The reason preacher's kids are sometimes mean is because they have to grow up with your mean kids!" And his boy Paul sure was mean!

MRS. WILLIAMS -was a dear soul and my favorite Sunday School Teacher. Then there was THE KLAN... Jimmy Flynn, Johnny Hill and I witnessed a KKK meeting and cross burning once which nearly scared me to death! The threat of them coming after me for something was a REAL influence! We recognized several men we knew which added to the scare. They were tough on men who mistreated their families, drank too much, or didn't look after them very well. It wasn't a Black, White, or foreigner thing, as there were no Blacks or foreigners in Grundy County.

Law enforcement was mainly provided by the Klan, decent citizens, parents and a once a week visit in town by a Sheriff's deputy. There was no local police force. There were many others who helped direct my path, as most adults in Palmer didn't hesitate helping your parents keep you on the "straight and narrow".

All in all, I feel Palmer at that period of time was a great place to live. The Depression years were tough and Palmer was a cold harsh place at times, but my parents provided a comfortable home, plenty of nourishing food, and lots of love and care. Most of all they taught us to be grateful for what we had. They also managed to provide each of their six children an opportunity for a formal education. Mountain people probably fared better during the Depression than others due to the fact that they had a tenacious will to work and "make do" with what they had.

Actually, the Tennessee Consolidated Coal Company took very good care of their people and provided most everything needed in a town that size. Being a "coal miner's son or daughter" was actually a privilege for the Owen kids!

Thus the first chapter of my life has been revealed. Stay tuned for there is much more to come!

Old sayings and Figures of Speech in Grundy Co. TN

"You can bend a sapling, but you can't bend a tree." Anita Crabtree said her father, the late Herschel Finch, Sr. used to say this. Mr. Finch meant teach your kids values while they're small and still teachable. Our friend Bobby Owen made the same point recently when he said that he'd read the "formative" years of a person's life were from about 5-14.

"I'm in a pickle". This meant in a difficult situation similar to being "between a rock and a hard place". Some of life's pickles turn out sweet and others are "dill".

"That's over in the dry goods side." I've not heard this in a long time but I'm sure Martha Carroll Hensley, Perkie Greene, Janelle Taylor and many others remember that the 'dry goods' section of a store was where the clothes and shoes could be found.

"In like Flynn" The Flynn name was once well known in Palmer coal mining circles, but this old saying probably goes back to the 1800's when Irish immigrants flooded America after the potato famine in Ireland. Some of the immigrants became prominent in political offices in the big cities of the northeast and the Flynn name is still prominent in Massachusetts. "In like Flynn" meant you were a "player" in today's term and had influence to get things done and could pull strings for jobs or favors.

"By rights" This meant that if things were fair and as they should be someone would get what they deserved. "He beat it in court, but "by rights; he should have been sent to prison."

"She's a friendly somebody" You seldom hear this anymore, but we just happened to recently. In the South, even a person of questionable character is often given the benefit of the doubt if they're friendly. A person who is not friendly is held in low regard by most other people.

"You can't tell him anything." Did this mean a person couldn't keep a secret? No, it meant that the person wouldn't listen to good advice and was often said about young people by their parents or older relatives.

“I had to grit my teeth” or “I had to bite my tongue.” I’ve not heard grit my teeth in a long time, but you still occasionally hear bite my tongue.

These old sayings meant that it took all your will power to remain silent about something a person said, but in the end, you decided that course of action was best.

Website Comments

Dear David:

Thanks for your friendship! I certainly appreciate the time and effort that you put into the “Palmer News”. It does mean something to those of us who once lived in Palmer. In fact, I have read that the formative years are about 5 to 14, which means we are part of Palmer and Palmer is a part of us.

Bobby Owen
Peachtree City, GA

Jan. 2009

Dear David: Just read your web page. We do have a PC and really enjoy it. But just in case I don’t see it Brother Bill sends it to me from you and I copy and send to my sister Clara and our Palmer neighbor Dola Ivy Rector who now lives in Georgia because they don’t have PC’s.

I know most everyone you visit and write about by remembering who their parents are. We sure enjoy hearing from Palmer here in Tucson.

It’s cool and windy here today, but expected to be 85. Our fall weather has arrived (Nov. 21).

Allene Nunley Hargis
Tucson, AZ

Jan. 2009

Dear David:

I received your “Palmer News” yesterday and you mentioned names that I had completely forgotten about since leaving the Palmer area 58 years ago. Mr. Jesse James for one, who worked some with Mr. Homer Heard in his barber shop located in Palmer Railroad Depot.

I'm very glad to hear that Palmer Community named a street after Mr. Jim Ivey. He was a very nice man. As young boys Alton Tate and I walked by his home that was located between our homes and he always had something nice to say to us.

His first wife died when I was a teenager. He married Dolly Banks Henderson, Charles Henderson's mother. Charles and I were very good friends and had many good times together. Miss Dolly made the very best tea cake cookies I've ever eaten and we would take hands full every time we went into their kitchen.

You mentioned Ted Nunley and we are distant cousins. We were in the same class at Palmer School. Ted rode horses and mules around Palmer with me and Leck Smith's daughter riding behind him.

Billy Ray Nunley

Monument, CO

(Billy Ray is the only soon of the late Graham and Sara Cannon Nunley and the brother of Allene Hargis.)

Jan. 2009

David David

Keep up the good work on the Grundy County Historical Society website articles

Martha Carol Cox Hensley

Weeki Wachee, FL

Dear David:

We are enjoying the latest book from the Grundy County Historical Society (Pictures of Our Past). We visit the website often. Hope to see you soon.

David & Janice McNabb McAnally

Dunlap, TN

(Janice is the daughter of former Palmer residents Crandel and Ethleen Sitz McNabb also of Dunlap).

Dr. Bryon Harbolt

January 2009

Holiday Greetings fom Dr. Byron Harbolt



(Photo from 1990)

Dr. Harbolt has been a physician in Grundy County since 1960 and is probably the longest serving in county history. If you know about someone who has served longer, please let us know.

The following is a letter from Dr. Harbolt.

Dec. 17, 2008

"Dear Friends and Relatives:

We've just about finished up another year or I should say just about finished what we've had to do this year. Surely God has been good to us in spite of our faults and failures. It is truly amazing that I am still able to keep the clinic open and also take care of so many inmates in the jail. Just this morning I was thinking of some wonderful promises. I'll just give you the references and you can claim them for yourself. First was Isa. 41:10, Ps. 32:8, II Chron. 20:20, Isa. 40:28-31; Isa. 30:21 & Ps. 1:3.

If I count all the patients that come to see me in the clinic every day I do have a lot of friends. I also have some very close friends who inspire me to keep going and growing spiritually day by day.

When I look back over the past year I am inclined to ask the question expressed so beautifully in the song: 'Why Does He Love Me So?' I have outlived all my family

members. My mother died at 85. I am now over 85 and am able to work just about as much as I did 48 years ago. And I feel good except when I get tired.

It is truly amazing how well my children and grandchildren are doing. Sam's son Bjorn, has been serving as a student missionary in Africa, has been in training in David Asherick's evangelism program. DelRetha's youngest daughter, Linnea served as a student missionary in Africa for one year. Sam is doing well in his profession as a pathologist. Sam's wife Susan has conducted a remarkable diet program to get diabetics off drugs. DelRetha's oldest son was married this year and I went to his wedding in Los Vegas. He is now doing a residency in ENT in Danville, PA.

Mark and Verna are leaving Wildwood, GA, to Iron City down below Nashville. I was very much surprised. I supposed they would be at Wildwood forever. However, they will still be connected with Wildwood.

Things are going along about as usual here in Tennessee.

Must close for this time. Surely time is running out for planet earth and Jesus has promised to return soon. I think this will be the only remedy for this world's problems. may God bless each of my many children and grandchildren. Let's be ready for Jesus' return,

With love,
Daddy----Grandaddy"

In Memory Mara Lee Roberts Caldwell



In this 1980 photo Mara Lee Caldwell Treasurer and David Patton Secretary accepted a \$100 check from Y.B. Ashby for the building of the Grundy County Miners' Museum and Heritage Center in Palmer. Mara Lee's reputation for honesty made the project a success as donors could rest assured their contributions would be spent wisely.

Mara Lee Roberts Caldwell died unexpectedly on Dec. 27, 2008, just three weeks shy of her 83rd birthday. She was preceded in death by her husband Robert L. "Poss" and parents Henry and Oda James Roberts.

When you said "Mara Lee" everyone in Palmer thought of the post office. She began her career there as a teenager working under the supervision of the legendary Bob and Effie Richmond Overturf and ended in 1988 after some 20 years as the town postmaster.

Mara Lee's parents had very little education, but they made sure all of their eight children graduated from high school. Seven of them taught school at one point and five made teaching a career.

Many who knew Mara Lee didn't know that she was one of what would become the famous Henry Roberts family of teachers carrying over into the third generation now. She taught three years in Gruetli-Laager including at the old "colony school".

Poss and Mara Lee were faithful members of the OES (Order of the Eastern Star) and she received her 50 - year membership pin in 2008. In past years they were worthy matron and worthy patron of the Tracy City Chapter.

We had know Mara Lee casually for many years, but in recent times we visited her weekly and had a snack while talking about old times in Palmer. A member of the "greatest generation" who grew up in the depression and World War II, to us she symbolized the values they cherished such as thrift and sensible living, love of God, family, and county, and a "can do: and "make do" attitude. One of her favorite sayings about thrift was "a wasteful waster makes a wishful want."

Mara Lee didn't have children of her own, so she doted on her many nieces and nephews and proudly told us that the "Lee" in Johnny Lee Coffelt came from her.

Another nephew, Rev. John Henry Coffelt, preached her funeral December 29 and his wife Dorcas sang "City of Gold" and "When He clothes Me". Burial was in Fall Creek Cemetery.

All who knew Mara Lee remembered her often quoting one of her favorite Bible verses when the subject of death was mentioned. It was, "To be absent from the body, is to be present with the Lord." Without question, that's her new home now.

Memories of Christmas Past by Mrs. Angie Northcutt Burnett

As told to David Patton

(Angie lives in Pelham, TN, but grew up in Altamont, TN, where she was an all-star basketball player at Altamont Elementary.(now North Elementary). Her love of the game has endured and at the end of 2009, she and others will be publishing a book on Grundy County sports.

If you have information or photos to submit, send them to her at 21 River End Rd., Pelham, TN 37366. Angie always does things in a first class way, so let's all help her preserve this "fun" part of Grundy County history that has touched so many lives.)

"I grew up very poor of material things, which made me rich in other ways. It made me appreciate what I had.

I was loved and cared for and spoiled by my parents. Now, it wasn't a "Leave It To Beaver" home, but it was a home and I loved being there. I'm a person who puts down roots. I never ever wanted to leave the mountain, but my duty was to my husband and his to his family, so here I am in Pelham celebrating my Christmases.

As a child Santa was the only one who brought gifts. He brought "one" gift. Oh, but how exciting getting a gift was. I was 9 when I found out about Santa and 21 when I started believing in him again. I told my kids when you stop believing, you stop receiving. The still believe (ha, ha). My son is 28 and has two children of his own; my daughter is 31 with 3 children.

I was either Mary or most often the angel that said, "Hark, fear not, I bring you good tidings of great joy for unto you is born this day a savior which is Christ the Lord."

I said this with tinsel on my head and clothed in a pinned up sheet.

We do the nativity before we open our gifts, the grandchildren playing the parts. The three grandchildren often have a bit of contention over whose turn it is to be Mary, but we started with the oldest and go to the youngest. It's Gretchen's (2008) turn this year, and she's the youngest. She has also been baby Jesus and a lamb.

David, home and family are everything to me. I appreciate my good kids and wonderful grandkids so much. They are my treasures and I'm blessed with a good husband. Christmas is more what's around the tree than what's under it now.

On the 23rd our kids and their families come and spend the night at our house, and we have something they especially like to eat. This year it's a nacho/taco bar, and we have salad and baked potatoes to kin of round it out. Of course, there are lots of pies, cakes, and candy to nibble on as well.

This year we're going caroling and taking candy to the neighbors. After that we'll have our play and then open gifts.

The grandkids gather on the reading chair, and I read Christmas stories and tell a princess tale before bed. On the 24th we'll go to my dad's for lunch then Carlton's family gathers for supper. After that the kids go home for Santa and Carlton and I sit quietly with a cup of hot chocolate.

Sometime during the night, when everything settles, I try to go out on the deck alone and thank my heavenly father for sending his son to be my savior.

My favorite Christmas at school was when I was in the 6th grade. I was the teacher's pet, and it was obvious. I got to do everything and I even got to go to the 8th grade and take names when the teacher was out.

I myself cut the class Christmas tree. It was probably (I still cut big trees.) 10 feet tall and reached all the way to the ceiling, but it looked good in the high ceiling class room.

My friend, David, was my classmate and stayed after school to help me and the teacher put up and decorate the tree. We had so much fun, and David and I still talk about it.

David was my hero that day. A hateful young man bumped the ladder and I fell or started to fall when David caught me. (That was when I weighed 110 lbs. and was catchable.) I was grown in the 6th grade. David also punched the boy who did it.

He tells me now that he only did that to keep me from killing the guy. I was a bit of a tom boy and could, at times be a bully." (ha, ha)

Merry Christmas and may God pour out his blessings on you always. I've enjoyed this time talking with you.

Comments on David's Web page, Part II

I enjoy reading all the things you write-Actually I look forward to them! I just hope people realize how beneficial your historical information will be for years to come.

Donna Gayle Gifford Basham
Tracy City, TN

(Donna is a native of Palmer and the daughter of the late Eugene and Georgia Lee Lockhart Gifford. Many of you will remember her grandparents, R.W. "Russ" and Daisy Perry Gifford, known affectionately as "Ma & Pa Gifford".

Beverly Sissom Riley Shares Her Christmas

Beverly is a native of Palmer, TN, but is now living in Elkhart, Indiana. She sends photos of her family sharing her father's birthday and Christmas.

[Beverly and her family \(menu\)](#)

Beverly's sister, [Charlotte](#)

Beverly's niece, [Courtney and friend](#)

Beverly's granddaughters, [Marisa and Madelin](#)

Palmer and Related Deaths in 2008

Another year is gone and the sad duty falls to us to remember those who left in 2008.

We had an astonishing 20 deaths in the Palmer town limits, which is about double the normal rate.

They include Jimmy Dale Finch, son of Charles Finch; Stormy Diane Baker, infant; Herbert Garner, Willie Mae "Bill" Harrison, widow of Hershel Harrison; Stella Mae Boyd James, Jackie S. "Jack" Pocus and wife Joan "Annie" Hill Pocus; Terry E. Roberts, Paul Kenley Campbell, Billy Keith Morrison, Jean James Keel and her son Ronnie Keel, Juanita Green Caldwell, Donnie E. Turner II, grandson of Mitchell Cleek; Dale Baxter Nolan, son of Gilliam Nolan; Shelva Jean Morrison Floyd, Ruby Marie Land Henry, Delbert E. "Cooney" Sweeton, Charles Chester "Chet" Cleek, and Mara Lee Roberts Caldwell.

In the Tatesville-Barker's Cove area death claimed Dura P. "Sodie" Britton, Thomas J. "Tommy" Layne, son of Clell Layne, Ethel M. Birdwell, and Rosa Nell Brewer Coffelt.

Former Palmer residents passing away in Gruetli-Laager were Claude Archie Layne, son of Clell Layne, Raymond Earl Davis, Mary E. Garner Meeks, sister of Herbert Garner; Tryda Mae Sanders Bouldin, Helen Caldwell Cleek, wife of Bill Cleek; Eddie Mae Caldwell McCullough at age 91; Clarie Bernice Tate, Mary E.

Meeks Brewer, widow of Doug Brewer; Jay W. Sanders, Dorothy McBee Meeks Geary Ross, and Frankie Morrison Bryant, widow of Harley Bryant.

Leonard Doss and his wife Blanche "Cricket" Doss of Altamont died as did George David Watts and Louise Slatton Van Hooseer Stevens in Tracy City. In Coalmont, we lost Troy L. Flynn, son of Carl "Chunk" Flynn as well as Paul David Meeks. Mr. Meeks never lived in Palmer, but is remembered as a popular principal at Palmer Elementary. At the age of 80, Paul Rickard "Corky" Sandlin died in Monteagle and in Dunlap Paul David Brown at a nursing home. There are lots of Browns in our area, and he was a son of Cecil Brown of Gruetli-Laager.

In neighboring Marion County the legendary Burton B. Cagle died at 85. He was the longest serving constable in Tennessee history and grew up in Palmer where the Cagle's firm became well-known for their mechanical skills.

Others were Elbert H. Morrison, brother of Dorothy Garner; Martin E. "Junior" Levan, Jr; Corene White Griffith, daughter of Charlie and Rachel White; Vera Wanda Meeks Braden, daughter of Hollis "Boog" Meeks; Don C. "Fly" Garner, son of Herbert and Dorothy Garner, and Annie Bell Shrum Cox 104 and her son William Paul Cox 86.

In the Chattanooga area death claimed Alma V. Overturf Patton, widow of J.R. Patton; Tommy F. King, Sr. brother of Rev. Lee King; Hollis Berton White, and Clara Mae Worley Mincey. Mrs. Finley was a sister of the late Clayton and Elton Worley.

In Hermitage, TN, Jerri Long Morgan died. She was a member of the large A.W. Long family and many will remember some of her brothers including Jack, Ted, and Sherwood, Leon Fults, brother of Joe Willard Fults, died in Iowa as did Wanda Elizabeth Rankin Halsey in Pueblo, Colorado. She was a daughter of Frank Rankin who was in one of the Palmer Big Mine photos featured in the Pictures of Our Past book by the Grundy County Historical Society.

In other deaths of interest to Palmer area citizens, Mary Shull, widow of Dr. William Shull, died at 94. He ran the Whitwell Hospital in the 1950's where many from here went for treatment. Dr. John Wilhoit, Jr. of Dunlap died at 83. Many from Palmer went to him over the years for their dental care.

In closing, we want to salute Mrs. Reggie Sweeton, widow of Cooney Sweeton. Reggie lived in Yonkers, NY, and met Cooney while he was stationed in the New York City area with the U.S. Navy. Can you imagine what a clash of cultures between a Tennessee hillbilly and a NYC girl?

“I didn’t like him at first, but then later realized what a good person he was”, she told me. “When he brought me to Palmer in the 1950’s, it was a shock to see that people drew water from wells, had outside toilets, and heated water on a stove to take baths in a little outside building.”

The Sweetons settled down on Burnt Orchard Hill and raised a fine family amid Cooney’s other relatives on Burnt Orchard. Their daughter, Samantha “Sam” Sweeton Stevens, is a presidential award winning math teacher at Grundy County High School.

Some 20-25 years ago Cooney was struck down with a crippling disease that eventually left him bedridden. The marriage vows say, “in sickness and in health”, and Reggie Lived up to it by being his caregiver for longer than most of us can remember.

With divorces happening at an alarming rater, you don’t see that kind of devotion to a spouse much any more. We hope 2009 is filled with rest, peace and happiness for Reggie and her family after all these years.

To all of you who lost friends and family in 2008, may this new year bring brighter days, and ‘the peace that passeth all understanding” be yours.

Berton B. Cagle (Left) and Edward F. “Plib” Geary at the old Palmer School gym.

This photo was taken approx. 1940-42. “Plib” was lost at sea during World War II in Feb. 1943 and in 1945, Berton was among those attending a ceremony to place a tombstone at Palmer Veterans’ Memorial Park in memory of Plib on the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II.

Winter Scenes from the Past

Caleb Cannon enjoys the snow on his 4-wheeler, used as "hilbilly snowmobines" in these parts. This is a January 2007 photo. Caleb's great-great Grandfather, Freddie "Jew Babe" Canon is one of those in the Palmer Big Mine picture in the Grundy County Historical Society's latest book "Pictures of Our Past".

This 2007 photo was taken on Bottom Road and shows the snow covered frozen swamp just below the Alf & Edna Crabtree home. This house was occupied before that by Bob and Effie Overturf who both were Palmer postmasters. Bottom Road got its name because part of it ran through a swampy area called the bottom.

The Overturf family reunion will be held in Grundy County this year, and those attending in October will be visiting Bottom, Batesville, and Daus Mountain Roads where many of their ancestors lived.

Old Bloody Bones

Anita Finch Crabtree is a daughter of the late Herschel, Sr. and Ruby Gifford Finch and says that the idea for this poem came from her childhood. "My Grandmother Gifford was called 'Ma Gifford'. When we were visiting her and she didn't want us to go upstairs, She would tell us to not go up there because Old Bloody Bones would get us. People back then would tell ghost stories and all the grandchildren loved to visit Ma and Pa Gifford."

Old Bloody Bones

Old Bloody Bones, Old Bloody Bones,
Stay in thy place.

Old Bloody Bones, Old Bloody Bones,
I cringe at thy face.

I hear your screeching steps at night
My knees knock, and I shake with fright.

Oh yes, you lived in days gone by;
After death, you scream and cry.

Old Bloody Bones, Old Bloody Bones,
You roam your house; you find no rest.
In your lifetime you didn't do your best.

You wasted your time;
It wasn't well spent.
You moan and groan as your clothes are rend.

Memories of Christmas Past

By Mrs. Henrietta Nunley Tucker

As told to David Patton

Hey David,

It was good to hear from you this 2008 Christmas. Thanks for the card. I do have Christmas memories from long ago. One year after the Christmas program at the old (now called Palmer United Methodist) Methodist Church, we went to Mama Nunley's (her grandmother) and there in the living room was a bicycle for my cousins Jim Brooks, Don Nunley, Ronnie Nunley and me. We never knew how they got there because we all were at church.

The boys played the three wise men, and I was Mary a few times at church. I guess that was the best time ever. Daddy would come to church on Christmas to see us. I am glad to know that later on he was saved. I know that mother and him are together in heaven now.

Mother always cooked a big ham and all the fixings. She also baked coconut cakes and made candy. I remember Mama Nunley made fried pies and my aunt Kathleen Brooks made a fruitcake.

When I was five or six I spent Christmas in Tray City with Stella Shrum. She raised mother and her brother after their mother died. I got a homemade play cabinet that year, and my daughter Lora still has it. What good times we had as children.

I do remember the toys at the Tennessee Consolidated Coal Company Store. Everyone went to town to shop and get the mail. Those were the good old days!

Mother said she got an apple or orange for Christmas, and I'm sure a lot of our parents got something like that when they were kids."

Henerietta is the only child of the late Stanley and Marie Worley Nunley and grew up in Palmer during the 1940's & 50's.

Her grandparents were Albert and Maude Brown Nunley. Mr. Nunley and his son Stanley are in the Palmer Big Mine photo featured in the latest Grundy County Historical Society book, Pictures of Our Past.

Memories of Christmas Past

By Mrs. Carlene "Tootsie" Cannon Smith

As told to David Patton

"You asked about our old Christmas ways. Well, there's not much to tell except we never had things like kids do now. We were just coalminers' kids in a big family. We couldn't afford much, but God seemed to make a way for us to have something.

We didn't have a beautiful Christmas tree like people do now. We just had an old naked looking pine tree cut from the woods.

Mama always fixed a ham because daddy kept hogs and would hang the hog meat in the smoke house salted down to preserve it. We never knew what it was to buy ham.

We decorated that old ugly pine tree with icicles and anything we could find. We always got a little something for Christmas. I remember a little ring that mama bought at Kress' Ten Cent Store. The smaller ones got a doll or a little car or truck or ball and jacks to play with.

When Palmer School had their Christmas tree like you said (ha-ha) we most always got a handkerchief or box of chocolate covered cherry candy. My son John Doug loved them. He would tell whoever got his name in drawing names to always get him chocolate covered cherries. My other son Tim didn't care what they got him, just so the got him something

One time my husband, John Shrum, bought John Doug a little fire truck, and Tim got a little car. They were the little pedal cars popular in the 1950's. I was washing dishes one day, and as I looked out the window to check on them; they were real busy. John Doug had the hammer and beat the wheels off his fire truck. Tim copied him and did his toy the same way. They were just small children. I said, what are you doing? You've beaten the wheels off of your fire truck and car. John Doug said, Me fix it Mama. I said, Yeah, Me fix it all right. You fixed it where it can't be fixed.

I remember when we went to the Christmas tree at the old Methodist (now United Methodist) Church. After the program we all went singing Christmas carols. Martha Hampton and her sister Becky, Joyce Conry, several more and me. I can't remember all of them. It was cold, but we enjoyed singing Christmas carols in front of people's houses.

Well, David, I hope you have a nice Christmas, and thanks for the card and letter. I hope

I have told you enough about Christmas. My last husband, Rowland Smith, always said, 'It's sock-swapping time' when Christmas rolled around. (ha-ha)'

Daddy always enjoyed playing with the toys the grandchildren got as much as they did. I still miss my family. They are all gone except me and my sisters Nadine and Venova.

Well, I'll sign off with God Bless you and God Bless America."

Tootsie is such a nice person and has been very helpful over the years on our Palmer history work. Thanks, Tootsie. We appreciate it.

Tootsie grew up in the Great Depression and World War II as a daughter of Freddie “Jew Babe” and Agnes Henley Cannon. Many of you will remember her brothers Glenn, Leon, A.C “Pete”, Tony and twins Howard and Horace and also her sisters Martha and Oma Lee.

Mr. Freddie Cannon is one of the Palmer Big Mine crew featured in the latest book by the Grundy County Historical Society, Pictures of Our Past.

February 2009

Memories of Christmas Past By Mrs. Allene Nunley Hargis

As told to David Patton

“Christmas was a wonderful time at the Methodist Church. Uncle Joe Geary was Sunday school superintendent and Roy Barker the choir director. Brother Crawford Barker was the pastor and had a son, Billy Barker, who was in my class at school. Some of the men who attended church then were Isom Patrick and his brother Charlie Patrick, Floyd Owen, Raymond D. Swann, Albert Nunley, Dave Henninger (the Company Store manager), H.C. ‘Nick’ Nichols, Carl Geary, Clabe Rogers, James ‘Flop’ Brooks, Uncle Bob Ackerman and his son Reyburn Ackerman, Ewing Hampton and Reece Fletcher.

If you got to Sunday school early, you could ring the church bell. A long rope hung down from the ceiling under the bell tower, and it was hard to pull for a child. Everyone in Palmer could hear that bell on Sunday morning.

That tall Christmas tree you mentioned stood just under the bell rope at Christmas. Every child got a gift wrapped in red or green tissue paper. That was about the only wrapping paper back then, and I still like it best today. We also got a brown paper bag with an apple, orange, and chocolate drop candy. I still buy those chocolate drops if I find them at Christmas time.

We children practiced the Christmas play for about two weeks after school at the church. We'd march across the pulpit stage in a line, scared to death, to sing Christmas songs and say our verses.

Some of the young people who attended the Methodist Church at that time were Dola Ivey and her sister Becky Ivey, Allene Geary, Hazel Gholston, Louvenia Gholston, Marie Gholston, Betty Nunley, Joyce Conry and her sisters Anna Polk Conry and Frances Conry, Martha Hampton and her sister Becky Hampton, Johnnie Jane Heard, Robert Hill Foster and his sister Dorothy Foster, Howard Ruth Sitz and her sister Frances Sitz, Nathan Barker and his brother Charles Barker, Bobby Owen and his sisters Carolyn Owen, Ruth Owen, Mary Elizabeth Owen and Pee Wee Owen, and, of course, Billy Ray Nunley and his sisters Allene Nunley, Clara Ruth Nunley and Judy Nunley.

Santa came to our house while we were at church on Christmas Eve night. Mama cooked all day on Christmas Eve. She made that banana cake that your mom made and also chocolate and peanut butter fudge, the best egg custard pies, chicken and dressing and all the rest. Daddy always went to the Company Store and bought a bushel of Red Delicious apples, a bushel of oranges and pecans and English walnuts.

We had a piano and our cousins Tootsie Cannon and her sister Nadine Cannon could play, so that's what we did all day and sang while Mama cooked.

We girls always got a doll for Christmas. I remember our brother Bill got a Lionel train one year. He put the tracks together on the living room floor. I can hear it running now. It had a whistle too. I remember getting electric stove one year. It was green in color and about the size of a large shoebox. A small light bulb inside warmed what you put in it.

One year we got a snow sled. It did come big snows then, and we rode it down the hill behind our home and down the slate dumps. One slate dump was down in front of our house and one between our house and the house of Bobby Owen.

One year Daddy and Mr. Rose Burr Sanders went to Chattanooga on Christmas Eve and got bicycles, a red boys' bike for Buck Sanders (W.H. 'Buck' lives in Tracy City today.) and a blue girls' bike for us. Talk about happy, we were!

At Palmer School (The old school is 81 years old now and still going strong.) we made paper ropes of green and red art paper and hung them on the top of the blackboard. We also hung red tissue paper bells. Remember those, how they folded and unfolded?

You know, most every family in Palmer at that time had come from Tracy City, or at least their parents did. Men who had a job and worked at the 'Big Mine' had things a little better than others. I guess sawmill was about the only other work. Some farmed or raised animals. By today's standards, we were all poor, but sure didn't know it. We were among the fortunate ones. I feel so blessed to have had such good hard working parents. Those coal miners were the most giving and honest people ever. What wonderful men and families for children to grow up with and be protected by.

You mentioned visiting Bonnie Gipson Payne on Palmer Mountain. I knew her dad Joe Gipson and his brother George Gipson. Bonnie's brother Hollis Gipson and her sister Allene Gipson were in my class when I started to Palmer School in 1934. The Gipson boys were very good baseball players.

The old fire tower (no longer there) on Palmer Mountain was a place when I grew up for school and Sunday school picnics."

Allene grew up in Palmer during the 1930's and '40's as a daughter of the late Graham and Sarah Cannon Nunley. She lives today in Tucson, AZ.

Memories of Christmas Past By Mrs. Diana Henry Smith

As told to David Patton

"I asked Daddy about Christmas when he was growing up. He grew up in the great Depression, and you were lucky if you had enough food on the table for Christmas. They didn't even have a tree until he married Mama. I guess a lot of people were like that back then. He said they always had food and sometimes he would get an orange and an apple. They always had nuts and Granny Nennie would make them pulling candy and a cake for Christmas.

You are right about Christmas being the best memories. Most of my memories are good ones. Growing up on Burnt Orchard Hill was on big happy family. Most of the people who lived there were Granny Sanders and her kids. Big Mama (Diana's

maternal grandmother) was the baby girl. There were always 35-40 kids up there. Sometimes even more.

Mama really got into Christmas when we were little. Aunt Willie Mae 'Bill' Harrison would send her boys to the woods to get all of us trees. Mama would not let us put it up until the 23rd. We got to decorate it on the 24th. A lot of people still used real candles, but she would not let us use them. Mama would say, 'you are not going to burn my house down with those things'. We would pop corn and string it with holly berries in between the corn. Then we would make paper chains and most of the ornaments. We painted sweet gum balls and hung them on the tree too. For the lights, we had to use those big colored bulbs. One time Mama got us some that looked like candles and when they got warm they would bubble up. I loved to watch them and still have a few. We made a lot of red bows for the tree and always had a star for the top.

One year when I was 12 Mama let us put up the tree on my birthday, the 15th and we had a party. We decorated the tree and sang carols and had a ball. I guess there were 30 kids plus the grown ups. I thought I was grown.

I never even saw an artificial tree until we went to Chicago. The first few years we were up there, we had a real one. We would put it up on the 15th then come to Tennessee. By the time we went back to Illinois, it was dead and a big mess. It would be all over the carpet, so we got a fake one. It looked like a big aluminum ball.

Papa Land (her grandfather) loved Christmas. He was like a little kid and would light up just talking about it. Bib Mama made those banana cakes you mentioned. I would love to have her recipe for it. It always had three layers and was cooked in an iron skillet. We always got presents from Papa Land and Big Mama and we stayed as much of the time with them as we did Mama."

Diana has been very helpful with our history work on Palmer, and we appreciate it very much. She grew up in the 1950's and early '60's as a daughter of James and Willie Mae Land Henry and lives today in Cleveland, TN. Her grandparents were Dock and Nennie Henry and Will and Nell Sanders Land.

Memories of Christmas Past By Mr. Charles Lewis

As told to David Patton

“You asked about Christmas at Palmer School. We had a small tree with homemade decorations on it. We all drew names including our teacher. You didn’t have to tell anyone whose name you drew. On the last day of school before Christmas, we took our presents to the classroom, and the teacher would give them out. It was fun.

At home we always had a tree with decorations on it. We would go and cut a small cedar or spruce pine. We had holly leaves and berries made in wreaths for our windows and doors. We didn’t have lights, but it was fun. Most of the time we’d have snow on Christmas back then.”

Charles always responds to our requests for historical information on Palmer, and we appreciate it. He grew up in the 1930’s and ‘40’s as a son of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Lewis. Shortly after returning to Palmer after service with the U.S. Navy in WWII, he moved to Florence AL, and still lives there today.

Memories of Christmas Past by Mrs. Nellie “Nell” Bone Finch

“Hi, David, To answer some of your questions about Christmas, yes, we sometimes exchanged gifts at Tatesville School. We drew names and each and every one got a present. Yes, we got the teacher a gift. Not always chocolate covered cherry candy because we made up to get them a gift.

No, the Nazarene Church wasn’t there when I was growing up. We had church I the Tatesville School (no longer there- It stood at what is now the junction of Tatesville and Daus Mountain Road.) and the school was used a lot for what they call a community center these days. We had our plays and Christmas trees there at night. We would practice our plays a month before Christmas. At the closing of our plays I would say a speech, mostly it was ‘The Night Before Christmas’. I would act it out and sometimes got a standing ovation as we really had big crowds.

At home, we didn’t get presents. We were always looking to play games like jump rope, checkers, or a big rummy game.

We had ham and plenty of other food. Turkey was enjoyed at our house. Dad always killed a hog on Thanksgiving and Mother saved a ham for Christmas.

There were always cakes and pies. Sometimes we had chicken, but it was mostly turkey. Now my favorite is roasted duck or pheasant. I always like a cake with raisins in it, a devil's food cake full of raisins.

We always decorated our house with spruce and holly. It sure smelled good. We always had a crowd for Christmas and sometimes the preacher and his wife were there, but we always had plenty of food.

We had our celebration at night. The house was full and people outside. Clayta (Rev. M.C. "Bud" Hampton's daughter) was the singer and speech maker when she got older. We ate a lot of sandwiches. My brother Tillman would buy a whole stick of bologna, a big stick of it. Most Sundays at home we had roast beef."

Nell grew up in the Tatesville section of Palmer during the 1920's and 30's as a daughter of W.K. "Will" or "Deacon" Bone. She and her sister, Thelma Bone Nolan, are the only survivors of this large family. Nell has been a wonderful help on our Palmer history research. She's the widow of Bill Finch and a resident of the Hven of Rest Nursing Home in Tracy City, TN.

Memories of Christmas Past By Mr. Billy Ray Nunley

"David, you asked about Christmas in Palmer. I think Christmas-time as a child is still one of my fondest memories.

My parents bought me a 12-gauge shotgun when I was 12 years old. I kept it for several years and used it for squirrel hunting around the goat rocks area. I had graduated to a 12-gauge pump by that time and sold it to Vernon Lewis for a redbone hound dog. I sold the pup to Alf Crabtree and got a 12-gauge Remington automatic, which I still have.

Do you remember the smell of Christmas when you walked in the Tennessee Consolidated Coal Company store? All the fresh meat in the meat market, hay and feed in the back of the store, dry goods 'clothing' department, carbide in large cans for miners' lamps, and toys and furniture upstairs. That's where the night

watchman (some will remember that Wayne Cannon was just a kid and stayed with Pappy at night) Leonard "Pappy" Von Rohr stayed.

Our parents always bought us clothes plus a large toy we asked for as kids. I had wagons and one year asked for a pedal car which I got. I rubbed my leg on the side of it getting in and out and got an infection on the back of my knee. Dad took me to Dr. O.H. Clements at the Palmer Clinic and held me down while Dr. Clements lanced the infection. I still have a scar left on my leg.

Do you remember the large candy counter the company store had? You got 5 pieces of candy for a penny. We would always go to Robert Morgan instead of Mr. Frank Shockley as Robert would always put an extra piece or two in the bag.

At home, we always had plenty of vegetables from the garden and a potato bin in the cellar under the house and onions hanging from the ceiling. Also down there Mom had rows of canned fruit and vegetables, including kraut, blackberries, huckleberries, apples and peaches. In late fall dad would buy a bushel of apples, wrap newspapers around them, then place them in black powder pellet boxes he brought home from the mines. We had a smoke house and he'd put the boxes there in a dark area until winter. Those apples were wonderful, so mellow.

Fresh meat was always something we had plenty of. Dad and Mr. Rose Boro Sanders were partners and worked in the Palmer Big Mine together for many years. They would fatten several calves and pigs then each would take a calf and two pigs for fall killing. We had a large meat box in the smokehouse and would smoke the hams with green hickory wood and cover the rest of the meat with rock salt in the meat box. They then sold the rest of the calves and pigs dressed out to Isham Patrick who was the butcher at the Company Store. He would put whole calves and pigs in the freezer then cut pieces as needed for customers. Mr. Rose Boro's son W.H. 'Buck' Sanders and I would get the skins from the cattle and the Company Store would give us \$1.75 for each hide. What a great childhood I had with my sisters in Palmer. As of 2008, I'm 75, Judy 73, Clara Ruth 77, and Allene 79.

David, I have had a great life. My wife Shirley and I will be married 55 years on June 25, 2009. We have three great children, Alan, 52, Cheryl, 48, and Jennifer, 38. We also have seven grandchildren, five girls and two boys. I thank God, our Lord and Savior, every day for the blessings he has given me and my family.

You mentioned Woodrow Cleek. He was a good baseball player. I played against him several times. If you see Gene Layne, say hello for me. He's the son of Frank Layne who was Joe Layne's brother. All of them worked and ran the Esso gas station in Laager for several years. My dad was a cousin to Gene's mother, Dixie Nunley Layne.

I don't remember Carl 'Cigar' Nolan, but his brothers Abb and Edward and their father Claude worked for my dad in th4e mines at one time.

I remember Louie 'Chief' Geary singing at the Palmer Methodist Church. Also Albert Nunley and his brother-in-law Joseph S. 'Joe' Geary and Uncle Joe's sons Johnny, Carl, and Alvin 'Oats'. My sisters Allene, Clara Ruth, and our cousin Carlene 'Tootsie' Cannon Smith also sang and Tootsie played the piano at church.

My mother was a cousin of Bailey 'Preacher' Brooks' wife, Ethel Cannon Brooks. Mom's father, Lavator Cannon, was her uncle.

David, may our Lord Jesus Christ bless you and your family, as he has surely blessed mine."

Billy Ray Grew up in Palmer during the 1930's and 40's as the only son of Graham and Sarah Cannon Nunley. Today, he lives in Monument, Colorado.

Memories of Christmas Past by Mrs. Edna Layne Brewer

"Hello, David. Glad to hear from you. I remember Christmas when my mother baked a ham and made sweet potato pies.

I hope you can read this. I have arthritis in my hands and can't write much any more. I miss Grundy County?

(Edna grew up in the Chiggertown section of Palmer in the 1930's and 40's . She is the widow of Echerd Brewer and the only daughter of the late Rev. Aylor and Maude Morrison Layne. Many of you will remember her brothers: A.J. and the late Raymond and Cotton Layne. Today Edna lives in Manchester, TN, with her only child Keith Brewer who is a former Palmer School principal and Grundy County School Superintendent.)

Memories of Christmas Past by Mrs. Carolyn Johnson

“My memories of Christmas are getting a black doll one year and getting a tricycle another year. Five of seven children in our family wore it our pretty quick. With hardly any cars on our road in front of the house, we would ride it down “Dougins Hill” which was short, but steep and had a big curve. The hill was named for our neighbor Mr. Dougin.

I also remember that at church everybody got a brown bag of goodies, and I always enjoyed the play. We went to a two-room school and usually got a dresser set from the person who drew our name. One year I got a really nice jewelry box. I really liked it and still have it.

When our son Mike was little we always spent Christmas morning at home, then to my mom and dad’s, then to Dick’s parents, always a feast. Dick’s dad always shot fireworks for Mike. He truly cherishes that memory.

Mike is 44 now, works at the University of Georgia and is studying for his Ph.D.”

Carolyn and her husband Dick live in Elizabethton, TN. They are valued friends of former Palmer resident Sara Swann Shipley who lives in Johnson City.

(Sara is in her 90’s now and with no nearby family. We appreciate Carolyn and Dick for their help and friendship to Sara.)

Old Sayings and Figures of Speech in Grundy County, TN

“Suit yourself” or “Does it suit you?” Suit yourself was often said curtly as in “I’ve tried to talk you out of it, but suit yourself.” This, of course, meant satisfy yourself or “Do it your own way.”

“Does it suit you?” meant does it satisfy you or meet your approval. This used to be said a lot in Grundy County.

“Get that dog our of here! It’s bad luck to have a dog in the mines.” When I was a kid in the 1930’s the palmer Big Mine was shut down temporarily, and my dad Hubert Lewis worked at a little coal mine that Steve Meeks had in Barker’s Cove. Steve’s son-in-law Harley Tate also worked there with him. “I walked to the powder

mag (magazine) at the Big Mine and god powder for Dad and carried it to Barker's Cove. My dog followed me all the way into the mine and that's when Steve told me to get it out of there."

Howard Lewis is the only person left in the Palmer town limits who worked at the Palmer Big Mine. His Dad is one of the Palmer Big Mine crew featured in the latest book from the Grundy County Historical Society Pictures of Our Past.

"Uh tall" "I don't understand it at all." Would be the correct way, but "uh tall" instead of "at all" is still said a lot in Grundy County.

"Don't county your chickens until they hatch." This is a wise old saying and still relevant today. It meant don't assume something is going to happen. Many people make big plans assuming things, which never happen. This can be disastrous in many situations in life.

"Hustle and bustle" We seldom hear anyone locally say this now. It meant "busy" or "hectic" as in "the hustle and bustle of the holidays."

"The world don't stop for nobody to get off." How true this is. This old ball keeps on spinning regardless of our problems or the problems of nations. The high and mighty pass on into eternity and are nothing to "Father time."

"The best way to learn a lesson is to learn it the hard way." Lots of truth to that A lesson learned the hard way is not easily forgotten.

"Rocking chair money" This was unemployment benefit checks, of course. We wonder how many young whippersnappers drawing "rocking chair money" in these hard economic times have heard this old expression.

"He's still feisty." This was said a lot years ago to describe an old person who was active and still got around good. It probably came from the little, but very active Fiest dogs.

"It's not all it's cracked up to be." This meant not all it claimed to be or should have been. Our citizens have found out that their government policies are often "not what it's cracked up to be."

Palmer News

TGIF! We do thank God it's February. It has been a cold winter and with the coming of February we can see the light at the end of the winter tunnel. In fact, our first crocus bloomed February 8 and the buttercups should bloom the last week of the month.

Happy birthday to Palmer's oldest citizen, Ethel Mae Gifford Cantrell. Among those attending the celebration in the fellowship hall at Palmer Church of God were nieces Donna Basham, and Anita Crabtree. Her only child, Lowell Thomas Cantrell and his family of Athens, TN, were also present.

Happy 60th anniversary to Clifford and Joyce Brown Cordell who celebrated back in December. They were married on December 23, 1948, by the late Rev. M.S. "Bud" Hampton. Among thus attending the celebration were Rev Hampton's daughter Wanda Meeks and her cousin Patsy Higgins along with Ola Stockwell, Violet Garner Lockhart, Roland and Faye Summers Smith, Raymond, Doris and Jody Hargis.

Young Heath Layman and his tree-trimming crew were still in Kentucky as of this writing (Feb.11) helping to restore power after the January ice storm. He's a grandson of Charles Green and the late Juanita Campbell Green.

Palmer School has a "sweet" fundraiser on Feb. 25. They'll be selling Krispy Kreme Doughnuts for their 8th grade trip.

Randal and Sylvia Disheroon Roberts of Chattanooga were here recently due to the death of his cousin Mara Lee Caldwell. Sylvia's the daughter of the late Ernest and Hazel Graham Disheroon.

We received word over the holidays that former Palmer school teacher Bertha Schulze Ashley of Manchester, TN, is alive and well at age 100 and is still driving around town. She enjoys hearing from former students, and Bobby Owen and Allene Nunley Hargis may remember her. Her phone number is 931 728-2928 and her address is 622 Iris Drive; Manchester, TN 37355.

Our January rainfall in Palmer was 4.9". Howard Lewis had 4 below zero on the 16th at the old Clyde Boyd place on "tabernacle curve". Let's hope that kind of weather is over for this winter.

Mary Weaver of the nearby Cagle community came by to see Ricky Layne. He served on submarines in the U.S. Navy and retired after a 30- year career. Many will remember his late father and grandfather Bedford and Andrew Weaver.

Happy 75th birthday to Joyce Roberts Hargis on February 12 and also get well soon wishes. Joyce recently had two surgeries and spent 18 days in the hospital. She's the pianist at Palmer United Methodist Church, but probably won't be able to perform until spring.

What's for supper? Would you believe dumplings and more dumplings? Anita Crabtree made 30 lbs. of dumplings over the holidays and says she made them up ahead of time, froze them, and then just had to drop them in the pot of chicken broth. She gave us a jar of sweet pepper relish she canned back in the fall, and it was delicious. Thanks, Anita!

Jerry Harrison, son of the late Herschel Harrison, Sr. has been in the hospital and goes back for more treatment in April. He's a nice guy and says he'll be 68 on August 29.

Our friend Bobby Owen sent us a calendar from his visit to the High Museum of Art in Atlanta. It featured the museum exhibit of the first emperor of China, Quin Shihuangdi, of terracotta warrior fame. Thanks, Bobby!

Bobby is also a member of the Dixie Wing of the Commemorative Air Force. They fly aircraft from WWII and Korean War era and participate in 10-12 air shows each summer. For more information on the group go to www.dixiewing.org.

Mr. Raymond Hargis told us that Ronnie Fults is critically ill in a Nashville hospital. Both live in Manchester, TN, and are former Palmer School principals, and served as Grundy County School Superintendents.

Rev. Cotton Ross, 85, preached Saturday night, January 31 at the Bryant's Cove Church in the remote and rugged area between Gruetli-Laager and Tracy City. The services, held monthly, are accessible only by 4-wheel drive vehicles. Roy Braden brings a generator for lights and the old fashioned "outhouses" are used for restrooms.

Tyler Brown of Coalmont was one of just 65 volunteers from across the state honored by Governor Phil Berdesen with a "Volunteer Stars Award" in Nashville recently. He's the grandson of former Palmer residents Herby and Bonnie Cook Caldwell.

Jack Johnson is now in rehab after some six weeks in Erlanger Hospital. He's the grandson of Lewis Braden and the late Peggy Nunley Braden.

We noticed that Wesley's Chapel Holiness Church had a nice new sign on Hwy. 108 in Gruetli-Laager. Pastor Delbert Layne is a son of Leonard and Troas Knowlan Layne and grandson of the late Fate Knowlan.

Rev. J. Darrell Turner was taken to the emergency room recently, but at last report was home and OK. His late grandfather, Henry Clay Turner, was one of the Palmer Big Mine crew featured in the latest Grundy County Historical Society Book Pictures of Our Past.

Happy 63rd anniversary to Ralph and Doris McBee Burnett. They were married on February 11, 1946. Ralph is a WWII veteran and retired carpenter. Doris is a daughter of the late Alf McBee and retired as a teacher. Their daughter Ann Nunley is a teacher at Palmer Elementary.

Jerry Cannon and Keith McBee attended the funeral of Jack Long's widow, Ruby Nunley Long. Keith was a pallbearer, and Jerry says he knew Ruby all his life. Ruby's brother-in-law Rocky Long of Crossville, TN, was also here.

Don't forget to visit our companion website www.grundycountyhistory.org for more information on our "neck of the woods". Our friend Ralph Thompson works tirelessly to preserve Grundy County History and we are all indebted to him. Thanks, Ralph!

Well, the old clock on the wall says it's time to say goodbye for now.

From the headquarters of "where the good people live" we wish you all a very enjoyable Valentine's Day and invite you to join us next time as we welcome the exciting month of March.

Please pray for our troops around the world and also our government leader in these uncertain times.

Memories of Christmas Past

By Mr. Billy Ray Nunley as told to David Patton

“David, you asked about Christmas in Palmer. I think Christmas- time as a child is still one of my fondest memories.

My parents bought me a 12-gauge shotgun when I was 12 years old. I kept it for several years and used it for squirrel hunting around the goat rocks area. I had graduated to a 12-gauge pump by that time and sold it to Vernon Lewis for a redbone hound dog. I sold the pup to Alf Crabtree and got a 12-gauge Remington automatic, which I still have.

Do you remember the smell of Christmas when you walked in the Tennessee Consolidated Coal Company store? All the fresh meat in the meat market, hay and feed I the back of the store, dry goods ‘clothing’ department, carbide in large cans for miners’ lamps, and toys and furniture upstairs. That’s where the night watchman (some will remember that Wayne Cannon was just a kid and stayed with Pappy at night) Leonard “Pappy” Von Rohr stayed.

Our parents always bought us clothes plus a large toy we asked for as kids. I had wagons and one year asked for a pedal car which I got. I rubbed my leg on the side of it getting in and out and got an infection on the back of my knee. Dad took me to Dr. O.H. Clements at the Palmer Clinic and held me down while Dr. Clements lanced the infection. I still have a scar left on my leg.

Do you remember the large candy counter the company store had? You got 5 pieces of candy for a penny. We would always go to Robert Morgan instead of Mr. Frank Shockley as Robert would always put an extra piece or two in the bag.

At home, we always had plenty of vegetables from the garden and a potato bin in the cellar under the house and onions hanging from the ceiling. Also down there Mom had rows of canned fruit and vegetables, including kraut, blackberries, huckleberries, apples and peaches. In late fall dad would buy a bushel of apples, wrap newspapers around them, then place them in black powder pellet boxes he brought home from the mines. We had a smoke house and he’d put the boxes there in a dark area until winter. Those apples were wonderful, so mellow.

Fresh meat was always something we had plenty of. Dad and Mr. Rose Boro Sanders were partners and worked in the Palmer Big Mine together for many years. They would fatten several calves and pigs then each would take a calf and two pigs for fall killing. We had a large meat box in the smokehouse and would smoke the hams with green hickory wood and cover the rest of the meat with rock salt in the meat box. They then sold the rest of the calves and pigs dressed out to Isham Patrick who was the butcher at the Company Store. He would put whole calves and pigs in the freezer then cut pieces as needed for customers. Mr. Rose Boro's son W.H. 'Buck' Sanders and I would get the skins from the cattle and the Company Store would give us \$1.75 for each hide. What a great childhood I had with my sisters in Palmer. As of 2008, I'm 75, Judy 73, Clara Ruth 77, and Allene 79.

David, I have had a great life. My wife Shirley and I will be married 55 years on June 25, 2009. We have three great children, Alan , 52, Cheryl, 48, and Jennifer, 38. We also have seven grandchildren, five girls and two boys. I thank God, our Lord and Savior, every day for the blessings he has given me and my family.

You mentioned Woodrow Cleek. He was a good baseball player. I played against him several times. If you see Gene Layne, say hello for me. He's the son of Frank Layne who was Joe Layne's brother. All of them worked and ran the Esso gas station in Laager for several years. My dad was a cousin to Gene's mother, Dixie Nunley Layne.

I don't remember Carl 'Cigar' Nolan, but his brothers Abb and Edward and their father Claude worked for my dad in th4e mines at one time.

I remember Louie 'Chief' Geary singing at the Palmer Methodist Church. Also Albert Nunley and his brother-in-law Joseph S. 'Joe' Geary and Uncle Joe's sons Johnny, Carl, and Alvin 'Oats'. My sisters Allene, Clara Ruth, and our cousin Carlene 'Tootsie' Cannon Smith also sang and Tootsie played the piano at church.

My mother was a cousin of Bailey 'Preacher' Brooks' wife, Ethel Cannon Brooks. Mom's father, Lavator Cannon, was her uncle.

David, may our Lord Jesus Christ bless you and your family, as he has surely blessed mine."

Billy Ray Grew up in Palmer during the 1930's and 40's as the only son of Graham and Sarah Cannon Nunley. Today, he lives in Monument, Colorado.

March 2009

Lewis Brothers Find Abandoned Baby

Imagine stepping outside in the wee hours of a cold February morning and hearing, of all things, the cry of a baby.

Ben and Clay Lewis live on Suck Creek Mountain which is known to just about everyone with Palmer or Grundy County ties. It's the location of Prentice Cooper State Forest and teeming with wildlife though just minutes from Chattanooga.

The Lewis Brothers were at a card game around 2:00 AM when Ben stepped outside sleepy and headed for home. That's when he heard the baby's cry from the nearby Bibleway Baptist Church.

When the brothers went to investigate, they found a 4-6 week old 8- pound baby on the church porch in 36 degree weather with a little onesie on, lying on top of two blankets with a pacifier and one sock on.

The Marion County sheriff's department was summoned, and the baby is in state custody and doing well after a hospital check-up. This happened February 15, and so far the person who abandoned the baby to the dangers of February weather and wild animals has not been found.

We thought some of you across the country might have seen this story in your local papers. The Lewis Brothers are the sons of former Palmer resident Jeff Lewis. Their grandparents, Howard and Oma Boyd Lewis, still live in Palmer.

25th Annual Grundy County Spelling Bee

The 25th annual Grundy County Spelling Bee was held February 12 at Coalmont Elementary School.

Stella Parris of North Elementary won the 2009 Bee and was followed by second place winner Ashton Scissom of Palmer Elementary, third place winner Kole Mann of Swiss Memorial Elementary, and fourth place winner Kierra King of North. All received the David Patton Spelling Award.

Ashton is the granddaughter of Connie Hargis Cannon and the late Wayne Cannon. Keon Meeks, granddaughter of Junebug and Carolyn Meeks, received the Louise Geary Layne Courtesy Award while Kirsten Jones, granddaughter of Larry and Gayle Crabtree, was awarded the Y.B. Ashby Teamwork Award. Both represented Palmer Elementary.

Mr. Patton founded the 3 awards to serve as an incentive for the Spelling Bee contestants. "These students represent the best and the brightest and I am honored to recognize and reward them for their hard work in this important academic endeavor, " he said.

Here is a [copy of the letter](#) David Patton received from the Grundy County Board of Education thanking him for his service.

Old Sayings and Figures of Speech in Grundy County, TN

1. "He's as tight as the bark on a tree." Or "He's so tight he'd skin a flea for the hide." You still hear these old sayings that describe a stingy person. Back in the Great Depression a miner with the reputation of being "tight" carried a \$50 bill in his billfold at the Palmer Big Mine. After a frantic search he never found the lost money, but year later a fellow miner got "saved" and confessed that he had found the money back then and returned it to the tight man.

2. "Money burns a hole in his pocket." This described a wasteful and financially irresponsible person and it could describe the United States as a whole in recent years. Every day we hear horror stories from the federal government right down to local potheads and everything in between. The money gets so hot that they just have to spend it immediately with no thought of paying bills of "saving for a rainy day". The financial monsoon season is here now though and many are being swept away in the ensuing floods.

3. "I'm as weak as water." This used to be said a lot to describe many things. "water gravy" was well known in the Great Depression when people couldn't make nutritious milk gravy. We had a 24-hour stomach virus recently, and it did make us as "weak as water".

4. "I don't have any wind." We haven't heard this in a long time but I'm sure most of you "oldsters" remember it well. It meant the person didn't have much breath and just a little exertion would make them "paint (pant) for breath" as they used to say. Most of it was caused by cigarettes, and many miners smoked so this combination caused much suffering and death.

5. "She can go fly a kite." This was said in frustration or anger and meant "kiss off" or "kiss my a—" in today's talk. Seldom hear the kite saying anymore.

6. "Give him an inch, and he'll take a mile." This used to be said a lot in Grundy County. Mothers often said it about a child as in "I let him go to the ballgame, but then he stayed out all night. Give him an inch and he'll take a mile." It was also said about adults who took advantage of someone that did them a favor.

7. "He was just Cadillacing down the road." This was someone driving by like they didn't have a care in the world and probably going fast at that. "Cadillacing" of course referred to the symbol of wealth and influence, the Cadillac car.

8. "In my day" or "In my day and time" or "In Roosevelt's day" 89-year-old Earl Rigsby grew up in the Great Depression and said "In Roosevelt's day" recently. He was referring to the great president Franklin D. Roosevelt who led the United States to victory during the Great Depression and World War II. Earl's a WWII veteran. Now, instead of these sayings, people refer to the past as "in the day or "old school".

9. "She's fitty-fied" This meant someone hard to please. Are women really more "fitty-fied" than men? Could be, could be!

10. "He's as common as an old shoe." This meant a down to earth person and so easy to get along with, never griping and complaining. Does this describe most all men in the United States? Could be, could be!

Palmer News

Has “spring sprung” where you live? Our beautiful mountain is back to life after a long winter sleep and ablaze with yellow forsythia, red quince, and multi-colored daffodils and jonquils or buttercups as we call them.

We are writing this on March 20 and the first day of spring has been sunny, chilly, and windy, but just enough to put you in a good mood and rejoicing that winter is past. March 1 did come in like a lion with howling winds and a dusting of snow, so we’ll be looking for the lamb on March 31.

Family and friends gathered at the Western Sizzlin’ in Dunlap March 7 to help to help Janice Layne Gulas celebrate her 63rd birthday. Mike Gifford and his sister Donna Gayle Basham have been lifelong friends and were among those present.

What’s for supper? Talk about good timing! On a cool day recently we stopped to visit Jerry Harrison and he just happened to be making a pot of soup. It was delicious and many who grew up in Burnt Orchard like Diana Henry Smith will remember that his mother Mrs. Willie Mae “Bill” Harrison was a good cook.

Our February rainfall was 3.7". The mountains of Grundy County can still be ice cold at times in March, and Rick Layne had 17 degrees on March 2 and the next morning Bonnie Payne had 12 degrees on Palmer Mountain. We heard the first frogs sing later than usual this year, Feb. 24 in Griffith Creek and March 2 in Gruetli-Laager. It seems insects always survive through, and we saw the first wasp in the window on March 7.

We sadly report that Dan Coffelt and Rex Magouirk are now patients in a long-term health care facility. Dan’s a World War II veteran.

Happy 17th anniversary to Bobby Lynn and Mary Cannon Stinnett who celebrated with dinner at the Cookie Jar Restaurant. They were married March 7, 1992, by Rev. Riley Anderson, Jr.

Joyce Hargis returned to Palmer United Methodist Church March 8 after almost a 2-month absence due to sickness. A “cottage prayer meeting” was held at her home during the ordeal by church members. Chris Grooms sang “Beulah Land” at the February 17 church service.

On a cool and sunny March day we took a walk over to Dock White Hollow and visited with Memories General Store owner Cody Cookston. Cody's a personable young man and the store is located in a very scenic part of Palmer. If you're coming through Palmer call him at 931 779-5580 for directions. We also enjoyed talking with Cody's Aunt Sherry Cookston Layman.

Ricky Ruehling, an employee of our local Ben Lomand Telephone Coop, spent several days recently in Kentucky to help crews there restore service after the terrible ice storm. "It looked like a bomb had gone off", he said, describing the devastation.

We enjoyed visiting with Mrs. Linda Borne Ruehling this week. She lost her husband Doug over the winter, and we extend our sympathy to the family. Linda was the Grundy County tax assessor for many years.

Howard Lewis visited Tom Creighton recently in Tracy City. Tom's in his 90's now, and I'm sure they enjoyed talking about old days in Palmer. Both are musicians and many probably don't know that Tom had been a prolific songwriter over the years and that Howard performs many of those songs. Most remember Tom as a legendary Grundy County car dealer.

The Palmer Cemetery Association had a chili supper this month to raise funds for summer mowing. Graves are free, but it takes money for mowing and upkeep. So, if you have family buried here, please send a donation to:

Palmer Cemetery Association
C/O Jeremy Robinson
39 Rock Avenue
Palmer, TN 37365

Former Palmer resident Juanita Merrell was honored February 23 with the "Betty Probasco Lifetime Achievement Award" presented by the greater Chattanooga Sports Hall of Fame.

She's a member of this hall of fame and the Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame. Juanita coached her Kirkman High School Volley Ball Team to four state championships and in the 1950's was an all-star basketball player at Grundy County High School. Her parents were the late Albert and Ladybug Nunley Merrell.

The snowbird returns:

Melvin Hampton of Jasper, TN, returned home this month after wintering in Florida. He visited his sister Wanda Meeks and had lunch at "Pa's Barbecue Restaurant" operated by Tommy and Viva Birdwell where fresh picked turnip greens were on the menu. He's the son of the late Rev. M.C. "Bud" Hampton.

Mary Ruth Rogers, widow of Burr Rogers, attended a baby shower recently for her granddaughter Jennifer in Griffith's Creek. Jennifer's the daughter of the later Ramona Rogers.

On sick call: Becky Guffey and Harold James have had pneumonia and Billy Carl Guffey has had treatment for a serious infection. Polly Ward Rogers, widow of Hade Rogers, Sr. has been hospitalized.

Carl Worley has been in the burn unit at Vanderbilt University Hospital in Nashville for a month or so after getting too close to a gas heater. Our friend Franklin "Frank" King has been a patient at Centennial in Nashville for almost a month receiving treatment for leukemia. Please pray and ask your church to pray for these poor men in such critical conditions.

The community was shocked at the sudden passing of Larry T. LeCroy. Larry was the primary care giver for his wife Donna Shadrick LeCroy who suffers from Huntington's Disease. We extend our sympathy to the family and ask your prayers for Donna.

Ricky Layne says he saw former Palmer resident Nick Creighton at the visitation for Larry, and many will remember Nick's twin brother Dick. Mrs. Shorty Sanders says she saw Johnnie Ruth Shadrick Trussell of Decherd, TN. She's a sister to Donna.

We ran into one of Dock White Hollow's most famous residents while shopping recently. Ezell Layman is a son of the late Homer and Ola White Layman.

Our friend Mrs. Frances Morrison Britton passed away last month, and we extend sincere sympathy to the family. We passed her house on Ducktown Circle while walking every week and sometimes stopped and visited with her and the family. She was such a nice person and will be missed.

Happy ? Birthday to Steve Garner who celebrated march 3. The “honorary mayor” of Chiggertown lists his age as “39”, but we’ll guess he’s 64-65. Steve’s always an interesting person to talk with.

This week while walking in Gruetli-Laager, we enjoyed talking with Leon Christian and Charlie Byers from the Grundy County Highway Dept. Our Grundy County Road Superintendent Dewayne “Turkey” Hargis and his crew do an outstanding job keeping our roads repaired and the right-of-ways mowed. Leon’s a son of the late E.J. Christian.

All of us here “where the good people live” have spring fever, and we hope this is on “bug” you catch. Let’s all walk “on the sunny side of the street” and enjoy this beautiful season.

As we all know, our nation remains in “critical condition” economically so pray for our leaders as they work to find solutions. And don’t forget our troops in Iraq, Afghanistan, and all points in between as they risk all to keep us safe and free.

Ezell Layman is shown in 1989 with his “chaw of tabaccer” at Jackie Henry’s Service Station. It was before daylight and he had stopped to talk with Hube Henry before going to work at Whitlow Brothers Sawmill.

Palmer and Related Deaths in 1993

Every once in a while someone will ask us, “Is so and so still living?”

Although this list is from 1993, we thought it might be helpful in answering such questions in the future.

Deaths in the Palmer town limits for 1993 included Wesley A. Fults, Leona Finch King, Willie Harold Watts, George Herman Privett, Henry Douglas “Doug” Flynn; who was employed by Tennessee Consolidated Coal Co. all his working life, Agnes “Ag” Morrison Partin Shadrick; widow of Alvin Partin and Clayton Shadrick; Robert T. “Junior” Summers, Jr., Doris Worthy Partin; wife of Bill Partin, Opal Rogers Cookston; wife of W.S. “Buck” Cookston, Esther Bone Magouirk; wife of Ellis Magouirk, Tommy Waymon Fults; son of Hubert Fults, and Louise Meeks Pocus; wife of Roy Pocus.

In nearby Tatesville-Barker's Cove we lost Edith Givens James; wife of Frank James, and John Ervin "Erv" Coffelt. On Palmer Mountain; Roxie Graham Layne, wife of Harley Layne died.

Gruetli-Laager deaths with Palmer connections were J.C. Sweeton, Charles Aler Tate, Carma Nell Wideman Sanders, Winnie Lockhart Ross; Mother of Rev. Cotton Ross, Gertrude Leona Ward Mitchell; widow of Oscar Ward and Emmett Mitchell, Mila Green Grimes; wife of Fred Grimes, Dorsey E. "Satch" Meeks; who worked at the Palmer Big Mine, Almedia Bone Kilgore Meeks; daughter of Will "Deacon" Bone, Violet Burnett Crutchfield, wheelchair-bound Grundy County Register of Deeds, and Glenn Hicks, son of former Palmer Police Chief Farrell Hicks.

Other deaths across the state and country with Palmer connections were Floyd Owen; Boss at the Palmer Big Mine, Amos Lee Nance, Charlie Cat Conry; son of Duncan Conry, Christine Martin Brooks, Florence Cleek Flynn, Myrtle Land Tate, Herbert Elmer "Red" Kilgore; son of Almedia Bone Kilgore Meeks and WWII POW, Pascal Sissom, Jr., professional wrestler Emmett Kelsey "Rocky" Cookston, Charles "Chuck" Knighton, Jr.; son of Modena Gifford Knighton, Cecil Levoy Garner; son of Herbert Garner, Esther Roberts Creighton, wife of Lactis "Curg" Creighton, Billy Gates "Bill" Harris, Herman David Morrison; brother of Claude Morrison, Mamie Smith Geary; wife of Johnny Geary, Tammy Lynn Shadrick Nunley; daughter of Joe and Patricia Johnson Shadrick, Albert "Abb" Griffith, Carl David Nunley and his sister Elizabeth Nunley Geary; wife of Robert Malcolm Geary, and Frank Hembree "Red" Nunley. We believe this Frank was the brother of Ladybug Nunley Merrell of Palmer and we know his son was a linebacker for the San Francisco '49ers.

Although these loved ones and friends left us 16 years ago, we know that they are still missed and extend to you our sincere sympathy.

Palmer and Related Deaths in 1994

Every once in a while someone will ask us, "Is so and so still living?"

Although this list is from 1994 we thought it might be helpful in answering such questions in the future.

Deaths for 1994 in the Palmer town limits included Thomas E. "Muskie" Overturf, Pearl Layne Morrison; widow of Lee "Fat" Morrison, Naomi Geary Pocus; widow of Joe Pocus, Opal Crabtree Shrum; widow of Howard "Blue" Shurm, Paul Logan "Pepper" Sanders, Christine Land Tate; daughter of Ruby Land Henry, Dennie J.

Magouirk, Richard Smith; brother of Rev. Hub Smith, and Osbin Wayne Shaddrick; son of Chester Shadrick.

Over in Dock White Hollow we lost Thelma Mae Hobbs Worley; widow of Raymond Worley. In nearby Batesville-Barker's Cove the passing of Hazel Margie Layne Layman; widow of "Abb" Layman, William Robert Pickett; a coal miner who lived to be almost a hundred and Lela Mae Kilgore Layne; wife of Ray Layne, is noted.

Gruetli-Laager deaths with Palmer connections were Billy Joe Shrum and his wife Martha Campbell Shrum, Jay Layne; son of Rev. J. Hugh Layne, and Louie Hascel Smartt.

Other deaths across the county, state and country with Palmer ties included Myrtle Brown Creighton; A Grundy County Herald correspondent for some 50 years, Bernice Smith White; wife of Roy White; Eddie White Layne; daughter of Charlie and Rachel White, Mose Shrum, brother of Howard "Blue" Shrum, Paul W. Summers; son of Robert Summers, Jr., Clata Hampton Frank; daughter of Rev. M.C. "Bud" Hampton, Francis Magouirk; who worked at the Palmer Big Mine, Anna Bell Stotts Tate; wife of Alfred Tate, Tommy Brown; son of Bill and Dovie Brown, Billy Holt Tate; son of Lorene Hold Akins, Tommy Golston; brother of Ralph Golston, Kenneth Ross; son of Bill and True Sitz Ross, Maudie Sehourne Brown; mother of Mrs. Raymond (Doris) Hargis, James David "Hammerhead" Mitchell; son of Pascal Mitchell, and Libby Hampbon Gray, sister of Rev. M.C. "Bud" Hampton.

Even though these loved ones and friends left us 15 years ago, we know that they are still missed and extend to you our sincere sympathy.

April 2009

Palmer and Related Deaths in 1996

Every once in a while someone will ask us, "Is so and so still living"? Although this list is from 1996, we thought it might be helpful in answering such questions in the future.

Deaths in the Palmer town limits included well-known World War II veterans Obed Marion “Soap” McNabb and Rufus Kilgore, Jr; Grace Smartt Crabtree Brown, widow of Will Crabtree and Clarence Brown, Sr.; Freeman D. “Doug” Nolan, son of Fate Knowlan; Kenneth D. James, son of Marvin Dee “Little Red” James, Ophelia Weaver Fisher, daughter of Andrew Weaver; and well known preacher Rev. Irvin Lee King.

Over in Barker’s Cove – Batesville, we lost a young mother, Jerri Dee Harrison Cannon, daughter of Jerry Harrison; and Irene Cooke, sister of Paul Cooke. While in Gruetli-Laager former Palmer residents James Edward Grimes, Alfred “junior” Morrison, Jr.; Mildred Byers Sissom, widow of Pascal Sissom, Sr., and 96-year-old Lois Brooks Henley, sister of Mrs. Olive “Ollie” Brooks McBee died.

Other deaths across the state and country with Palmer ties were Ella Naomi Parsons, daughter of Mrs. Tennie Will Parsons; Leila Mae Anderson Clements, widow of Dr. Oscar Howell Clements; Jessie Thompson Worley, mother of Allie Jean “Shorty” Sanders; Margaret Louise McGovern Dick, sister of Clarence McGovern, and their cousin James Alton McGovern; Fay James, daughter of Emmett James; Clyde Kilgore, brother of Rufus Kilgore, Jr.; Hilda Levan, sister of Robert and Jarvis Levan; Robert Malcolm Geary, brother of Naomi Geary Pocus; Johnnie Gifford Patterson Partin, wife of Pat Patterson and Bill Partin; Rev. Alfred S. Tate, brother of Woodrow Tate; Bobby Gene White, son of Grady White; Gladys Overturf Sissom, wife of Rev. Buford Sissom; Martha Dee Brown Tate, widow of Fred Tate; Odell Lewis Minton, daughter of Herbert Lewis; Louise Finch Arms, daughter of John and Carrie Partin Finch; Veola Goforth Heard, widow of Homer Heard; Peggy Elizabeth Perry, daughter of William “horsefly” Perry; Tony Alan Cannon, son of Freddie “Jew Babe” Cannon; Keiba “Mac” McCubbins Brown, wife of Harvey E. Brown; Celina Elizabeth “Bluedy” Crabtree Johnson, widow of Johnnie Johnson; Thelma Hale Brown died in Michigan and James Smith and his sister Frankie Smith Caldwell in Florida.

Paul Fred Parks, longtime teacher and principal at Grundy County High School, died in Monteagle. William C. “Bill” Wiggins who leased and operated the Phillips 66 Service Station owned by Tennessee Consolidated Coal Company in the late 1950’s and ‘60’s died in Tracy City. Although neither lived in Palmer, they were known by many here.

Even though these loved ones and friends left us 13 years ago, we know that they are still missed and extend to you our sincere sympathy.

Palmer and related deaths in 1995

Every once in a while someone will ask us, “Is so and so still living”? Although this list is from 1995, we thought it might be helpful in answering such questions.

Deaths in the Palmer town limits included Charlotte Long Cannon, wife of Jerry Cannon and Palmer town recorder for many years; Fred Tate and Lonnie A. “Tood” Morrison, retired from the Palmer Big Mine; Stella Andrews Wideman, wife of Howard Wideman; Ronald E. “Ronnie” Cox, brother of Martha Carroll Cox Hensley; James C. Seagroves, widower of Ethlene Garner Seagroves; Nora Layne Dyer, second wife of Tommy Dyer; Joyce Anderson Hammers, daughter of Alfred “Dogtick” Anderson; Buster Edward Caldwell, son of Chick Caldwell; and Lawrence Nunley, husband of Beatrice “Beet” James Nunley.

Over in Dock White Hollow we lost Marlie Magouirk Doss, daughter of Ambrose Magouirk; and in nearby Tatesville-Barker’s Cove, James F. White, son of Dock White; John A. Cordell, Charles Ray Layne, grandson of Rev. J. Hugh Layne; and Alfred Louis Stoker.

Gruetli-Laager death with Palmer connections were Andrew Layne, son of Rev. J. Hugh Layne; Ricky “Chigger” Morrison, Jr.; Carl Raymond “Todd” Cunningham, son of Webb Cunningham.

Other deaths across the state and country with Palmer ties were Ova Owen Long, mother of Ted and Sherwood Long; Billy G. “Bill” Nunley, Sr., Palmer businessman and son of E.L. “Edd” Nunley; W.F. “France” Braden, Louella Grimes Norris, widow of Elmer Norris; Clyde W. Grooms, Dorothy Arlene Taylor Davis, widow of Theodore “Spunk” Davis, Polly Webb Tate, sister-in-law of Woodrow Tate; Frank Scruggs, widower of Ophelia Holt Scruggs; Paul H. Worley, father of Allie Jean “Shorty” Sanders; Franklin Hershel Knowlan, son of Fate Knowlan; and Alton David Boyd, son of David Alonzo Boyd.

Even though these friends and loved ones left us 14 years ago, we know that they are still missed and extend to you our sincere sympathy.

Old sayings and figures of speech in Grundy County, TN

1. Don't plant your garden until the leaves on the oak tree are as big as a squirrel's ear. - One of the biggest mistakes by gardeners is planting before the weather gets warm enough. "The late Freddie "Jew Babe" Cannon always had a good garden and he told me this," Jerry Cannon said. Thousands of tomato plants have been killed by frost over the years in Grundy County.
2. Good natured - This described a person with a friendly and pleasant personality. Such people were also said to have "a good turn".
3. It don't faze me. – This meant you weren't upset or distracted by a situation.
4. He just wants to peck around – Have you ever noticed how chickens dart here and there constantly pecking? A person who "pecked around" wasn't a serious worker and had a variety of jobs that didn't require a lot of hard work.
5. He's not worth the powder it would take to blow him away. – This meant the powder in a gun shell to shoot him. Often this was used to describe drunks, thieves, or someone who was lazy.
6. I need to have a tiel-unt put in – This was a culvert or tile under a road or ditch to drain rainwater. Many people in Grundy County still say "tile-unt" instead of tile or culvert.
7. Hand me my jumper. – We hadn't heard about a jumper in years and had completely forgotten about it. Do any of you young whippersnappers have any idea what we're talking about? Earl Rigsby, 89-year-old World War II veteran, mentioned a jumper recently. It was a thin unlined jacket worn in the 1930's – 1950's.
8. It's just a hop, skip and jump – We seldom hear this anymore. It described something located nearby.
9. That's a bunch of baloney. – This hillbilly staple used to be cheap but many times now it's more expensive than ham or other finer meats. People would say "a bunch of baloney" when they heard something that sounded like a lie or exaggeration or when they thought someone was trying to pull a trick on them.

10. We're on speaking terms – We heard this the other day, but seldom do any more. It most often described a situation where you had a conflict with a friend or close acquaintance, had quit speaking, but reconciled just enough to speak to each other although you weren't friends or close anymore.

May 2009

Palmer and Related Deaths in 1997

Every once in a while someone will ask us, "Is so and so still living?"

Although this list is from 1997, we thought it might be helpful in answering such questions in the future.

Deaths for 1997 in the Palmer town limits included Hubert Hammers and his wife Rosa Nell Scruggs Hammers, Jessie Lowe Turner Campbell and her daughter Rhonda J. Campbell, William H. "Jip" Crabtree, Jr., Cleo Sanders Layne, widow of Pat Layne; Jewell V. Meeks, longtime cook at Palmer School; Aaron Huling Johnson, son of Huling Johnson; Clara Sue Head Cox, wife of James "Hippy" Cox; Bedford R. Glisson, Nancy Inez Oliver, Geraldine Layne Rogers, wife of "Little Hade" Rogers; Billy Ray Phillips, Elsie Kathleen Nunley Brooks, widow of "Flop" Brooks; Rosa V. Schoenmann James, widow of Fred James; and William "Wet Duck" Dishroon, POW held by the Germans in World War II.

Earl Franklin Creighton and Gladys Davis Henry were in nursing homes and Eddie Nieves died in Tatesville.

Other deaths across the county, the state and the nation with Palmer connections were Matthew Coffelt, Rance Cannon, Buford Campbell, Bernice "Bones" Brewer, Laden C. James, Bessie Lou Givens, Nancy Dee Shrum Skeen, sister of James and John Shrum; David R. "Dick" Stinnett, Sallie Rust Knox, Margie Fultz Layne, a member of Palmer School's first graduating class of 1928; Martha Cannon Henley, Frances Naomi Merrell Wells, Mildred Weaver Johnson, Horace E. "Gid" Knight; Otsie McGovern Teets, Clarence Stockwell, Irene Layne McBee, Clarine Morrison, wife of Claude Morrison; Cora Patton James and her daughter Edna Parthenia "Parry" James, John E. "Johnny" Keener, Ottis L. Green, Errol Flynn, Gilbert L. Layne, Grace Nunley Highfield, daughter of Lawrence and Beet Nunley; Rachel Rollings Geary, longtime teacher at Palmer School; Louie D. Berry, longtime principal at Palmer School; James E. "Jimmy" Carpenter, Sr.; Virginia Alberta

Smith Griffith, Charles W. Boggs, Robert Doyle Moneyheffer, Hollis Durand Meeks, Vivian Lee Byers Anderson, widow of "Dog Tick" Anderson; Nadine Laymon Scott, daughter of Homer Laymon and Nona Sitz Smith, daughter of Frank Sitz.

Many from the Palmer area know former judge and Grundy County Sheriff Elston Clay of Pelham. He passed away in 1997.

Even though these loved ones and friends left us 12 years ago, we know that they are still missed and extend to you our sincere sympathy.

Palmer and Related Deaths in 1998

Deaths in the Palmer town limits form 1998 included Ella rose Flynn Cleek, wife of Chet Cleek; Virginia Triplett, mother of postmaster Darlene Brooks; Howard W. Henry, Juanita "Weedy" Patrick Bishop, and Lillie Lee Ross Cleek, widow of Hearl Cleek.

Hubert "Hube" Henry, Mattie "Matt" Anderson Smith, and Mattie White Mitchell, a member of Palmer School's first graduating class of 1928, were all in nursing homes.

Other deaths across the county, state and nation with Palmer connections were Lizzie shrum Cleek, Mollie Coffelt Nunley, Jodi "Josie: Burnett Dishroon, Buford E. Anthony, Mava Pittman Privett, James Noah "Jimmy" McBee, Tillman Bone, Ruby Nolan Jenkins, Katherine Myers Meeks, Bobby Gene Brown, Mary Elizabeth Hobbs Terry, Ann

Caldwell Norton, Kenneth Sissom, Nelmon Savage, Nina Gail Sanders Dycus, Lorene Tate Sissom, widow of Clyde Sissom; Brenda Fults Britton, Danny L. Boggs, brother of Charles W. Boggs; John W. Nunley, Anna Cleo Green Kilgore, Melvin Meeks, Jr., Dorothy "Dot" Creighton Davis, Lewis B. King, Kenneth H. Cooksont, James Watson Layne, Robert "Bobby" or as most people knew him by "Shakey" Dyer, Robert L. "Bob" Crouch, Palmer Elementary School Teacher in the 1930's and Grundy County High School teacher in the early 1940's.

We would also like to note the death of Floyd Campbell of Coalmont who drove a school bus in Palmer for years, former Grundy County sheriff Billy Gene Reid, Tracy City attorney Charles Kildgore, Robert W. Baggenstoss of Dutch Maid Bakery, Grundy County High School Coack in the 1960's Oscar Hollie Brown, GCHS teacher Violette Wakeland from the 1960's also, and Dr. Robert Mabe of

Chattanooga. These individuals never lived in Palmer, but were known to many residents here.

Even though these loved ones and friends left us 11 years ago, we know that they are still missed and extend to you our sincere sympathy.

Then and Now

The big satellite, no longer in use, still stands in Wanda Hampton Meeks' back yard on Tatesville Road. Several people in Palmer had them before cable TV came through in the summer of 1984.

Now, with the constant change in technology to make everything smaller, the satellites of today are just a fraction of the size of the first ones.

The little satellite and the buildings are on Palmer Mountain where the state fire tower was located. Behind it is an old "outhouse" and what looks like a tool shed on the right. Note both are painted green.

A home for the fire tower ranger and his family was also provided and when Isham Hobbs was the fire tower lookout in the 1950's and 60's. We believe that state painted all the fire tower buildings green in keeping with the forestry mission.

Today, all the fire towers in Grundy County are closed. We believe Kenny Smartt was the last Palmer fire tower lookout in the 1990's.

Church Sign

Message at Westside Baptist Church May 2009.

Old sayings and figures of speech in Grundy County, TN

I've got to go to Chattanooga. We heard this the other day for the first time in years. It used to be said a lot and was pronounced "noogie" instead of "nooga". Yankees and other immigrants to the area used to say "Chat – nooga".

He's selling out. Now this mostly means betrayal as in politics, but years ago it meant selling your home and moving away.

I'm pulling in my horns. We heard a poor old man say this recently explaining that at his age and lack of support of his pet project, he was withdrawing. In our old age, we must all accept the fact that we'll sometimes have to "pull in our horns" and not expect to do what we could as young people.

Even Jesus got angry. This used to be said sometimes when a church person "flew off the handle" and got angry or upset over something. Almost everyone gets "fed up" with things in life and the person meant that they weren't perfect and that even Jesus got angry as in the temple and the money changers.

He got stobbed. We hadn't heard this in so many years that we'd forgotten it, but it was said a lot instead of "stabbed". When a woman said it recently it was such a shock that we almost felt like we'd been "stobbed".

She said she was all right or he made it right or he said everything was all right between him and the Lord. Years ago a preacher or other Christian would ask a person on their deathbed if they "were ready to go". Just the other day a person said a man who died recently told someone that he was "all right", meaning that he had repented of his sins and was "ready to go".

He hogged it out. We'd never heard this until recently. Of course a hog is associated with greed and a man described a coalmine operator this way meaning he wanted to make a fast buck and left a lot of coal in the mine.

Wait 'til I get my clothes on. Years ago you seldom heard anyone say "Wait 'til I get dressed." A lot of people in these parts still say "Wait 'til I get my clothes on."

Palmer News May 2009

Is it a rainy May where you live? Palmer looks like a dark green jungle as all types of vegetation explode with color caused by the heavy rains.

Happy 90th birthday to Hazel Roberts Hornbuckle and Rev. James Roberts who both hit the milestone this month.

Hazel was 90 on Mother's Day and was joined by out-of-state family members and locals at Palmer United Methodist church services. She's the widow of Charlie Hornbuckle.

James celebrated his big day with family at a fish fry. He's a member of the "night shift" crew at the Palmer Big Mine who are featured in the latest Grundy County Historical Society book Pictures of Our Past.

Suzette Nunley, daughter of the late Glenn and Boots Finch Nunley, is staying with her great aunt Ethel Mae Cantrell who is 95 now. Suzette has been living in Florida for many years.

Palmer Elementary joined other county schools May 15 for their annual "end of school year" visit to the Lake Winnie Amusement Park in Chattanooga. It's always a fun-filled day of rides and food for kids and adults alike.

What's for supper? How about kraut and weenies, stewed potatoes with chunks of pork, pinto beans, onions, tomatoes, cornbread and biscuits.

Old people used to talk about "topping off with something sweet". We "topped off" with a homemade coconut pie. We enjoyed this good supper at the home of Bonnie Payne and son Charles up on Palmer Mountain while out picking up cans.

Bonnie's son, Roy Payne of Tracy City, is having health problems and faces surgery this summer. He's been disabled since a coal mining accident in 1981, so remember Roy in your prayers. Many of you will remember his father, the late James E. "Doodle" Payne.

Jerry Cannon is recovering from a bout of inner-ear trouble or "vertigo" as they call it now. Wasn't that the title of an Alfred Hitchcock movie? We visited with Carl Worley May 8. He's home after a two-month hospital stay after suffering horrible burns, but is making a good recovery especially for a 75 year old.

Here due to the death of Jarvis L. Levan were his brother Kenneth of Ohio and sister Genora of Florida.

"I hadn't seen Kenneth since the 1950's", Jerry Cannon said. "He knew me, but I didn't know him. I noticed he still combs his hair the same way he did back then."

Anita Finch Crabtree hadn't seen Genora in a long time, but said, "Genora still looks good. We went to school together."

Helen Ackerman Arbuckle and Ed Sweeton came out from Tracy City. Ed and Jarvis grew up together on Burnt Orchard Hill in Palmer and have remained lifelong friends.

“My sister Earlene and Genora went to school together”, Helen said. “Genora has a beautiful voice. When her twin sister Geneva died, she sang at the funeral, and I’d say that there wasn’t a dry eye in the house.”

We didn’t know Jarvis had any health problems and were shocked and saddened to hear of his passing. He was very helpful on our Palmer history research, and we extend our sincere sympathy to his family.

We also extend our sympathy to the family of Franklin Delano King. “Frank” as most called him, was a good friend and a U.S. Navy veteran. Keith McBee read “Taps” at the graveside military funeral. Afterwards, a big crowd attended a memorial service at Collins Church of Christ where childhood friend Howell Gilbert Clements spoke. He’s a son of the late Dr. Oscar Howell Clements who was the Palmer town doctor in the 1930’s and ‘40’s.

Former Palmer residents retuning due to the death of Janice Layne Gulas were Jackie Scruggs and his sister Sandra along with their brother Joe and his wife Joyce Grooms Scruggs. Also here were Janice Overturf, Jerry and Bobby Lockhart, Donna McCullough, Tony and Lana Roberts Summers. Donna Gayle Gifford Basham came out from Tracy City and says she enjoyed talking with Tom Burnette who still lives here. Many will remember Tom’s twin brother, Dick, who has lived in Florida for years.

Janice lived in Chattanooga and attending the funeral there were former residents Henrietta Nunley, Martin and Rita Crabtree Smith, Arthur Huling, Phyllis Tate, Drema Roberts and Faye Summers Smith.

Janice had been sick for years and we extend our sympathy to her family in their loss.

Jerry Harrison is home after major surgery at Erlanger Hospital and we wish him a speedy recovery.

My little friend Vanessa Stinnett was attacked recently, by, of all things, a rooster, while visiting a first-grade classmate. She wasn't hurt, but was scared to death. We've heard old people talk about things like this happening years ago.

We sadly report that Thelma Bone Nolan is in a nursing home. She's the widow of Alfred "Buddy" Nolan and is 82 now.

Harold and Linda Morrison Barnes of Oregon were here to attend a reunion for the 1959 class of Grundy County High School. She's the daughter of the late Fred "Humpy" Morrison. Locals present were Leon and Pansy Smartt Christian of Gruetli-Laager

Our April rainfall was 6.0". In 1999 we had 5.5".

Harold James attended Mother's Day services at Palmer Free Will Baptist Church with his wife Martha and daughter Lynn.

Mrs. Howard (Oma) Lewis was honored as the oldest mother at First Baptist church on Mother's Day.

Palmer Church of God had about 150 present, and mothers receiving flowers were Mrs. Eddie (Rita) Crabtree, Mrs. Stanley (Teresa) Myers, Mrs. Marty (Wilma) Layne, and the oldest member, Mrs. Myrtle Hicks.

Palmer United Methodist had 7 present with all the ladies receiving a beautiful red rose.

Mrs. Allie Jean "Shorty" Sanders, widow of Wham Sanders, attended a St. Jude banquet May 5 in Chattanooga with her son Danny. He and his wife Betty traveled to Virginia Beach, VA, recently after the birth of their first grandchild.

We're coming to you on May 17 and it's "Blackberry Winter" in Palmer. The berries should be plentiful this year with all the rain.

Well, that's the latest from "where the good people live." We hope you enjoy the Memorial Day weekend, and please remember to honor those who gave their lives so that we can continue to enjoy the everyday freedoms we often take for granted. Good-bye for now.

June 2009

Palmer News

It's June, the month of good hot weather, the: blooming month: as we call it. The flowers and vegetable gardens all burst into bloom and give us beautiful colors and some mighty good eating this time of year.

Happy 96th birthday to our good friend Crandel McNabb of Dunlap, TN. Crandel and his wife, the former Ethleen Sitz, both grew up in Palmer and we wish them a very happy July 4th as the great holiday draws near.

The annual Creighton reunion drew a total of 39 at the Coalmont Community Center. Among those present were Wanda Hampton Meeks and Patsy Creighton Higgins of Palmer; Tom Creighton, wife Margaret, and son Bruce of Tracy City; Nick Creighton of Altamont; and Opal Hobbs James, daughter Linda and son Glenn of Nashville. We forgot to mention Ann Creighton of Palmer and her sister Joyce Conry of Chattanooga. Opal James at 95 and Tom Creighton , 92, were the oldest attendees.

Eddie Crabtree, son of the late Alf Crabtree, has been suffering terribly from kidney stones, and we hope he gets better very soon.

Our May rainfall in Palmer was 12 ¼". In May 1999 we had 5.8".

Tom Burnette, U.S. Army veteran who served in Vietnam, made his usual patriotic talk during Memorial Day weekend services at Palmer First Baptist Church where he serves as a deacon. He and his wife Frieda walk a lot, and he has lost 40 pounds.

It was good to talk with Clifford "Buck" Brewer recently. He had a stroke in recent years, but still mows and stays as active as possible.

Members and friends of Palmer United Methodist enjoyed a fish fry and singing on the church lawn Memorial Day weekend.

It was a pleasure to meet Mr. Sean Lewis recently. He moved here from Cleveland, OH, and has just completed his second year at the eighth-grade teacher at Palmer Elementary. He's a Desert Storm veteran and married to Leon "Gabby" Tate's granddaughter.

Brittney Green has just graduated from nursing school and as an R.N. She's a granddaughter of Jerry and Judy Harrison and Charles Green and the late Juanita Campbell Green. Way to go, Brittney. She's a very pretty and hard-working young woman.

Novella Shadrick Patton of Chattanooga was a resident of a nursing home at last report after undergoing a heart stent procedure. She's the widow of Carl Patton and is 92 years old now. Many of you know her brother Mike Shadrick of Palmer.

Carl Wayne Sissom of Georgia attended the recent 1959 class reunion of students from Grundy County High School. He's retired from the U.S. Navy and lives in Georgia. His brother Richie also lives in the peach state and is on the sick list. They're the sons of the late Clyde and Lorene Tate Sissom.

Palmer Elementary School's graduation was May 20 and in keeping with the date 20 eighth graders hit the auditorium stage to receive their diplomas.

They were Austyn Cooper, Tashina Haddock, Alexis Hammers, Keechia Jones, Shana King, Summer Knight, Adam Lawrence, Ethan Meeks, Dee Jay Nolan, Whitney Northcutt, Dominique Rayne Nunley, Miranda Partin, Stefan Payne, Kristen Rankin, Trevor Theeal, Dakota Sanders, Ashton Scissom, Keith Lee Stewart.

Ashton Scissom, granddaughter of the late Wayne Cannon was the valedictorian, and Keechia, granddaughter of 1962 Palmer graduate Joyce Worley Morrison, was the salutatorian. Best All Round Boy was Austyn Cooper, grandson of the David "Bologna" Crabtree, and best all-around girl was Miranda Partin. Ashton Scissom and Ethan Meeks had perfect attendance.

Here's an interesting piece of Palmer School history. Brittany, Sara, Rebecca, Jared and Ethan Meeks all graduated from Palmer Elementary with perfect attendance in K-8. That is truly an amazing feat and a first for our school, we're sure.

The five are children of Dewayne and Pam Henry Meeks. Pam's a long time bookkeeper at the school and we asked her if she didn't have another beside Ethan to graduate with perfect attendance. "All Five", mother Meeks said with a beaming smile that could light up Neyland Stadium. If you want to see pure joy, talk to a mother who is proud of her children in their school work. Way to go, Pam! You've done a wonderful job with your children, and we're all proud of you. As the late

Jackie Kennedy Onassis said, “If you fail with your children, nothing else really matters.”

Palmer students graduating in the 2009 class at Grundy County High School included twin sisters Jacquelyn and Alexandra Cantu, granddaughters of Jack Sissom. Jacquelyn was a co-salutatorian and Alexandra was an honors scholar. Both girls received college scholarships.

Rasha Cannon, granddaughter of Jerry Cannon and Jerry Harrison, also graduated as did Chelsea Morrison. Chelsea was an honors scholar and is the granddaughter of the late Lindley Long.

As you can see, it has been hectic here “where the good people live”, but we’re proud of our students and wish them all the best of life in the years ahead.

We hope the “fish are jumpin’ and the cotton is high” where you live. Happy July 4th and let’s make a date to visit about this time again next month.

Old sayings and figures of speech in Grundy County TN

1. Bless your heart. You seldom hear this any more. It was said by women as an expression to someone sick or having other problems. They also said this to someone who did something nice for them.
2. If I’m not badly mistaken. This was said by someone confident of what they were saying but didn’t want to be perceived as a “know it all”.
3. He’s drunk sick. Back years ago when we had a lot of drinking in Grundy County this was said instead of a “hangover”.
4. That salt will dry up your blood. We heard this recently for the first time in years. An elderly man said this to his wife as she was sprinkling salt on a slice of watermelon.
5. I bent my earl wire. I bet all of you 50 or over know what an “earl” wire is. People called it “earl” instead of “aerial” wire and, of course, it was the aerial wire on a car for the radio. Remember how those old car radios would pop with static and sometimes go completely out when the car went under high- powered electric lines?

6. He's weak minded. This was someone who wasn't insane, but not completely "all there" as they also used to say.
7. He's in the right or he's in the wrong - People used to have a keen sense of fairness and although they might not hold the same viewpoint, they would concede that someone was right or wrong. Instead of "He's right" or "He's wrong" they'd say, "He's in the right." Or "He's in the wrong."
8. He's a rough customer. – This wasn't a customer in a store, but a person who had a bad name in the community such as a thief or drunk.
9. He needs to stand on his own two feet. This was a person who got a good job or position because of his family or political connections and "standing on his own two feet" meant he needed to succeed on his own merits.
10. She's a big cut-up. This was a person who liked to laugh and joke and maybe even pull tricks on others.

Palmer Students Make 8th Grade Trip to Washington, DC

Oldest and youngest- Mary Cannon Stinnett, 74, and grand daughter Vanessa, 7, rest in front of the White House. This photo was taken May 29, 2009, which was Vanessa's 7th birthday. President Kennedy would have been 92 years old that same day, and Vanessa visited his grave at Arlington. There was no 8th grade trip for the class of 1949, but 60 years later, Mother Stinnett finally got to go on a Palmer School Eighth Grade Trip with the class of 2009.

Other photos submitted are:

Capitol building

Washington Monument

Tomb of Unknown Solider

Eight Graders in front of White House

Arlington Cemetery

Palmer School's Eighth Grade Trip

D.C. Excursion Rivals 1974's Famous "Disney World" Tour

By David Patton

"It was wonderful and our kids were so well behaved." That's how longtime Palmer Elementary bookkeeper Pam Henry Meeks described the school's 2009 eighth grade trip to Washington D.C., and the sentiment was echoed by everyone we talked with about this once-in-a-lifetime experience.

The adventure began at 7:00 PM on May 26 as a group of 48 adults and children met at the school and boarded a tour bus. Staff members included Principal Sadie Smartt, eighth grade teacher Seann Lewis, third grade teacher Alisa Boyd, and bookkeeper Pam Meeks.

Eighth graders were Austyn Cooper, Alexis Hammers, Keechia Jones, Kirsten Jones, Jimmy King, Jr., Shana King, Sumer Knight, Adam Lawrence, Ethan Meeks, Whitney Northcutt, Dominique Nunley, Miranda Partin, Stefan Payne, Kristen Rankin, Trevor Rheal, Dakota Sanders, and Keith Stewart. After an all-night bus ride, the group had breakfast at Cracker Barrel followed by a visit to Mount Vernon.

Mrs. Smartt, principal since 1996 and longest serving in school history, had the idea to go to Washington. She and other Grundy Countians had traveled there by bus in January 1993 to witness the inauguration of President Bill Clinton.

"We raised enough money for the eighth graders to go, but if not for the others on trip who paid, we wouldn't have been able to go," she said. "I'm a history buff and some of the kids and I were talking about favorite sites, but it was all great. We got to see the original Magna Carta at the Smithsonian and the Daniel's Story part of the Holocaust Museum. We even saw a presidential motorcade and Ford's Theater was an interesting place."

Few know that the town of Palmer has a connection to Ford's Theater. When we began our history research on the town some quarter-century ago, we wanted to search for the Palmer family. After finally locating his descendants, we found that Clarence William Palmer, for whom the town is named, was at Ford's Theater the night that Lincoln was assassinated by John Wilkes Booth. See the big Palmer family plaque in the Grundy County Miners' Museum and Heritage Center for more information on Mr. Palmer.

Mr. Lewis, whose first year as the school's eighth grade teacher was capped off by this amazing trip, recalled it with a sense of awe in his voice. "Our first stop, Mount Vernon, really impressed me by the way the house and grounds were kept up," he said. "I'm a Desert Storm veteran and my dad served in Thailand during the Vietnam era, so the war memorials were of special interest. I had wanted to get rub offs of all the Grundy County names on the Vietnam wall, but it came a heavy rain and I was only able to get one." "We saw bullet holes in the House of Representatives and our tour guide said a woman came into the building in the early 1860's and shot at several of the Congressmen. Our students and adults did Palmer and Grundy County proud by their good behavior. We went on a dinner cruise down the Potomac the last night and our well-behaved group really stood out when compared to some of the others on the boat. As the year goes by this trip will become more and more meaningful to these young students as they reflect on it."

Mrs. Meeks, staff member since the early 1990's was still excited about the journey weeks after returning home. "It was a year-long effort of fundraising, but it was worth it," she said. We had 3 doughnut sales, a couple of dinners, bingo, fun days and business donations. We had to have a large group in order to get an affordable rate from the tour company. A maximum of 50 could go, and we ended up with 48. My favorite places were Arlington National Cemetery and the Lincoln Memorial. It's much bigger that it looks on television. I had promised our lunchroom manager Kim Shadrick Rollins that I would get a rub-off of Marvin Phillip's name on the Vietnam Wall, but it came a downpour, and we all got wet. He was her uncle and my second cousin. I managed to get just one name, George Edward Henry, class of 1962. The name of another Palmer graduate, Marshal Brown, is also on the wall. My great uncle, Elmer "Doe" Davis, served in World War II, and that memorial is really huge."

"I was really worried about all the walking, but my son Ethan was an eighth grader, and I wanted to make the trip with him. My daughter Sara Nolan also went. Someday I'd like to go back to Washington with my family, take my time, and go through everything. The tour guides said October and November were the best time to see Mount Vernon."

Ethan Meeks, 13, class of 2009, says Arlington was his favorite place. "I don't know why he didn't tell you about Ford's Theater," his mother, Pam, said. "He's really interested in Lincoln and after we toured Ford's Theater, we went across the street to Mrs. Patterson's Boarding House where the President died. Some of the kids

instead wanted to go down the street and get t-shirts, but Ethan told them he could get t-shirts any day, but he wanted to see where Lincoln died.”

Ethan is an honors student and had perfect K-8 attendance at Palmer Elementary. He was the last of Mother Meeks’ five children to graduate and for a fascinating piece of school history about this family check out the June 2009 “Palmer News” on this website.

Larry Crabtree, class of 1962, and wife Gayle accompanied their granddaughter Kirsten Jones to Washington. “The tour guides really explained all the sites well and made it much more meaningful than if you had just went on your own,” he said. “When we went to Ford’s Theater I remembered that Marvin Dee “Little Red” James of Palmer always said he was kin to John Wilkes Booth. I also liked Arlington Cemetery and the Changing of the Guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. They have to be a certain weight and height and marched so straight and precise that they looked like sticks. At the Vietnam Wall it came a gully-washer and a man selling umbrellas for \$5 was handing them out as fast as he could. All of us wish we could have spent more time there because we knew the names like George Edward Henry who went to Palmer School. We were last there in 1995 and you could drive up close to the buildings, but 9-11 changed everything. Now, you have to park a good distance away and do a lot of walking. Traffic barricades are everywhere and we saw guards with rifles on the White House roof. I thought to myself, ‘We’re prisoners in our own country.’”

All of that security was for a good reason. Less than two weeks after the group returned to Palmer, a gunman at the Holocaust Museum murdered a guard in cold blood. They say that “whatever will be, will be” and surely it was fate that placed Mary Cannon Stinnett, oldest, 74, and her daughter (adopted great granddaughter) Vanessa, youngest, 7, aboard that tour bus to Washington. They were the last two joining the group just 48 hours or so before departure.

“I finally got to go on my eighth grade trip,” said Mrs. Stinnett, class of 1949. “Back 60 years ago there was no eighth grade trip. It was a different world than today. We barely had school clothes. There were not buses for elementary school, and I walked up the railroad tracks every day and went through where the Palmer Veterans’ Memorial Park is today to school. My family didn’t even have a car.”

“The tour’s first stop was at Mount Vernon and Mrs. Stinnett was very impressed. “It was beautiful with the rocking chairs on the front porch looking out over the

Potomac. President Washington must have had an engineering mind they way the house and grounds were laid out so meticulously.”

“We had gallery tickets and toured the Capitol Building. I was in Washington years ago and the security wasn’t that tight there, but it sure is now. I think everyone found Ford’s Theater and Mrs. Patterson’s Boarding House interesting places and the Lincoln Memorial with him gazing out at the visitors was just awesome. My late husband J.R. Lovell and my current husband Bobby Lynn Stinnett both served in the military, and if you want to make me mad just show disrespect to the flag or a veteran. My late father, Scott Cannon, fought on the front lines in the U.S. Army in World War I. Armistice Day (now called Veterans’ Day) that ended World War I was his favorite day of the year for the remainder of his life. Even on his death bed, he would deliriously call out the name of his comrades in battle.”

“So, of course, Arlington and all the War Memorials were very special places to me. Vanessa had her 7th birthday on May 29, the very day we visited Arlington. We visited the grave of President Kennedy with the eternal flame and the tour guides told us to be quiet around the site and that some family members might be visiting the grave that day since it would have been his 92nd birthday. We did see where flowers had been left. Just down a path is the grave of his brother Robert F. Kennedy. It’s marked with just a simple white cross and they said that was what he had requested.”

“As we were leaving Arlington, we got the experience of a lifetime. A military funeral was approaching with its low cadence of muffled drums and a horse drawn caisson bearing a coffin. Vanessa asked if anyone was in the coffin.”

“The World War II Memorial was pretty, and we got to visit the Vietnam Wall. One of the names there is Marshal Brown. He was married to my cousin Kathleen Barnes.”

The Palmer adults and students got a live civics lesson that made clear what freedom of speech and our Bill of Rights is all about.

“They were having an anti-abortion demonstration in front of the White House and yelling (Obama, quit killing babies.) That bothered Vanessa. We also got to see the presidential helicopter land there. Three approach and no one knows which has the president aboard. At the last minute that one lands and the other two go on.

All of this must have been overwhelming for little Vanessa. We wonder how much the honors student an upcoming second grader will remember in the years ahead.

After a Saturday night dinner and dance cruise on the Potomac, the group boarded the bus early Sunday morning on May 31 and headed for the green hills of Tennessee. After the excitement of Washington, it must have seemed like another world when they arrived back in Palmer around 8 PM. But as Dorothy said in the Wizard of Oz, "There's no place like home."

We don't know of any elementary school in Grundy County ever taking an eighth grade trip to Washington, so these students saw a lot of history and made some of their own. A special thanks to Pam Meeks, the "Dynamo" of Palmer School, for her assistance on this story.

See "Disney World-Here We Come, Palmer School's eighth grade trip of 1974" on this website for another saga of a long and unusual journey that we'll take you along on.

July 2009

Pretty Baby

This new member of our world is Andrew Reeves Scheel of Indiana, who was born on January 29, 2009. Known as "Drew" he's the great nephew of our website visitor Beverly Sissom Riley of Elkhart, IN. His great grandparents were the late Buford and Gladys Overturf Sissom who lived in Palmer before moving to Indiana in the early 1950's. Who knows? A big healthy lad like Drew may one day be playing football for Notre Dame or Purdue. Best wishes, Drew.

Old Sayings and Figures of Speech in Grundy County, TN

"The 4th"- As the great holiday approached, years ago, you would hear people start talking about plans for the "4th". They didn't have to say "the 4th of July", you knew what they meant. It was the highlight of the summer.

"Gallon of Cream" – Years ago ice cream was the big treat on the 4th because for many it was the only time of the year they got it. Back in the 1940's & '50's you didn't have the big roomy refrigerators of today, and a number of people didn't have one at all. Here in Palmer Harvey Brown would take orders for "cream" several days before, then early in the morning on the "4th" he'd go to Chattanooga and pick

it up. It came in round drum-like containers kept frozen with “hot ice” or some said “dry ice”. I believe the containers were about two-gallon size, and since many had a houseful of kids, they’d order a lot and eat ice cream all day.

“He got Houdinied”- Harry Houdini was the most famous magician of the 20th century and if someone in the community got tricked or crooked about something, they’d say he got “Houdinied”.

“They had a knock-down, drag-out fight.” – You heard this said most often about a man and wife who fussed and fought all the time. They didn’t literally knock-down and drag-out, it was mostly verbal abuse. The term probably originated in the old movie western and their saloon fights.

“He had a piece in the paper.” - We heard this the other day. It used to be said a lot and described a letter to the editor or an article in the Grundy County Herald.

“The guilty dog always barks.” – One person would ask another about something they had said or done, and if that person became defensive or angry, people would say he probably did it because the “guilty dog always barks.”

“He got off on the wrong foot.” – This meant got off to a bad beginning on whatever they had started. I’m sure it came from a description of dancing.

Palmer News

We hope all of you had a great July 4th. The weather in Palmer was dry and sunny so everyone got to get outside to use the BBQ grill and visit. This is the big holiday of the year in Gruetli-Laager and many from here went that night to enjoy their fireworks show.

Grundy County Herald columnist and musician Shan Worley performed with his band “Wild Ride” at the event. Many of you will remember his father Hansel Worley and late grandfather Raymond Worley of Palmer.

Happy 85th birthday to Mrs. Oma Boyd Lewis who celebrated July 5th. She’s the wife of Howard Lewis and the daughter of the late Clyde Boyd. The Lewises live in Mr. Boyd’s home on Tabernacle Curve across from the Palmer Clinic.

Our June rainfall in Palmer was 3.5". We're getting just enough rain on the gardens to have a good season. It always thrills us to see young people graduate from college and congratulations to Mike Edwards of Palmer and Rachel Cunningham of Tracy City. Mike got a B.S. Degree in computer science from UT-Chattanooga. He's the son of Juanita Garner Edwards and grandson of the late Hobart Garner. Rachel's grandmother is former Palmer resident Earlene Cunningham Bryant and she received a B.S. Degree in sociology from Tennessee State University.

James Henry McBee, son of the late John Henry McBee, suffered a heart attack in recent years and has since given up drinking, smoking and salt. He has such will power that he smokes one cigarette a year, and that on Father's Day. As I told him, such a man could move a mountain.

Allen Dean "Dino" Meeks, son of the late Buford Meeks, smoked for years, but has given it up. He takes the money he spent on cigarettes, puts it in a jar each day, and plans to buy a car on cigarette savings. We saw a famous brand advertised the other day for \$4.49 plus tax, so you can see what a tremendous saving that will be.

What's for supper? Talk about making my day. I was sitting on the porch on July 4th evening when my good friend Michelle Campbell Travis drove up with a delicious supper consisting of BBQ ribs, baked beans, potato salad, corn-on-the-cob, and a strawberry type cake. Michelle is a very kind and caring person, and we thank her very much.

We enjoyed a visit with Ronnie and Lynn Lankford Finch at their Gruetli-Laager home the other day. He always has on of the best gardens in the area as did his dad, the late Burton Finch. Winford Finch of Ohio, Ronnie's brother, is one of our website visitors, and we're glad to have him.

Pastor Ronnie Partin and others from the House of the Lord Church on Palmer Mountain enjoyed a bowling trip June 16. Work is underway to install a roof on what will be a large fellowship hall for the church.

It was good to talk with Leonard and Troas Knowlan Layne recently. She was a cook at Palmer School for years. A lot of you will remember her dad, the late Fate Knowlan.

Larry Crabtree, son of the late Gordon Crabtree, has been hospitalized with kidney stones and still looked pale and weak when we visited July 21. "The pain was so

severe tat it affected the heart condition I've had for years," he said. "I was screaming with pain and told the doctor that I'd had open-heart surgery, but the pain from this was a lot worse."

The Jack Benny and Joyce Worley Morrison family enjoyed a July 4th cookout. His dad, "Little Ben" Morrison worked at the Palmer Big Mine and Joyce is the daughter of the late Elton Worley. They live in the old P.T. Nunley place.

While out walking recently, we stopped at the home of Mrs. Gussie Magouirk Flynn and visited with her. She's 92 now, but still alert and happy. Her husband, the late Doug Flynn, spent all his working life with Tennessee Consolidated Coal Company. "It was very simple when I filed for Social Security", Doug once told us. "All my payroll records were with one company, TCC."

The Sequatchie County Public Library in Dunlap will celebrate its 50th year in September. Betty Worley, director since 1962, is Tennessee's longest serving library director. She's a niece of the late Mrs. Stanley (Marie Worley) Nunley of Palmer.

On July 10 we spent the day at the Dunlap, TN home of Crandel and Ethleen Sitz McNabb, their daughter Janice McAnally and her husband David. Crandel is 96 and Ethleen turns 93 in September. The couple will celebrate their 73rd anniversary August 29.

What an enjoyable day it was. We shared old Palmer photos and stories, which brought back so many memories. The McNabbs are alert and happy and really make you feel welcome in their home. Janice and David are warm and caring people, and we feel like we've found a new friend in David. Over the years, the McNabbs have been an invaluable source of information on Palmer history, and we thank them so much.

Happy 40th anniversary to Mike and Mary Ruth Phillips Shadrick. Rev. M.C. "Bud" Hampton married them at his home on July 12, 1969. Mike's a son of the late Barney and Estelle Brown Shadrick and Mary Ruth's parents were the late David and Ruby Nell Davis Phillips.

We stopped and visited with Clayton and Joyce Roberts Hargis July 20 while out walking. Joyce has just had her 5h operation to repair a detached retina. Clayton had beautiful tomato plants until a blight destroyed them. It's not been a good

summer for this fine couple who also lost their daughter Drema recently, so please remember them in your prayers.

It's always nice to make new friends, and we really enjoyed meeting and talking with Jeff and Patty Tate from the Cleveland, Ohio, area. Jeff was visiting with his parents, Leon "Gabby" and Willie Mae Flynn Tate. He will retire in just a few years and plans on coming back to Grundy County.

Rev. Lynn and Kathleen Casseday from Jasper Church of the Nazarene celebrated their 55th anniversary June 26. He's a former pastor of Palmer Church of the Nazarene.

When we dropped by Palmer School July 21 principal Sadie Smartt and faithful assistant Pam Meeks were hard at work preparing for the first day of school August 10. Mrs. Smartt said she had lunch recently with Margie Sanders Ramey. They taught together at Swiss Memorial and when Mrs. Smartt became Palmer Principal in 1996, Margie joined her staff as a teacher here until her retirement.

Tom and Freida Meeks Burnett took Oma McNabb to the Manchester Cracker Barrel to celebrate her 92nd birthday. She lives in Tracy City now and is the widow of Marion "Soap" McNabb. She's the last of the William Eli "Jesse" James family, and many will remember her brothers Emmett and Little Red James and her sister Mrs. Henry "Oda" Roberts. Happy birthday to you, Oma.

Dr. R.T. Kendall of Nashville was the guest speaker at the June 28 Homecoming service at Palmer church of the Nazarene. He served as the Palmer pastor in the mid-1950's and is the author of some 50 books, he served as senior pastor at Westminster Chapel in London, England, from 1977-2002.

Among those attending the service were Ann Creighton and her sister Joyce Conry, Hazel Hornbuckle, Patsy Creighton Higgins, Angela Coffelt McBee, and Ray and Nelda Carol Savage Gomer.

It has been a hectic month, and we're "worn out", so from all of us here "where the good people live", we say, "Goodbye, for now."

We always welcome news from those with Palmer connections, so let us hear from you, and we'll be back in the "red-hot" month of August.

August 2009

Health Care Debate of 1994

Talk about ripped from today's headlines!

Fifteen years ago President Bill and First Lady Hillary Clinton led a major effort to reform the health care system and provide coverage to all Americans. That effort failed with Mr. Clinton's participation being blamed for its demise.

Here we are in a new century and the health care system is still in shambles. Will President Barack Obama's efforts fail like the Clinton's? The fierce debate is raging in Washington right now with most of experts believing that some type of reform will be Passed.

Dr. Byron Harbolt is shown in this 1990 photo at his Cathedral Canyon Clinic in Altamont. 2101 will mark 50 years as a Grundy County physician, and this "angel of mercy" continues to treat the poor and needy as part of his Christian ministry.

Genora Levan Nickerson

Mrs. Nickerson was in Palmer back in the spring to attend the funeral of her brother Jarvis L. Levan.

Genora grew up on Burnt Orchard Hill in Palmer as a daughter of the late Ben and Bessie Nolan Levan and lives to day in Zephyr Hills, Florida.

Thanks for sending us your CD, "There's a yodel in My Heart". We enjoyed it along with Crandel and Ethleen Sitz McNabb on our visit to their Dunlap home. Let us hear from you soon Genora and keep checking our website.

Former Residents Visit Hometown

This has been an exciting summer for our history work in Palmer.

Sara Swann Shopley (center) and Crandel and Ethleen McNabb grew up to gether in Palmer and were reunited this summer for the first time in many years.

"One of the great pleasures of my history work is keeping former residents in touch," Mr. Patton said. "The McNabbs and Mrs. Shipley have been an invaluable source of information on Palmer's early days, and I cherish their friendship."

In early July, Crandel and Ethleen McNabb came calling, and we paid a return visit to their Dunlap, TN, home later that month. Mr. McNabb, 96, is a 1935 Grundy County High School graduate and also drove the Palmer to Tracy City school bus during his years as a student. After unloading his passengers he recalls having to drive to a garage about a mile away, walk back to school to attend classes, then walk back to the bus in the afternoon and drive to the school to pick up his fellow students for the drive home to Palmer. An education was hard to come by in the Great Depression and only the toughest managed to persevere.

Mr. McNabb became a well-know auto body repairman and many will remember him from his days at Varnell Chevrolet in Tracy City. He was also the auto mechanics teacher for the 1967-68 term at GCHS. He and his sister Charlotte Pattie are the only survivors of the Tom and Florence Knight McNabb family.

Mrs. Mc Nabb will be 93 on September 30 and is a 1935 GCHS graduate. She, her brother, Lewis Sitz and their sister Frances Gratigny are the only survivors of the Virgil and Maggie Levan Sitz family. A 1935 GCHS graduate, she began her teaching career at Palmer Elementary in the late 1940's and retired from the Marion County School System.

The McNabbs will celebrate their 73rd anniversary this month. They were married by Pastor Crawford at the Methodist (now Palmer United Methodist) parsonage on August 29, 1936, with Dola Ivey and Ethleen's sister Heelen serving as witnesses. Always cordial and happy to hear from Grundy County friends, they may be reached at 2778 Kelly Cross Road, Dunlap, TN 37327.

On July 31 Sara Swann Shipley of Johnson City visited and was accompanied by a delightful couple, Dick and Carolyn Johnson of Elizabethton, TN.

Mrs. Shipley, 92, is a 1935 GCHS graduate. She and her late brother Hampton Swann grew up in Palmer as the children of Raymond D. and Hattie Hampton Swann. Mr. Swann was the supply manager for Tennessee Consolidated Coal Company and Mrs. Swann, one of the most beloved citizens in Palmer history, was related to E.L. Hampton who founded the company.

Leaving Palmer after high school, she met her future husband R. Bruce Shipley of west Tennessee while both were students at the University of Tennessee. He became an electrical engineer and the couple traveled around the world. Mr. Shipley is deceased and her nearest descendant is a nephew, Lee Swann.

While here Mrs. Shipley visited her childhood church, Palmer United Methodist, where she recalled that Sunday School Superintendent Joseph S. (Uncle Joe) Geary would let the children ring the church bell. We also accompanied the group to Palmer Elementary School where she noted that the auditorium was on the opposite side of the school from where it is located today. Our next stop was the Swann family home place where resident Donna Shadrick Lecroy kindly allowed us to visit the home and grounds at will. Before returning home Mrs. Shipley enjoyed a visit with Mrs. Evelyn Taylor in Monteagle. Those of my generation will remember Mrs. Taylor as a teacher at Grundy County High School.

It's always wonderful to make new friends and my gracious co-host, town librarian Miss Susan Faye Sissom, and I welcomed Glenn James and Forrest Parmley from Nashville are back to Palmer for a July visit.

Talk about nice guys! Forrest is a retired pharmacist and former president of the Tennessee Pharmaceutical association. He's a son of the late Ingram and Rebecca Cannon Parmley and as a boy lived on Section House Road along the railroad tracks in the house where Hazel Hornbuckle lives today. Forrest lost his father in an accident at Palmer Big Mine in the 1940's. His mother was a member of Palmer Elementary's first graduating class of 1928.

Glenn is a retired Nashville barber. His father, the late Jesse James was a coal miner and barber with a shop in the old train depot after Mr. Homer Heard moved to Manchester, TN. Glenn's mother, Opal Hobbs James, 95, and his sister Linda, a retired R.N., also live in Nashville.

As Glenn looked out at the now changed landscape, he reminisced about the old Palmer Theatre.

"My Granny didn't believe in picture shows", he said. Harriet Roberts London had a birthday party for her son Jack and took us to the Palmer Theatre afterward. I was really enjoying the coming attractions. It was my first time there, and I thought the attractions were the movie we came to see. Later I saw the famous cowboy star

Lash LaRue when he made a personal appearance there. He was the one who did the tricks with a whip.”

While visiting with Glenn and Forrest in walked Becky Ivey Teague, 86, of Chattanooga and her son Jerrell for an unexpected visit to the Coal Miner’s Museum. Becky and her sister Dola are the only survivors of the Jim and Clara Ruth Poe Ivey family. Mr. Jim Ivey is thought to be the first man to bring his family from Tracy City to help found what would become the new coalmining town of Palmer. The Ivey sisters are dear friends and we appreciate their help on our history research so much. As you can see, the month of July was a trip down memory lane for me and for our guests. Regardless of how far we may roam, memories of our childhood home always tug at our hearts. A sincere thank you to Janice McNabb McAnally, Janelle Layne Taylor, and Wanda Hampton Meeks for their assistance on this story.

Crandel McNabb, Scoutmaster

Crandel McNabb was a Scoutmaster in Marion County TN and earned every award a volunteer scouter can obtain including the Silver Beaver and God & Country awards. A longtime elder in the Church of Christ, he was honored with the God and Service Award presented by the Churches of Christ in Abilene, TX.

Tom McNabb, Barber

Mr. Tom McNabb, a well-known Palmer miner and barber, lived where Harold James lives today.

A generous and accomodating man, during the Great Depression he would often accept milk, butter or garden vegetables for a haircut instead of cash. One person gave him a gallon of shelled peas for his services.

The customer shown is though to be Ed Layne, son of the late Clell Layne. In the early days before beauty shops he would occasionally cut women's hair.

Old Sayings & Figures of Speech in Grundy County, TN

If you dream of snakes it means you have enemies.

We'd never heard this before until recently when a woman said she had dreamed of snakes the night before then said, "Mama always said if you dreamed of snakes, it meant you had enemies."

I'm going to boil some roeshun ears for supper.

I guess this is a variation of "roasting ears", don't you? You seldom hear this anymore. Most peopel just say "We're having corn" or "We're having corn on the cob." I'm guessing that Miss Charlotte up in Elkhart, IN, way remembers "roeshun ears".

You've fell away, haven't you?

I hadn't heard this in so long that it shocked me when 95-year-old Ethel Mae Gifford Cantrell asked me this recently. It means you've lost weight. People used to also say, "He's fell away to nothing."

He just talks to hear himself talk.

This was said about someone who was trying to be a bully or maybe a person bragging on themselves to impress others.

It wasn't worth much punkin.

Of course, it was "pumpkin", but most in these parts did and still do say "punkin". People would say this about something a person had cooked and it meant that they really didn't like it although they could eat it to keep from hurting the person's feeling. This was said about almost anything that people used that they weren't satisfied with. We wonder why the "pumpkin" was used as an expression of dissatisfaction.

We'd like to gift you.

I'll be 62 on October 12 and had never heard this until last month. Obviously, it means we'd love to give you a certain gift or do something nice for you. The person who said this to me is a warm and caring individual and I really appreciate their concern for me.

"Oh, I forgot what I was going to say." Then another person would say, "Then, it must have been a lie."

I'd never heard the "It must have been a lie" part until recently. It's frustrating to be talking with someone, get distracted, and forget what you were going to say, but it happens to all of us.

Palmer News

It's August and the summer is slipping away isn't it? August was named for the Roman emperor Augustus. To make August equal to July, the Roman Senate took one day from February and added it to July.

Isn't it amazing that we're still using the name "August" like the ancient Romans did? About all those of us in the South know about August is that it's the hottest month of the year. Sure beats the lonely snow and gloomy weather of winter though doesn't it?

Happy 45th birthday to John Rogers who celebrated August 2. He's a son of the late James "Burr" Rogers and Mary Ruth Mayes Rogers who still lives here. John has spent his entire teaching career at Swiss Memorial Elementary, which reminds us of the late Frances Conry's incredible record of 45 consecutive years teaching at Palmer Elementary.

Diana Henry, where are you? She's one of our favorite people, and we've not heard from her in a while. Her dad James is the only survivor of the Dock Henry family and many of you will remember Diana's uncles, Howard, Red and Gene.

We enjoyed meeting and chatting with Mrs. Nicole Sweeney a few weeks ago at Palmer Elementary. She's the 7th grade teacher and her husband Brent is the school's custodian. They came to Grundy County from Michigan about 2-3 years ago and live in Gruetli-Laager.

It was also nice chatting with John Ross Jones up at the school recently. He began his teaching career here last year and we're glad he's back this year. He's a member of the famous Henry Roberts family of teachers and many will remember his grandmother Kat Roberts Jones who was a teacher.

It's rocking chair time. John Doug Shrum retired from the Grundy County Highway Department this month and was a longtime TVA worker before that. He's a son of Tootsie Cannon Smith and the late John Shrum and says he may take up golf.

Speaking of golf, Jimmy Long says he's taken up the sport in recent years and enjoys it. He was a good high school athlete and also a good softball player after

that . He's a son of Joyce Sweeton Long and the late Jim Long and athletic ability comes from both sides of his family.

Rev. J. Darrell Turner was the guest preacher for Palmer Church of God homecoming services July 18. Bonnie Finch Layne was among the special singers. Darrell's grandfather, Henry Clay Turner, is one of the Palmer Big Mine crew in the latest book by the Grundy County Historical Society, "Pictures of Our Past".

Our July rainfall was 8 3/8" and in July 1999 we had 6.2". July 2009 was the coolest that 86-year-old Howard Lewis, myself and many others in Palmer can remember.

Happy 18th anniversary on August 3 to Hershel and Georgia Tate Disheroon of Griffith's Creek. The attend First Baptist Church of Palmer. He's a brother of the late Wet Duck Disheroon and she's a sister of Clifford Tate of Coalmont who died recently.

On sick call: We hadn't run into Kent Layne in a long time until a couple of weeks ago. "I had pneumonia last year and still haven't gotten over it", he said. Kent's a son of the late Joe Layne who ran the ESSO station for years in Gruetli-Laager. He'll turn 73 soon, so "Happy Birthday, Kent".

When's the last time you heard of anyone having "pleurisy"? Rick McDaniel of Fredonia Mountain near Dunlap goes to Tracy City each Saturday with his aluminum recycling truck and said when it hit him, it felt like "someone had stuck a sword in my side". Wanda Hampton Meeks had a overnight hospital stay with pleurisy in one lung and pneumonia in the other.

Betty Creighton Coffelt recovering fast from double knee replacement and A.C. Cannon is doing well after gallstone surgery.

Keith McBee and Taylor Creighton both have had sinus surgery recently. So many people in this part of the country suffer greatly from this affliction and we hope new treatments continue to be developed.

Tony Summers has been suffering from kidney stones and his sister Faye Smith is suffering complications from a car accident. Tony and his wife Lana came over this month from Dunlap area and brought Ethel Mae Gifford Cantrell some tomatoes

and corn. The Robert Summers and Russ Gifford families were Palmer neighbors for years.

Tim Shrum, son of Tootsie Cannon Smith and the late John Shrum, was suffering from the ancient affliction of “gout” when we talked with him.

While that is bad enough it was 18 years ago that Tim stared the Grim Reaper in the face. “I’ve been cancer free for 18 years,” he said. “I had lived a bad life, but the Lord had to put me flat on my back and looking up before he could get my attention. I had cancer in six different places and a knot popped up on my neck the size of a baseball. It was the same kind of cancer that killed Jackie Kennedy Onassis in less than three months.”

Tim gives the almighty God all the praise for saving his life and giving him a chance to change his life and do the right thing. Just this year he attended his 1969 GCHS class reunion and is still able to work and make a living. He attends Bivens Chapel Congregational Methodist Church. What an inspiring store he has!

It was nice talking with Jack Summers, Leon “Gabby” Tate and Seann Lewis recently as they were doing some carpenter work at Gabby’s house. Seann is the 8th grade teacher at Palmer Elementary and is married to Gabby’s granddaughter. The couple came here from the Cleveland Ohio, area.

We also enjoyed talking with Joyce Nolan recently. She’s a daughter of the late Marshall Nolan and like all the Nolans we’ve ever known, she’s a friendly person and never meets a stranger.

“I’ve heard of Dutter Morrison all my life, but this is the first time I’ve ever seen you.” That’s what Ricky Layne said to James “Dutter” Morrison this summer when Dutter introduced himself at Scott’s Grocery over on Hwy. 399. Dutter’s been in Arizona and other places away from Palmer for many years, but has now moved back home. He’s the oldest son of the late Pat Morrison.

Tina Harrison Meeks and Polly Phipps visited their brother Hershel Harrison Jr. in Merritt Island, FL, this summer. Other Florida visitors were the Billy Carl and Becky Guffey and Dennis and Judy Morrison Kelley families who vacationed in Panama City.

Whew! As you can see, we've had a lot going on here "where the good people live." We'll try to catch our breath and be back with you in the wonderful month of September. Happy Labor Day!

SEPTEMBER 2009

Palmer News

"Try to remember, a time in September." These song lyrics remind us that this is our favorite month of the year with its combination of a little bit of summer and a little bit of Fall.

This beautiful month will be missed in the upcoming winter as the lyrics continue "deep in December, it's nice to remember," and it will be.

Palmer's Labor Day celebration was another big success as usual, this year. Former residents Andrew Shrum, Jr. and Drema Roberts came over from Chattanooga to see old friends.

"You're a good Christian man, the blight won't hit your tomatoes." But, alas, it did! A woman said this to Carl "Teeter" Morrison, but he lost his tomatoes like almost everyone else. Doesn't the Good Book say something about things happening to the just as well as the unjust?

Despite the tomato blight good gardeners such as Larry "Farmer" Crabtree, Bobby Stinnett, Christy Meeks, William Grimes, Booger Hammers, Howard Lewis, James Jacks, Becky Morrison, Rhonda Harrison Green and too many others to mention had plenty of vegetables.

Joel Patton had another patch of good watermelons out in Coalmont and down in Pelham, the "Tomato Queen of Pelham Valley", Janelle Layne Taylor had a bumper crop although the blight killed most of the mountain maters.

Kenneth Layne, son of the late Clell Layne, put out 1700 plants and should have tomatoes for sale until frost in Gruetli-Laager.

We stopped a couple times this summer and visited with Luevenia Sanders Rollins and her grandson Jimmy up on Burnt Orchard Hill. She's 88 and the widow of Smokey Rollins and the daughter of the late Theo Sanders. Jimmy had a little

garden and says he picked cucumbers until he was sick of it. In one four-day period, he got 110 cucumbers.

One of the joys of gardening is giving and receiving vegetables. We got corn from Howard Lewis, Bobby Stinnett, Joel Patton and William Grimes and okra from Larry Crabtree. We gave vegetables to Ann Creighton and her sisters Joyce Conry as well as Helen Arbuckle, Harold James, Jerry Cannon, Edna Crabtree, Eddie and Rita Crabtree and others.

Another wonderful part of summer is looking at the beautiful flowers as we walk around town.

Allie Jean "Shorty" Sanders, Becky Guffey, Margaret, Edna & Rita Crabtree, Christy Smith and Ann Creighton all had pretty ones.

We had a pot of red begonias near the porch when Judy Anderson Harrison came around with her Jehovah Witness magazines. "Those were my mother's favorite flower", she said. Judy has a pretty flower garden of her own. She is the daughter of the late Riley, Sr. and Keneatha Kilgore Anderson.

We always enjoy putting some color in the yard at Palmer Methodist and had 3 baskets of red begonias in a tree this year.

Denise Morrison and her mother Connie Cannon had flowers in the community park where the old railroad "Wye" was and Tom and Freida Burnett had flowers at First Baptist church as well as a beautiful display at their home. It's always good to see a business looking good and Valerie Sanders had some very pretty container flowers at Palmer Drugs.

We saw a flight of geese on the 14th, which is supposed to mean they're flying south for the winter. Sometimes you can hear them honking as they fly high above.

Jimmy Brooks has a horseshoe pit at his home and has enjoyed that this summer with friends. We didn't know anyone locally played the once popular game of horseshoes any more. Many of you will remember his grandfather Flop Brooks.

Ida Pearl Brown of Coalmont and her niece Becky came by to visit us recently. Ida Pearl had to move from Palmer to an apartment building in Coalmont last year

because of bad health. She drove a school bus for years including when Mr. Raymond Hargis was school Superintendent.

Mary Ruth Rogers is recovering from a broken ankle suffered in a fall at her home, but almost died in the hospital because of a malfunction in a morphine pump, which was giving too much medication.

Palmer rainfall for August was 2.75” In 1999, we had 1.4”

We enjoyed visiting our childhood friend Preston Knowlan in Gruetli-Laager last month. We talked about the tomato blight and Preston said his Dad, Fate Knowlan would take a small amount of hardwood, burn it to white ashes, then mix it a jar of the strong unsweetened Bruton Snuff and sprinkle over and around the plants. “I can’t ever remember the blight hitting Daddy’s tomatoes”, he said.

Former resident Martha Carroll Cox Hensley and husband Jim came through the area for a visit and met old friends at the Western Sizzlin’ in Jasper.

Among those enjoying the food and memories of old times in Palmer were Betty Sue McGovern and her sister Nancy, Mickey Cleek Suter, Charles Bailey Brooks, Anita Finch Crabtree, Henrietta Nunley Tucker, Raymond Long, Anna Lou Hill Hatfield, Dolly Dyer Shadrack and Jerry Cannon and his sister Sis Layne. It was a Dutch treat affair, but Jerry hit the jackpot when an old Ducktown childhood friend came to the rescue. “Nancy paid for my lunch,” he said.

What’s for supper? Not to be outdone, we also got a treat when our friend Michelle Campbell Travis brought us a Labor Day supper consisting of Grilled chicken and hamburgers, potato salad, slaw, and baked beans. Thanks a lot, Michelle.

Happy 68th birthday to Donna Shadrack LeCroy. Family and friends gathered on the 15th to visit and share cake and ice cream. Donna is wheelchair bound with the hereditary Huntington’s disease. She’s the widow of Larry LeCroy and among the guests were his brother Don and their mother Mamie Layne LeCroy who is 90 now.

Tootsie Cannon Smith has been sick lately, but is still driving and seems to be getting better. Tootsie is one of our favorite people and has been a big help on Palmer history work.

We received a couple of letters from Allene Nunley Hargis this month. She's Tootsie's cousin and lives in Tucson, AZ. Allene says she planted onions and lettuce in her flower garden back in the spring and had more than she could use. She misses people in Palmer and enjoys hearing from them and mentioned how good tomatoes in Palmer always tasted. The widow of "Little Ray" Hargis, they had a big family, and I'm sure some of you went to school with them.

Well, this month begins our fourth year of coming to you via this website. It takes a lot of time to do so, but we enjoy it and hope it keeps you connected to your old hometown.

So, on behalf of Jerry Cannon and all the others here "where the good people live", have an enjoyable fall in your part of the country and check back in with us during spooky month.

Old Sayings & Figures of Speech in Grundy County, TN

1. That makes so mad I can't see straight. Southerners are a hot - headed lot and you used to hear this all the time.
2. I'm as weak as a kitten. People used to say this when they were recovering from the flu or other illness. The real flu will make you weak as a kitten.
3. I've got to bath them. We hadn't heard this in a long time until recently. Instead of "bathe" the person said "bath".
4. She's all dolled up. That meant a woman nicely dressed and with make-up who looked pretty as a doll.
5. That's highway robbery. This was said a lot when something was over priced. It meant a brazen attempt to over charge.
6. He's a pea brain. This described a person whom the speaker regarded as not very smart or someone who thought they knew more than the actually did.
7. He won't turn his hand. This meant a person wouldn't try to do any work on a project or whatever the endeavor was. Such people would often try to be the boss or criticize others though.
8. That's a bunch of baloney. Bologna or "baloney" is a cheap southern lunchmeat that is still very popular until this day. Years ago people used this old saying to describe something they heard but disagreed with or didn't believe.
9. I put a nanner in my lunch box. We haven't heard a banana called this in a long time, but probably will soon.

10. Speaking of the Devil – Two people would be talking and if someone walked in or drove up unexpectedly they would often teasingly say, “speaking of the Devil” as though they’d been discussing the person. We haven’t heard this in a while. People used to tease each other a lot and most people had a good sense of humor.

Newspaper Clipping

Everyone loves to see their name in print!

OCTOBER 2009

Press Release/ Palmer Veterans Appreciation

Seann E. Lewis, a U.S. Army veteran of Desert Storm, is the 2009 recipient of the 24th annual Palmer Veterans Appreciation Award. The award, presented each November by town historian David Patton, is sponsored by Citizens Tri-County Bank.

Mr. Lewis was inducted at Fort Bliss, TX, on February 7, 1990, where he completed basic training followed by AIT as a Stinger Missile System Gunner. On June 29, 1990, he graduated from parachutist school as airborne qualified at Fort Benning, GA.

While stationed overseas at McCully Barracks in Wackernheim, Germany, he was deployed to Saudi Arabia on January 1, 1991, in support of the 3rd Armored Division, Alpha Company, 318 Cavalry. Completing his military service at Fort Hood, TX, as a member of the famous Cavalry Division, he was discharged on October 5, 1995, with the rank of SPC-4.

Mr. Lewis’ military decorations include the Army Commendation Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Southwest Asia Service Medal with 3 bronze service stars, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, Kuwait Liberation Medal, Expert Pistol and Grenade Badge, Marksman Rifle Badge, Parachutist Badge.

A life member of VFW Post 9871, in North Ridgefield, Ohio, Mr. Lewis is a graduate of Ashland University in Ashland, Ohio, and currently teaches 8th

Grade at Palmer Elementary School. He and his wife Angela are the parents of a daughter, Lillian Mae Lewis.

“In all these years, this is my first opportunity to honor a teacher,” Mr. Patton said. “Mr. Lewis is a good role model for our young people, especially these 8th graders who will soon be adults themselves.”

Malcolm P. Rankin, a highly decorated World War I soldier, was the first recipient of the Palmer Veterans’ Appreciation Award and was followed in order by Obid Marion “Soap” McNabb, Rufus Kilgore, Jr., Glenn A. Nunley, Robert W. Levan, William “Wet Duck” Dishroon, Alfred “Buddy” Nolan, Earl F. Creighton, Charles E. “Gene” Brooks, Bedford R. Glisson, Herschel L. Finch, Jr., James Lowrie King, J.C. “Tom” Scissom, Carl E. “Teeter” Morrison, John W. “Bill” Partin, Thomas M. Burnette, James Shrum, Jr., Billy Carl Guffey, William “Jack Partin, Daniel “Dan” Coffelt, Larry G. Henry, Bobby Lynn Stinnett, and Dennis A. Sweeton.

October 2009 Palmer News

What’s the weather like in your part of the country? We’re coming to you on October 20 and this has been the wettest, cloudiest, and coldest October that we remember, but hopefully the rest of the month will be sunny and dry like a typical October.

Our first killing frost was October 18, but “Mr. White really killed Mr. Green: the following morning as all the outdoor plants were wiped out.

Happy 80th birthday to our good friend Herschel Finch, Jr. Friends and family gathered on the 14th to help him celebrate and among those attending were his sons John of California and Herschel III of Florida and cousin Ronnie Finch. Junior’s retired from the U.S. Navy.

Jewel Hamby Goodman of Pelham suffered a mini-stroke earlier this month, but at last report was still running her store. Mrs. Goodman is a former teacher at Grundy County High School and in her 90’s now.

Wanda Hampton Meeks and Patsy Higgins visited Norma Stocker recently. Norma’s the widow of Alfred Stocker and recently lost her son Don to cancer.

On October 20, Wanda, Patsy, and their cousin Nick Creighton visited her brother Melvin Hampton and wife Kathy in Jasper. Melvin recently built a new "cabin" on the Tennessee River and is the retired owner of Hampton Trucking.

Linda Rollins Morrison of Fairmount, IN, visited her mother Luevenia Rollins recently. Linda's lived in the Indianapolis area for many years.

Close call: Theresia Campbell, wife of James Campbell, was gathering eggs in her daughter Michelle Travis; chicken coop and there found two copperhead snakes. She lives in the Ewing Hampton plane and Michelle lives where Orange Lemon Northcutt lived, both on Big Mine Road. This area of Palmer has always been bad for snakes.

Doug and Carolyn King Hargis celebrated 30 years of marriage this month with family and friends. Among those attending were their Pastor John Kennedy and wife Tressie of Pelham. John Pastors Palmer United Methodist.

Mrs. Ricky (Freda) Layne visited Mrs.Cotton (Sue) Ross and Polly Rogers at the Dunlap Nursing Home. There are in the same room and Polly's the widow of Hade Rogers and daughter of the late Oscar Ward.

Kat Slatton McHone cooked a birthday dinner on her son Edward's 60th birthday. Joel Patton recently ran into Edward. In 1969 they took U.S. Army Basic training at Ft.Campbell, KY. Edward went on to Germany and Joel went to Vietnam.

Palmer weather report: We had 10.8" of rain here in September, which was the wettest September that we remember.

Happy 60th anniversary to Willie Howard "Buck" and Dot Conry Sanders of Tracy City. Buck grew up in Palmer and is a retired Tracy City postmaster.

The Gruetli-Laager Senior Citizens Center took their annual trip to Pigeon Forge last month. Among those making the trip were Hazel Hornbuckle, Velma Jean Grooms, Ann Creighton and her sister Joyce Conry and James Brown.

The family of the late J. Hugh Layne had their annual reunion last month at Laager Independent (Cotton's) Methodist Church. All the J. Hugh Layne Family is gone now. Willie Mae Brown Layne, widow of Andrew Layne was probably the oldest person there.

Faces in the crowd: We ran into Ronnie Nunley, Archie Jones and Johnny Parsons recently. Ronnie's adopted parents were P.T. and Agnes Nunley and Archie's a son of the late Kat Roberts Jones. Mr. Parsons lives in Coalmont and is such a nice man. He is the brother of former Palmer Elementary Principal Claude Parson and a cousin of Mary Ruth Rogers of Palmer.

Kayla McCullough, granddaughter of Danny and Betty McCullough and Clayton and Joyce Hargis, is serving in the U.S. Army. Also in uniform is Jonathon Grimes, son of Wayne Grimes and grandson of Hershel Grimes. We're really proud of these young people.

The home of the late Ronnie Cox in Chiggertown burned recently. It had been rental property since Ronnie's death in 1995.

What's for supper? We enjoyed some of Ricky Layne's stew a couple of weeks ago. Some people have a knack for making certain things, and Ricky can sure make stew and chili.

The Hosanna Harvest of Hope, a facility providing a home for disabled adults in Chattanooga, held a fundraiser October 8. Former Palmer resident Lanny McNabb was the auctioneer.

For years people in Palmer and Gruetli-Laager have received a free weekly "Sequatchie Valley Shopper" in their mailbox. That ended this summer and the little paper with its ads and community calendar will be missed. Soaring postal rates are putting many publications out of business.

On sick call: This has been a year of sickness for Mike Gifford, and he's now recovering from surgery. We hope his health stabilizes.

Hallie Knight and her 96-year-old mother Agnes James are both recovering from a car wreck in Marion County last month. Hallie's brother Alvin "Kit Fox" James, is also seriously ill.

Jim Rollins is recovering from cancer surgery and MacArthur White McPherson is recovering after a near death experience from complications of stomach surgery.

Jerry Harrison is recovering from his third major surgery in the last six months and Mrs. Nelmon (Dorothy) Savage is recovering from surgery.

We celebrated our 62nd birthday on October 12 and the first card we got was from Jim and Martha Carroll Cox Hensley of Weeki Wachee, FL.

The Hensleys welcomed their third great-grandson, Logan Nicolas Young, who was born June 25, 2009. Logan Nicolas weighed in at 9 pounds, 6 oz. and was 20 ½" long. He has two brothers, Steven and Noah. They are the great-great grandsons of the late Reno and Nell Dykes Cox of Palmer.

We also received a card from Miss Susan Faye Sissom, son Ross, and husband Smoky Colston; the Crandel McNabb family; Bruce and Gail Bryant Coffelt; Gary Bouldin; Ann Creighton and Joyce Conry; Ricky and Freda Layne; Beverly Scissom Riley and her sister Charlotte Haggard of Elkhart, IN, and Randal Nolan of Chattanooga.

We told Randal that we heard from former Palmer Elementary principal Raymond Hargis frequently and asked if he remembered Mr. Hargis. "Yes", he replied. He was one of the best principals we ever had." Randal served with the U.S. Army in Vietnam during the 1960's and since then has spent most of his life as a security guard in Chattanooga. A sincere thanks to all of you for the cards. They really brightened my day.

Bobby Stinnett was in Knoxville for the Tennessee-Georgia football game October 10. Tennessee won in one of the most exciting games of the season. Fans saw a 100- yard kick-off return, blocked punt, touch down passes, interceptions, fumble recovery and most of all Coach Lane Kiffin's first SEC win.

Time is moving on in this first month of fall, and the leaves are turning their glorious colors on our beloved mountain "where the good people live."

Halloween is on Saturday night this year, and hopefully we'll have clear skies and a big shiny moon as the little trick or treaters make their round in the crisp night air.

If you have Halloween memories from years past, share them with us by mail at 50 Dogwood St. Palmer, TN 37365.

Good-bye for now. Get outside and enjoy the fall season, and check in with us in November.

Old Sayings and Figures of Speech in Grundy County, TN

1. He looked like he had a scary face on. A scary fact, of course, was a Halloween mask. People used to say “scary face: to describe someone who had a beard or looked like they’d been on a drunk. Years ago unshaven men or those with long hair were looked down on.

2. Money makes the pot boil. Have you ever heard this one? We hadn’t, but a woman close to 60 says she remembers her grandpa saying it. Money makes a lot of things happen, so I guess it makes the pot boil too.

3. He’s much of a man. You seldom hear this anymore, but we did just the other day. It described a big strong man back in the days when physical strength in jobs like coalmining and saw milling were big advantages. When people like this got older, people would sometimes say, “He’s still much of a man.”

4. He thinks the world owes him a living . This was said a lot to describe a lazy person and can still be heard today.

5. He wears hand me downs. Years ago clothes were hard to come by in Grundy County, and now everyone has more than they could ever dream of wearing. This old saying meant used clothing usually passed down from older family members to the younger ones.

6. She’s about gone. This was someone on his deathbed whose passing was imminent.

7. Thank you kindly. I’ve always thought this was a very nice response to someone who did something for you. These days you’re lucky if you get a “thank you” at all. In order to promote courtesy among our young people, in 2007, we were

honored to establish the "Louise Geary Layne Courtesy Award" at the Grundy County Spelling Bee.

8. I think the world of him. Obviously this was someone you really liked. You don't hear it expressed this way much anymore.

9. That's a dead end road. This mostly referred to bad behavior or bad judgment. It meant that if you continued in your ways, you had no chance of success.

November 2009

Palmer School Turns 82

Palmer School opened for classes on November 14, 1927, and is still going strong today. Let's take a look back at Grundy County's oldest school.

Homecoming '86 Celebration- Back in 1986 Governor Lamar Alexander led a hugely successful project to celebrate Tennessee's heritage. Each community was asked to plan a special celebration and Palmer chose a reunion of all former Palmer Elementary students, faculty, staff and parents.

Floyd Owen (left) and Louie "Chief" Geary got together for the final time before their deaths just a few years later. Both were bosses at the Palmer Big Mine. All of Mr. Owen's children attended the school. Chief represented Palmer on the Grundy County School Board for years and his daughter the later Frances :Tops: Henry graduated and later taught at Palmer Elementary.

August 31, 1996 Reunion-Keith McBee (right is shown with Bobby Lynn and wife Mary Cannon Stinnett.

The Worley Family-Mrs. Roy Worley, shown with her children, taught at the school in the later 1940's until the death of her husband Mr. Worley was the pharmacist at the Tennessee Consolidated Coal Co., Company Store

2007 The 80th Birthday Celebration- Grundy County Historian William Ray Turner (center) visits with Keith and Anita Lappin Brewer. Many years ago, Mr. Turner worked with Keith's dad, the late Echerd Brewer.

Palmer School Hosts Veteran's Ceremony

When you present an award for almost a quarter-century, the setting each year is different. This year we honored a teacher for the first time, and making the presentation at the school was also a first.

Y.B. Ashby, President of the Grundy County Veterans' Historical Society, opened the proceedings with prayer followed by a reading of "The American's Creed" by Megan Fults from Mrs. Sweeney's 7th grade class.

Vanessa Stinnett from Mrs. Childers' 2nd grade class then gave a rousing rendition of "God Bless America". This classic, by America's greatest songwriter Irving Berlin, was introduced by Kate Smith as part of her CBS Radio Show on November 10, 1938, inspiring millions during World War II and right up to the present day. Exactly 71 years later, the talented little Vanessa sang it publicly for the first time on Nov. 10, 2009.

Lindsey Gunter, another of Mrs. Sweeney's students, then stepped forward to read excerpts from the plaque followed by the duo of Mary Stinnett, a 1949 Palmer graduate, and Mr. Lewis in a lively version of "The Caissons Go Rolling Along".

Finally, as a crowded and hushed classroom of students from grades 6-8 and family looked on, we presented the 24th annual Palmer Veteran's Appreciation Award to the school's 8th grade teacher, Seann E. Lewis. Mr. Lewis was humble and grateful in his acceptance speech, and Mr. Ashby concluded the ceremony with a plea for unity with the War on Terror like he saw during World War II among both civilian and military citizens.

To my surprise, as we were about to leave, Lindsey Gunter, Roger Jensen, and Steve Garner presented me with a framed certificate of excellence and an array of gifts in recognition of my work as the Palmer town historian.

Mr. Lewis and I sincerely thank everyone for making this such a special day. A special thanks to Pam Meeks and Mrs. Shalonda Braden for their help with the arrangements.

Photo

l-r: Y.B. Ashby, Mary Stinnett, Seann Lewis, Vanessa Stinnett, Lindsey Gunter, David Patton, Megan Fults

Old Sayings and Figures of Speech in Grundy County, TN

- 1. He took a backset. We heard an old person say this recently, and it means that you had a bad cold or the flu, thought you were over it, and got sick again. We may hear it a lot this winter with the swine flu making headlines.*
- 2. He's a big strapping big, or He's a big strapping man. This was a healthy and strong person back in the days when malnutrition was a common thing and pale weak people were the result in many cases.*
- 3. She's of age. This means that a person has turned 18 and are now is legally an adult. We heard this recently.*
- 4. He needs to be taken down a buttonhole or two. This was a person who was overconfident or cocky and needed for something to happen that would humble them.*
- 5. I'm sore as a risin'. A friend recovering from a serious operation told us this recently. People used to have a lot of painful sores called risings years ago, and I've heard in recent years that they were caused by a blood disorder.*
- 6. I just go along to get along. This meant that you didn't agree with the other person in whatever the matter was, but to avoid hurt feelings, you went along with them.*
- 7. I feel like a million dollars. That was really feeling good – I have not heard that in a long time.*
- 8. He's just a liable (pronounced ly-bull) to as not. Meant just a likely to do something as not and described an unpredictable person or situation*
- 9. Cross my heart and hope to die. Kids used to say this to someone to show they weren't lying because that had crossed their heart and hoped to die if they were lying.*
- 10. That's highway robbery. This was said in anger or astonishment upon learning that someone charged an outrageous price for goods or services.*

Palmer News

The year 2009 is quickly running out as we're coming to you on a windy and partly sunny Veteran's Day after a rainy Tuesday from the remnants of Hurricane Ida. We went through the rain to Palmer School and presented the Palmer Veteran's Appreciation Award (see article on this topic) and that lifted our spirits on a gloomy day.

Let's kick-off with birthday greetings to my brother Joel Patton, Danny Crabtree, and Bobby Owen, who will all celebrate this month. Joel lives in Coalmont and turns 60. Danny's a son of the late Gordon Crabtree, still lives in Palmer and turns 55. Bobby hits 80 this month and lives in Peachtree City near Atlanta. He's the only son among a group of sisters and their parents were the late Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Owen.

The old "Company house: of the late Lawrence and Beet James Nunley burned the morning after Halloween. It was rental property in recent years and a landmark in the "other end" of Palmer.

We spent another enjoyable Halloween as the night watchman at Palmer School. This was our 15th consecutive year and we received a much appreciated "thank you" letter from Grundy County School Superintendent Joel "Jody" Hargis. Mr. Hargis and his father Raymond both served as Palmer Principal and School Superintendent over the years and Mr. Raymond recalls that Ronnie Cox was the Halloween watchman when he was principal 1955-58.

Mrs. Robin Hammers McNeece, Grundy County Deputy Sheriff and Resource Officer at Grundy County High School, came by several times that night to check on the school.

"I went here for K-2 grade," Robin recalled. "One day Mama drove me to school, let me out of the car and went on. I was a little thing and couldn't get the big door open and was scared. W.R. "Trey" Anderson, now Grundy County Sessions Court Judge, was also a student and saw me and opened the door."

Robin lives in Gruetli-Laager and is a daughter of Robert "Perk" Hammers and the wife of Monteagle Police Chief Virgil McNeece. She's a very nice young lady, and we enjoyed meeting her very much.

We had a little group of "spooks" come by the school "trick-or-treating" and got a good photo of them. Charles Britton and Wendy had 40 spooks at their house in Ducktown, Joy Shrum, 95, on Daus Mountain Road where she fixed popcorn balls, Kat McHone, 15, on Palmer Mountain, Jerry Cannon, 11, Ricky Layne, 5, Mary Stinnett, 1, and Wanda Meeks "quite a few" on Tatesville Road. In Gruetli-Laager Mrs. Bruce (Gail) Coffelt had 25 and Rooster Guffey an amazing 205.

Rabbit Morrison and Ricky Layne's Halloween adventure became a "cold" experience. They took off through Dock White Hollow and up the rugged mountain toward the old Leck Tate place. The fan belt broke, and they finally got back to Palmer half frozen at 2 AM on Sunday morning.

Rev. Greg Jones, former pastor of Palmer Church of God, was here to preach the funeral of Treva Worley Land Morrison. He founded Community Harvest Church of God in Coalmont before returning to his native Alabama.

Our October rainfall in Palmer was just a hair over 7". In 1999 we had 4.6"

The Swine Flu closed Grundy County Schools Nov. 4-6 before classes resumed on Monday the 9th.

Ricky Meeks, son of Willie Dee Meeks, is coaching the Boys' basketball team at Swiss Memorial Elementary. He coached at Palmer Elementary for years and our gym is named for him.

Palmer United Methodist honored John Kennedy with "Pastor Appreciation Day: on November 8. Mr. Kennedy and his wife Tressie Jo (Gallagher) Kennedy received gifts and everyone enjoyed a morning of refreshments and fellowship.

Mrs. Gussie Flynn taught Sunday school for years at Palmer Nazarene and said that eight of the nine became preachers including Danny Coffelt and Brett Meeks.

Mary Stinnett placed flowers on the grave of her father Scott Cannon on Veteran's Day. He was a U.S. Army soldier in Europe during World War I.

Johnnie Jane Heard Brown came by to see us November 6. We were gone, but found her note. She was raised where I live today, but has lived in McMinnville, TN, for many years.

Alex Gulas of Chattanooga was here visiting relatives recently. He lost his mother, Janice Layne Gulas, earlier this year.

We saw this interesting article recently in the Chattanooga Times Free Press. Grundy County has 34 churches per 10,000 population. That's more per capita than any other county in Southeast Tennessee and North Georgia and North Alabama. We don't doubt it.

The daughters of the late Clyde Sissom visited recently and had lunch at the Wagon Wheel Restaurant. They live in the Chattanooga area and one lives on Sand Mountain, Alabama.

Bobby Lloyd and Perkie Greene along with their children Beth and Bobby were here last month visiting relatives. Bobby Lloyd said a lot of property where they live in North Florida is "for sale" like it is in Grundy County.

It was good to see Shirley Cunningham recently. He's practically deaf, but still gets around good for a World War II veteran.

The Gruetli-Laager Senior Citizens' Center served area veterans a spaghetti dinner and among those attending were Billy Caldwell, Taylor Creighton, Claude Parson, and James Brown. James, son of the late Cecil brown, wore his military hat and jacket.

The Center also went on their annual Tennessee River cruise recently and Kat King and her son Frankie, along with her sister Clara and husband Stanley Partin, went this year. "Frankie enjoyed it so much", the widow of Franklin King said. "Tell Bobby Lloyd and Perkie Greene, "Hello, for us when you write the Palmer news. We love them and appreciate everything they have done for us."

On sick call: Richard Rollins of Chiggertown is recovering from hip-replacement surgery while Harold James is recovering from bypass surgery.

Former Palmer resident Myrtle Dishroon Davis has had a recurrence of cancer according to her grandson. She lives in Jasper and some of you will remember her daughters Barbara and Betty and son Grady "Lurch" Davis.

Our friend Mrs. Donna Gifford Basham is recovering from a painful condition caused by bumping a cyst on a filing cabinet setting up a serious infection. Freaky things can become life threatening sometimes.

We ran into Betty Coffelt at the post office and she's had colon surgery and double knee replacement surgery this summer. Betty's 82 this month and walking like a young person. She says her husband Leck has killed a few squirrels this fall, and they've enjoyed them. Squirrels used to be eaten a lot years ago in Grundy County and were hunted as seriously as deer are today.

When I graduated from Palmer School in 1991 we got two days off for Thanksgiving, and now they get a whole week, so it's true, "time changes everything."

We wish you a very happy Thanksgiving and Merry Christmas as well. We'll be taking a break for the holidays, but will return in January with our Palmer News of all the happenings here "where the good people live."

So until then, enjoy this wonderful time of the year with family and friends and we'll be back refreshed and raring to go in 2010.

December 2009

Mr. Patton will be taking a break during December.