

HAPPY SUMMER!

YES, IT'S HOT, WHO'S READY FOR FALL?

In this issue! Current Membership List;
Huntsville News from 1825; Summertime Snack
Recipes; Letter from our Councilman Bill Kling;
The J. O. (Pick) Johnson Home;
Update from Katie Stamps and HHPC;
Letter from our OTHD Board President
and More!

GARDEN TOUR UPDATE

The Hidden Gardens of Old Town Garden Tour normally takes place in Old Town Historic District every 3 years. This year, 2025, would have been the date for this one but due to the 2024 tree/home damages here gardens were not ready. So the Garden Tour WILL be held next year, the first weekend in June of 2026. We have several gardens signed up now but would love up to 15.

If you think you'd like to put your garden on the tour please let Katie Davis know. Every garden has its special charm and beauty no matter what size it is! Visitors to the gardens do NOT go in the homes.

Our last garden tour hosted 1200 visitors and there was music, entertainment, cold water, refreshments at some homes, etc. We got lots of good feedback!

If you have volunteered for the 2026 Tour we will be in contact with you very soon.

Visitors come from all over the state as well as our northern Tennessee neighbors and everyone loves getting ideas for their own gardens. Thank you for being a part of it!

LETTER FROM OLD TOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT BOARD PRESIDENT,

KATIE DAVIS

Hello Old Town,

Hello Old Town Residents, wow, was May a busy and rainy month. I hope all those showers are bringing you beautiful flowers to enjoy! Speaking of flowers, we are well on our way to planning the 2026 Old Town tour of Hidden Gardens. Please mark your calendars for the first weekend in June of 2026. We hope to see some of your fabulous gardens on tour as well as see your smiling faces during such a fantastic event for the neighborhood. Standby for more information to be released as the date draws nearer.



We are working on planning a few neighborhood events for 2025. We'll have our first porch party soon and are already looking into planning our fourth annual Spooky Fest. We would love your input on these neighborhood events - any suggestions to help us pull these off in the best way possible?

There's a lot of construction happening in Old Town - isn't it wonderful to see so many of the structures in our district getting some much-needed TLC! If you have any questions about keeping up your historic home, please feel free to reach out. I am on Huntsville's Historic Preservation Commission and am always happy to talk old home repair!

I wish you all a wonderful summer - enjoy the warm weather! I look forward to seeing you soon at our upcoming Porch Parties!

All the best,

Katie Davis, President Old Town Historic District



Huntsville News from 1923

Burglary in Lowe Village

The general merchandise store of Chancy & Reed in the Lowe Mill Village was entered some time during last night by burglars who gained their entrance by removing a large glass out of the front of the building. The sheriff's office was notified at 6 o'clock this morning and up to this writing no clue as to the guilty party or parties has been found. It is reported that only a few articles were missing.

Body of Woman Found on Railroad Tracks

Considerable excitement was caused in West Huntsville early this morning when about eight o'clock Marvin Drake, 15, while on his way to school, discovered a woman lying beside the Southern railroad tracks a short distance from West Huntsville, She was lying near a tree and was partly covered with bushes and grass. She appeared to have blood on her arm. Her hat was lying a few feel away and the disheveled condition of her clothes and general appearance convinced the youth that she was dead.

He hurried to nearby homes and informed the people that he had found a dead woman. Another party passing also discovered the woman and came in with the same story, and that they had seen men running from the scene. A party was quickly organized and started for the scene but when they arrived the woman was gone. A search was conducted along the railroad tracks but no sight of her was to be found. There is no explanation and this remains a mystery.

Bits of News

- Miss Virginia McCormick and Miss Grace Walker received a large number of friends at Kildare from 4-6 o'clock. The spacious home presented a spring-like appearance with quantities of beautiful colored spring blossoms arranged throughout the home. In the dining apartment Miss Helen Wynn and Mrs. Philips Peeler sat at corresponding ends of the table pouring tea and coffee,
- According to Huntsville construction experts, the cost of upkeep on floors in homes and apartments has more than doubled during the last 10 years as a result of women wearing high heels. The heels are so narrow at the base, the experts say that they actually dig into the hard wood. This compels closer scraping when the floors are refinished and consequently the wood lasts only half as long.
- Fearing infection in a finger which his cat had bitten, Theodore Jones, of Arab, chopped off the finger with a hatchet. He is expected to live.
- Get a Good Night's Sleep there's nothing like it to put you in shape for the day's duties or pleasures. There's nothing like Dr. Miles' Nervine to bring refreshing, restful slumber Buy a bottle. If it does not help you, we'll give your money back. Your druggist sells it at pre-war prices just \$1 a bottle.

Says His Friends Drugged his Liquor

W. F. Canterbury, who claims to be here from Memphis, and who came here yesterday and registered at the men's boarding house on East Clinton Street, complained to the police that he had been robbed of \$200. He claimed that he went out early in the evening with a party of friends and alleges knockout drops were administered to him. When he awoke, he found himself in his room at the boarding house and his roll of money missing. Bloodhounds trailed the supposed robbers from the boarding house to the railroad yards and it is thought the thieves have gone to Atlanta.

NEIGHBORHOOD FEATURES

Be sure and check out the Old Town Website at oldtownhuntsville.org

NEIGHBORHOOD STARS



Leslie Thomas is with Shaun Collins at University Of Alabama Tuscaloosa.



Earlier this month, Ruby received a grade of Outstanding in piano performance at the State level of the Alabama Music Teachers Association (AMTA) piano auditions. She was additionally named a winner in her division; as a winner two consecutive years, she will perform in the Winners Circle Recital at the AMTA State Conference in Mobile next month. We are thrilled for her and so very proud.



RUBY IS THE DAUGHTER OF LESLIE THOMAS AND SHAUN COLLINS



FROM THE DESK OF BILL KLING

OLD TOWN CITY COUNCILMAN DISTRICT 4

We are finally coming into June and summertime! A lot of activity is happening now. Road resurfacing is getting underway in earnest, now that the winter and spring showers time is coming to an end. Major road arterials throughout the city, including Williams Avenue, Bob Wallace Avenue, Holmes Avenue west of the Parkway, Drake Avenue west of Whitesburg to the Parkway and California Street from Governors Drive to White St. are being resurfaced. Additionally, many neighborhood streets are also being done.

I was pleased to contribute to DOWNTOWN Huntsville's Umbrella Alley, across the street from the 106 Jefferson Hotel. This is a great use of under-utilized alley space, that can be used for cornhole tournaments, tables for sipping libations, and listening to good music. I am glad that with the demolition of the old City Hall, the land area will be used to expand and enhance Big Spring Park. It will be something that all Huntsville citizens can enjoy for years to come. Those that would like a piece of marble from the old City Hall, email me at bill.kling@huntsvilleal.gov and I will be glad to get a piece made available to you. This is a valuable piece of Huntsville's history.

I am regularly walking the streets of downtown, calling in potholes, clogged sewer inlets, dangling cable TV wires and needed areas for street sweeping.

I've been able to get additional street sweepers added to our city fleet and as a result we are doing more frequent street sweeping within residential areas, which of course includes downtown. Regular and more frequent sweeping in neighborhoods helps to make them nicer for people to live in and will help to enhance the beauty of downtown for residents and visitors alike.

The MERTS Center is a project that we've been watching for a long time, and the latest word is that it will be available to be turned over to the individual owners on August 1. This completed project will be a great addition for downtown Huntsville.

I hold a town meeting on the third Monday of each month, 6 PM, in Meeting Room A of the Huntsville Public Library. This is your meeting. All are welcome.

Contact Me!

email: bill.kling@huntsvilleal.gov Phone: (256) 534-7704 Cell (256) 337-3045

I Promise You - I will Respond!

Porch Parties are Happening Soon and You Will Be Invited!

The schedule has not been set yet but we will be having 2-3 porch parties starting soon. As we get the exact date and address we will send out information.

A home with a good porch is volunteered and always includes snacks, drinks, good company and sometimes a unique alcohol drink that is created just for the event. There is usually always musical entertainment.

Bring a snack or finger food of your choice to share with others.

Normally there are between 20-40 neighbor families who attend.

Bring your beverage of choice and chairs if you like.

Come join us for a fun afternoon and meet your neighbors!

Community Watch for Old Town

A community watch group made up of Old Town members who walk or ride bikes frequently through our district looking for anything unusual. You can be a daytime Community Watch member just by being watchful while walking your dog, jogging, driving, etc.

Be very observant and if you see anything out of the ordinary or just suspicious, call the non-emergency police # 256-722-7100. If it's an emergency call 911.

Historic Markers for Your Home

You've seen the Historic Markers that many homeowners have in front of their homes. These are ordered and purchased usually in the summer timeframe. The homeowner receives a form to fill out with historic information about their home, then sends the application to the Old Town Board. The plaque and/or post is ordered and received within a month or so. Mike Self is the contact person to get your historic marker, he can be reached at email drmself007@gmail.com

Good Information Links

A wealth of local historic info and great home photos - Huntsville History Collections - www.huntsvillehistorycollection.org/

Old Town Website link - oldtownhuntsville.org/

Huntsville Historic Foundation - historichuntsville.org/

Making changes to your historic home? be sure and go to this link: huntsvilleal.gov/inspection/documents/HHPC.APPLICATION.pdf

Whether you are an OTHD member or not, we need your email address in order to send you time-sensitive critical information like this. The printed Gazette's come out 4 times a year and are in digital form as well, so that we can get updated information to you instantly.

To send us your updated information, please email oldhuntsville@gmail.com

Summertime Snacking



Nine-Layer Dip

1 can refried beans

1 small carton sour cream

1 4-oz. can green chilies, chopped

1/2 pkg. taco seasoning 1 carton avocado dip

1 8-oz. can black olives, chopped

2 large tomatoes, chopped

1 bunch green onions, chopped with greens

1-1/2 c. shredded cheddar cheese

Combine the beans and green chilies with juice. Spread beans in a large casserole dish and sprinkle with a bit of garlic powder.

Mix the sour cream and taco seasoning. Over the beans layer the avocado, then olives, sour cream, tomatoes, green onions, and top with the shredded cheese. Serve, while the beans are still hot, with warmed tortilla chips and picante sauce.

Tipsy Garlic Shrimp

1/2 c. butter

4 cloves garlic, crushed

8 oz. whole mushrooms, stems removed

1 T. lemon juice

12 oz. fresh shrimp, peeled and deveined

1 c. white wine

2 T. cornstarch mixed with just enough water to dissolve

Melt the butter in a large skillet. Add the garlic and mushrooms. Gently mix in the lemon juice and shrimp. Saute for 1 minute on each side, til pink. Add the wine, increase

heat and bring to a boil. Remove from heat and add to the corn-starch mixture. Return to flame til sauce is thickened, serve over brown rice.

Onion Crisp Chicken Breasts

4 chicken breasts

3 T. light mayonnaise

3 T. dry bread crumbs

1 packet instant beef-flavored broth mix

2 T. minced onion flakes

Rinse and pat dry chicken. Layer it in a shallow baking pan that has been sprayed with Pam, preheat your oven to 350 degrees.

Spread mayonnaise over the chicken evenly. Combine the remaining ingredients in a small bowl, and sprinkle over the chicken breasts. Press the crumb mixture down into the mayonnaise, bake uncovered for 45 minutes.

Bacon and Green Beans

3 slices bacon, cut in 1/2" pieces 1 can (16 oz) French-style green beans

2 green onions, chopped

1 t. lemon juice

2 t. cornstarch

1/2 t. sugar

Salt and pepper

Fry bacon, drain. Drain beans, reserve 1/2 cup liquid; add beans and onions to bacon. Combine bean liquid and lemon juice; stir in cornstarch. Add to beans; heat til sauce is thick, add sugar and salt/pepper to taste. Enough for 5.

Ruth Hursh's Peach Crisp

1 c. brown sugar

1 c. flour

1/4 t. cinnamon

1/8 t. nutmeg

1/3 c. butter

2-3 c. fresh peaches, thinly sliced

Mix dry ingredients together, then cut in 1/3 cup butter.

Pour the fresh peaches, sliced thin, into a buttered pie plate. Place dry mixture on top to cover the peaches, place in 350 degree oven and cook for 30-35 minutes or until the top is browned.

Serve with vanilla ice cream or homemade whipped cream.

Chocolate Chip Pecan Crunch

2 c. plain flour

I t. salt

1 t. baking soda

2 sticks butter

1 c. brown sugar

1 c. granulated sugar

1-1/2 t. vanilla

2 eaas

2 c. semi-sweet chocolate chips

1 1/2 c. chopped pecans

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. In large bowl mix the flour, salt, baking soda - set aside. Melt the butter in pan, add the sugars, vanilla, eggs. Pour into the dry mixture, mix well. Add the chips and nuts, mixing well.

Spray cooking spray onto cookie sheets, drop batter by teaspoonfulls about three inches apart. Bake for 7-9 minutes. Cool and serve.



FROM THE OFFICE OF HUNTSVILLE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION AND PRESERVATIONIST

KATIE STAMPS

Hello residents of Old Town!

We just wrapped another successful Preservation Month campaign in May. This year's theme of "Harnessing the Power of Place" focused on the role of data in preserving the power of place through new digital tours, web applications, photos and videos.

A fantastic slate of Preservation Month events kicked off with another successful Five Points

PorchFest on Saturday, May 3 along Pratt Avenue. It's always fun to gather with neighbors and welcome visitors in the historic districts. I know Old Town is familiar with the hard work it takes to put on a big production like this, and the city appreciates neighborhoods being willing to host community events.

Our featured event "Then & Now: The Role of Data in Preservation" took place on Thursday, May 15 in the second-floor lobby of Huntsville City Hall. At this event, we launched the new digital Discover Downtown Huntsville walking tour as well as the Historic Huntsville Image Collection Viewer recently created by the City's Geographic Information System (GIS) department. Dozens of photographs from the collection, which features over 11,000 historic images of Huntsville, were on display in the lobby throughout Preservation Month. Below are links you can use to explore these online resources:

GIS Image Collection Viewer:

https://maps.huntsvilleal.gov/lmageCollectionViewer/?view=search&c=0&q=0 Discover Downtown Huntsville Digital Walking Tour:

https://theclio.com/tour/2819

I had a great time chatting with fellow history buffs at our Preservation Happy Hour on Tuesday, May 20. Hosted by Baker & Able, the rooftop bar at 106 Jefferson Hotel, we had a lively discussion and shared ideas about how we can better preserve Huntsville history. This event is open to the public, so I invite you to join us next year!

While rain caused a few tour date cancellations, I was able to close out Preservation Month with a guided Discover Downtown Huntsville walking tour on Thursday, May 29. I developed this walking tour to share the evolution and history of downtown Huntsville's commercial district from its earliest settlers to the Space Race and beyond. It was exciting to share with them about the videos and photographs on the new digital tour now available on the Clio app.

I led a couple of walking tours in Old Town for LearningQuest last month and one lucky group got to hear stories from Old Town's very own Jerry Barclay! The groups were in awe of your beautiful homes and so appreciative for the work YOU do to preserve Huntsville history.

As always, please reach out to me with any questions!

Katie Stamps

256.650.4779

katherine.stamps@huntsvilleal.gov

REMEMBERING JAMES OLIVER (PICK) JOHNSON

by Jim Johnson

"Dear Ms. Stamps,



J. O. Johnson High School

My sisters, Ann Johnson Nielson and Beth Johnson Osteen, and I are the children of James Oliver (Pick) Johnson and are proud natives of Huntsville. We now live in Nashville, Tennessee and Houston, Texas. During our visits to Huntsville we are pleased to see the robust and attractive growth of the city. We are equally pleased to see the significant effort to preserve its history and culture, especially the designation of the Historic Districts.

On a recent visit we noticed that our second home in Huntsville, 704 Randolph Avenue, SE is in one of the Districts, we believe the Old Town Historic District. We also noticed that homes in the Districts show the names of the original owner. In the case of 704 Randolph Avenue, SE, the designer, builder and original owner was our father, Pick Johnson. The house was designed and built in 1947. We lived in this home until our father designed and built a family home on Criner Road in Jones Valley in 1964.

The bungalow on the southeast corner of the lot was also designed and built by our father in 1951. It was to be the home for our grandparents, Arthur Tee and Bertha Olissa Wall Johnson after they sold their farm in Monrovia. Our grandmother passed away before it was completed. Our grandfather then lived with us in the main house until his death in 1952.

Jan Williams, a former Commission Board Member and Margaret Ann Goldsmith, a prominent advocate of Huntsville's Historical Preservation were guests of ours in this home. Jan and his family were neighbors on Pratt Avenue and later on White Circle, SE. Current Commission Board Member, Peter Lowe, is a long time family friend although he did not know us when we lived at 704 Randolph Avenue.

Given the foregoing, how do we apply to have 704 Randolph Avenue, SE designated as the J.O. (Pick) Johnson House? Thank you for any guidance you can provide us for making our request for this designation.

Sincerely yours, Jim Johnson



"Pick" Johnson

A Little History of the Home

704 Randolph Avenue, SE History and Architecture

The house at 704 Randolph Avenue, SE was designed and built by J. O. (Pick) Johnson in 1947. Mr. Johnson was also the general contractor for the house. The original house consisted of three bedrooms, two bathrooms, a kitchen, utility room, dining room, living room and screened porch on the west side of the house. A detached one car garage was also built at that time. The house was designed in a modified bungalow architectural style with red brick exterior. It is similar to other bungalows in the Old Town District. The red brick is typical of the brick made from the red clay found in north Alabama. The garage was designed in a similar style with red brick exterior.

In 1953, a "grandparents" cottage in the same architectural style was designed and constructed on the southeast side of the lot adjacent to Wells Avenue. This house consisted of one bedroom, bathroom, kitchen and dining/living room.

A brick grill was constructed adjacent to the cottage. It was designed by Dr. Walter Jones, a locally renowned griller of barbequed chicken!

In 1956, the attic was finished to provide another bedroom and bathroom.

The J. 0. Johnson family occupied this house as their family home until a new family home was designed and built on Criner Road in Jones Valley in 1964.

Editor's Note: Mr. Johnson and the current owners of the home are working together to design and erect an Old Town historic marker that will be in place later in the summer.

2025 Membership To Date

Gabriel & Katherine Day James & Karen Cotton John & Mary Jennings Anna Baker Warren & Robb Hereford Ann Brown Max & Susan Gurgew Nancy Sheppard Karen Maroon **Cathey Carney Steve & Penny Sumners** Richard & Michelle Buchanan Lisa & Wayne Gregg Mike Olheiser & Nicole Bock Alice Lawler **David & Tera Wilder** Kyle & Alyson Scholl **David & Lori Smith David & Becky Carstens** George & Laura Jo Hamilton Cathy & Mike Self Ron & Ree Ann Jolly Barbara & Michael Holbrook **David & Margaret Powell** Bill & Tanjie Kling Edgar & Frances Dalrymple II **David & Jodi Nutall** Rick & Jacquie Taylor **Jean Montgomery Blakely Sherrod Emile & Linda Ault** James & Suzanne Fordham **Laurie Grande Taylor Hubbard and Joseph Don & Sherry Woody Charles & Andrea Jones** Mandy & Brian Roberts Ramu & Lakshmi Nallamala **Thomas & Phyllis McAlpin** Pat Pavne **Curt & Janine Harrelson Rob & Kathryn Van Peursem**

Karen Totten Jerry Barclay Jacqueline Davis John & Lori Walters **Charles & Barbara Hopkins Carol & Wayne Wright** Ann Brown **Beth & Ray Morring** Tom Snow Sheri & Mike Belmont **Lisa Montgomery** Jan Dorning Renda Campbell Lisa Norton **Lucy Brown James & Christine Meeks Deb & Don Thomas Rosemary Little** Derek & Shannon Simpson **Dan McKitrick** Mark & Jane Sweeney Mr./Mrs. John Mitchell Jr. **Drew & Leslie Lockhart** James & Lori Webber L.A. Dwver Doug & Karen Madison John & Wimberley Watts Jeff & Michelle Stanfield Malcolm & Betty Tarkington **Rosemary Reeder** Richard Ashmead

Donna Jean Brown **Graham & Sarah Burgess** Ralph Peterson Jr. Matt & Katie Carter Michael & Amy Cosgrove Sandy & Bob Hovde **Charlotte Dombrowski** Steven Clontz Angle Jackman John & Peggy Richard Tom & Allen Young Ron & Joanna Collins Chris & Emily Sayers Katie Davis William & Rachel McDaniel Diana Davidson Jacquie Williams Foster & Virginia McDonald Coy & Brenda Hallmark **Robert Sutton** Charles & Shari Miller Steve & Amy Cornelious Jack & Emily Burwell Johnny & Alana Burks . Ricky & Reginia Stockton Cason & Emily Elam **Dorcas Harris** Michael & Sheri Belmont Richard & Shannon Raleigh Jim & Patty Grier **Bob & Laura Hash**

Memberships are good from January - December. Your donations are tax deductible as the Old Town Historic District organization is a non-profit 501c3 organization.

Every dollar you give goes to the improvements and special events in Old Town - such as the Christmas Luminaries, Summer Social, Fall SpookyFest, Community Safety Events, Porch parties, etc. We are a special neighborhood and your interest and involvement is so needed!

YOU CAN'T GET TO HUNTSVILLE FROM HERE

by Gene Primm



In 1955, I worked for Monroe Calculating Machine Company. I was sent to St. Louis, Missouri to a service school. I left Huntsville from the old bus station on Clinton Street.

After leaving Huntsville we stopped at what seemed to be every crossroads and country store we came to. It took me eighteen and a half hours to get to St. Louis.

While in school I met another employee who was from Nashville, TN. He had come to St. Louis by automobile. I told him about my trip by bus and suggested to him that I would pay his gas expenses if he would let me ride back to Nashville with him. Then I could get a bus into Huntsville, saving me many hours of travel time. He agreed to this and after the school was over we left on our trip to Nashville.

We arrived in Nashville just a little after midnight. I asked him to take me to the bus station so I could catch a bus to Huntsville. When we got to the bus station I found out the next bus to Huntsville did not leave until 7:00 that morning. I decided that was too long to wait so I asked my friend if he would take me to the Huntsville Highway so I could hitchhike on in to Huntsville. Hopefully, I thought, I would be in Huntsville long before the bus ever left from Nashville.

The first car that came by stopped and said he was going as far as Murfreesboro. He was a bus driver just getting off from work. I really appreciated him stopping and thought this hitchhiking was going to be easy; it was a piece of cake.

After he let me out in Murfreesboro I stood there for hours without getting another ride. As it started to get daylight I began to get worried. Then finally as the traffic started to pick up, a man stopped and asked me where I was headed.

After I told him I was going to Huntsville, AL. He told me to hop in and that he would take me as far as Tullahoma, TN.

I thought for a minute and asked him how far Huntsville was from Tullahoma and he told me about seventy miles. I asked him how far it was from Murfreesboro to Huntsville and he said about seventy miles, but he said it was a beautiful drive to Tullahoma.

After spending the night standing on the side of the road, I really was not interested in viewing the country-side. Despairing of any more hitchhiking I asked him if there was a bus station there, and after he replied "yes", I got in the car for the seventy mile drive to Tullahoma.

The stranger dropped me off at the bus station a few hours later. Hurriedly, I approached the ticket agent and asked if there was a bus leaving for Huntsville, AL anytime soon. He told me I was in luck, there was a bus just getting ready to leave that was going to Huntsville. Without even a pause I said: "Give me a ticket."

The agent gave me my ticket and pointed the bus out to me and I was on my merry way.

As I approached the bus I saw on the front that it was going to Nashville, TN. Puzzled, I ran back inside the bus station and told the ticket agent that the bus he had pointed out was going to Nashville, not Huntsville.

He then informed me you could not get to Huntsville from Murfreesboro without going to Nashville first!

I took the bus back to Nashville and caught the same bus to Huntsville that I would have caught anyway if I had not spent the night hitchhiking through the dark back roads of Tennessee.



WELCOME NEW NEIGHBORS!

If you know of a new resident who has just moved into Old Town let someone on the board know - we like to welcome all newcomers with some fresh-baked treat and a welcome package about our district!

Contact Kyle Scholl at (678) 641-1171

Our Old Town Historic District is a very desirable place to live.

Many newcomers who are moving to Huntsville want the open front porches, increasing property values, nosy neighbors who watch out for each other, beautiful gardens and unique older homes that are fascinating to see and learn about the history.

But, not that many homes in this district go up for sale so newcomers have to resort to moving to ordinary, boring suburbs.

So if you're a new Old Town neighbor, WELCOME!!

2025 BOARD MEMBERS AND EMAIL ADDRESSES:

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Our City Councilman	Dill Ixiling	