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Legacy is published by and for the Oliver Springs Historical Society. We welcome submissions, both in text articles and pictures, current and upcoming events, "in memoriam", reminiscences, etc..

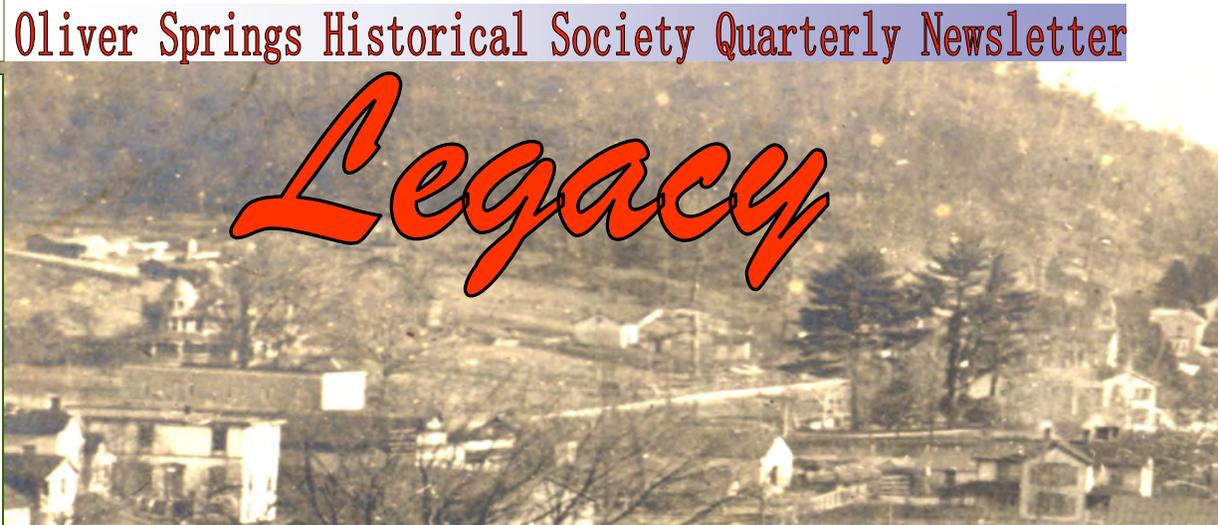
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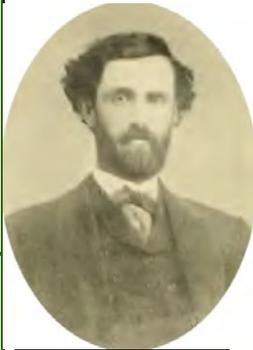
# Legacy



## The Richards Sisters Murders

Of all the doings, comings and goings, intrigue, subterfuge, joy, grief, birth, deaths, and calamities ever to befall our community, none has ever caused more protracted discussion among the residents of this little town than the question that still begs to be answered: who killed the Richards Sisters?

It seems apparent that few if any towns exist without undercurrents of strife and grudges often long past but seldom forgotten. Such seems to be the case with our lovely little burg as well. The picture above provides an ample backdrop for an examination of a case in point. Consider the Richards and the Hannahs. Brought together by a wholly unnatural set of circumstances borne out of the ashes of the great Civil War, The Joseph Richards family and the John Hannah family were in many ways polar opposites. It may have been asking too much to expect them to coexist in such close proximity.



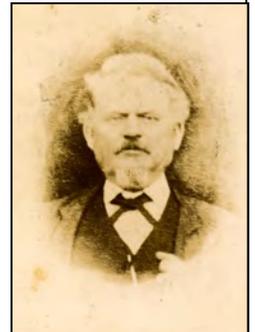
Maj. John Hannah

Major John Hannah was a Confederate war veteran. Seriously wounded in the Battle of Shiloh, Major Hannah settled in Oliver Springs with his wife Lillie and young son Harvey, leasing a house and property from Northern industrialist Joseph Richards, who had come south in the wake of the Civil War to take advantage of investment opportunities in the war-ravaged

region. The relationship between the families soon became strained, with Major Hannah succumbing to the old wound in 1880, and Joseph Richards subsequently taking legal action to evict the Hannahs from the mansion on the hill above Main and Spring Streets. The mansion burned soon thereafter, and was replaced by an ornate Victorian mansion with turret room towering skyward. Lillie Hannah remarried a Dr. McFerrin, and bought the old Colonial Hall residence across the street. Thus the placid townscape of Oliver Springs became the stage for repeated legal wrangling between not only these two families, but between cousins, grandchildren of Joseph Richards, some of whom seethed at the notion that they had been unfairly dealt with in the settlement of Joseph Sr.'s



Robbie Underwood



Joseph Richards Sr.



1st Richards House  
 Burned in early 1890's

Continued on pg. 2

estate upon his passing in 1888. The aforementioned parties quarreled over land, boundaries, easements, timber and the property where the fabled springs emanated from the ground. These legal maneuverings continued until, in February of 1940, sisters Ann and Margaret Richards were found brutally murdered along with domestic worker Leonard "Powder" Brown.

Aaaahhh... Intrigue and mystery.....

February 5th, 1940 was a bitterly cold day in Oliver Springs. Schoolteacher Mary Richards, concerned because repeated calls, then hand-carried notes to her sisters Ann and Margaret had gotten no response, rushed home, then almost immediately lurched



L-R: Mary, Margaret, Mother Margaret Williams Richards, and Ann Richards, shortly before the mother's passing



out of the house and down the drive, screaming that "they were all up there dead". Young Fred Hooper, whose mother owned the drug store downtown, was standing nearby consorting with a school chum when he saw and heard the commotion. This tortured cry set in play a sequence of events that both perplexes and boggles the mind of one considering the tragedy to this day. In the days, weeks, and years that have passed since that time, there are still more questions than answers. We do know that sometime in the late morning or early afternoon of that day, a person or persons entered the house seen above

and at right, shot Ann Richards in the kitchen, then ascended the staircase where Margaret Richards was accosted and shot the first time. Margaret apparently struggled with her attacker, then made her way down to the landing where she was fatally shot in the head. Sometime later, errand boy Leonard "Powder" Brown received a fatal shot to the head. The details surrounding Brown's death are fuzzy to this day. Why was the young house worker killed? Some thought him to actually be the killer, who, in a panic after the killings, turned the gun on himself. Proponents of this theory included Anderson County Sheriff Bob Smith, local undertaker Bill Sharp and Constable Lon Coker. This theory, however, was dismissed a few days later at an official coroner's inquest, where the coroner's jury decided that the three had "met their fates at the hands of a person or persons unknown." Testimony was offered regarding Powder Brown's great fear of firearms.



A crowd gathered in the cold rain at the kitchen door of the Richards Mansion. Sister Ann was found lying in the floor just inside this door with a single gunshot wound to the head.

Although even today botched investigations are not as rare as we would like to think, one can but imagine what Sheriff Smith thought upon arriving at the Richards Mansion to find sisters Ann and Margaret dead along with ostensible killer Leonard "Powder" Brown, and having to retrieve the murder weapon from the gathered crowd where it had been passed about for possibly over an hour, thereby dashing any hope for fingerprint matching. I have spoken at length with many people about events of that infamous day, and most are like me... they find it hard to believe that protection of a crime scene such as this one would be so poorly understood or observed, even in 1940. By published accounts of the day, the Anderson County sheriff arrived to find not only the gun having been handled by probably half the men in town, but the house open and persons wandering through it apparently at will. Of course, we must remind ourselves that the sciences and disciplines that make up modern forensics were far less advanced in those days.. although there were many mature facets of crime scene investigation in use at that time, such as powder residue testing, ballistics testing, fingerprinting, and some chemical analysis. The crime scene was forever tainted almost from the time the sisters and young Brown were discovered.

If not Powder Brown, then, who did murder the sisters? Much information has been gleaned in the years since the murders, information that reveals the Richards family, although much loved and respected in the community, were not without detractors and enemies. We continue to study the information at hand, as well as seeking new leads on the ghastly killings.

# Notes From the Chairman

WE'VE HAD A GREAT FEW MONTHS, AND SEEM TO BE MOVING RIGHT ALONG WITH OUR BUILDING. SEVERAL FOLKS HAVE VISITED THE PROJECT AT THE GARAGE, AND IT'S HARD TO WORK FOR SHOWING THEM AROUND, SO IF ANYONE WANTS TO BE A TOUR GUIDE ON TUESDAYS.....COME ON DOWN. CABINETS WERE DONATED FOR THE KITCHEN THIS MONTH. OUR HISTORY LESSON ON THE OLIVER SPRINGS HOTEL WENT VERY WELL. ROBBIE UNDERWOOD DID A GREAT JOB NARRATING. SOME OF THE LADIES CAME DRESSED FOR THE ERA OF THE HOTEL. VERY GOOD PROGRAM AND WE HOPE TO HAVE MANY MORE. THANKS TO JERRY WHITE FOR PUTTING TOGETHER ANOTHER GOOD GOSPEL SINGING FOR US. IF YOU WEREN'T THERE, YOU MISSED A BLESSING. THANKS TO EACH OF YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT AND HELP. IT WAS ALSO GREAT TO SEE CLEAT BOLING ABLE TO COME TO THE SINGING. JULIA DANIEL HAS THE FALL FESTIVAL UNDER CONTROL, BUT SHE WILL NEED HELP, SO PLEASE VOLUNTEER. OUR NEXT MEETING IS MONDAY, JUNE 1ST.....HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE.



Your Chairman,

*Eddie Coker*

## C.S. (Sonny) Harvey Jr. Gospel Singing

**The annual C.S. (Sonny) Harvey Jr. Gospel Singing** was held Saturday night, and was another resounding success. One of the things that Mr. Harvey loved most in this life was good Gospel music, and the harmonies reverberating through the old Beech Park Activities Building were a fitting testimony to Mr. Harvey's life and legacy. This event has always been free, but the love outpoured from those grateful souls in attendance has helped to further finance the C.S. Harvey Jr. Archives and the other resources that will be housed in the Abston Building when it is complete. What a noble and harmonious way to honor our late beloved chairman and friend! We love you, Mr. Harvey, and it is to your memory and the Christian witness you bore that we continue this proud tradition..... *(Robbie Underwood)*



Gospel Singing Photographs by Wesley Lee.. Thanks Wesley!

# What Does The Manhattan Project Mean To Me?

By Julia Daniel

*(Note from Robbie: In the entire history of our town, there are several events that serve as defining harbingers of changing fortunes. The coming of the railroad in the latter decades of the 19th century, the building of the Oliver Springs Hotel, the burning of the Hotel in 1905, the opening of the Windrock Mine No. 1 Driftmouth just after the turn of the century, and no doubt other iconic happenings could round out the list. Of these, possibly none has helped to shape the fortunes of our town and surrounding communities to a greater extent than the coming of the Manhattan Project during some of the darkest days of WWII. Suddenly gone were the days where a young man had to leave the area to find lucrative employment for his family. Our sons and daughters flocked to the opportunities made available by the massive construction and manufacturing jobs that were quickly available. Thanks to Julia for her article about this project that helped to make better the lives of a great many of our families.)*

## What Does The Manhattan Project (MP) Mean To Me?

Education and a better opportunity for my family and future generations. As I reflect back on the MP, although I was not born until 1948, I know that my family and others benefitted from this project. My father's family lived in the Oliver Springs area and during that time my father and his brother were well known farmers and were able to sell county hams, corn and other vegetables and received a good price for their products. Other family members would take in boarders to live in their home, provided home cook meals, and provided laundry services which provided additional family income. Several family members had the opportunity to work in the newly developed area as laborers, house keepers, and cooks.

I was told that during that time the wages were \$0.50 an hour and it was increased to about \$4.00 an hour and that was "good money." During that time period coming out of the great depression, family would help each other and family members would provide child care services, and the elders were taking care of in the homes. When I was born, there were three generations living in the same house: my grandmother, my parents, my older sister, my uncle and his wife and son, and my father's sister a total of nine family members including me.



Shift change at the Y-12 Weapons Plant in the early days of operation



Women workers stationed at the control panels of the massive calutrons, a type of mass spectrometer developed during the Manhattan project for the purpose of extracting the Highly fissile isotope U-235 from nonfissile uranium. U-235 comprises less than 1% of uranium found in its natural state, and must be separated to a high level of enrichment to be useful for both nuclear power and nuclear weaponry. These ladies seen above were quickly known as "Calutron Girls".

receiving good money, it went further back then than it does today. Family members were given the opportunity to pay for transportation for their children to go high school in other towns, because black children had no high school in Oliver Springs and several family members went to Knoxville (Austin High) and also in Jefferson City to go to Nelson Merry High School. Family members could go to college and become Tuskegee Airmen, second generations of doctors, lawyers, and third generations of teachers, which have provided over 200 years of teaching children.

Today, family members are foreign missionaries and "Helping Hands." Family members have been members of the "Clinton 12," members have been doctors at John Hopkins, and later moved to Duke Hospital as top doctors in the



Y-12 Weapons Plant. Of all the facilities born out of the Manhattan Project, only Y-12 continues to be recognized by its wartime code name. Today Y-12 not only continues its mission of providing components for all manner of nuclear deterrent weaponry, but is now the repository for uranium for the U.S. Government.

country. Today, family members have been third generations of college graduates. I would also like to think today even of myself who started working for the Atomic Energy Commission in 1967 and retired from the Department of Energy with over thirty years of government services who started out as an assistant typist and retired as an Information Services Specialist after receiving many outstanding opportunities working with the government. This gave me the opportunity with the help of God to give my two children and my five grandchildren a brighter future and an opportunity to make a difference and make this a better place to live.



X-10, now known as Oak Ridge National Laboratory, is still commonly referred to as X-10 by longtime residents of this area.

Today, I serve as chairperson for the Concern for Students (Edgar Fritz Memorial Scholarship) for my

church which have provided over 40 scholarships, president of the Mayme Carmichael School Organization, chairperson of the October Sky Festival, and just retired as a board member of the Oliver Springs Historical Society with over 10 years of service to explore how I can give back to my family, church, and town. I believe that the Manhattan Project has contributed to the success of my family and others within the town of Oliver Springs and surrounding areas.

# Doyle Russell



Doyle Samuel Russell, age 65, a resident of Harriman, passed away Saturday, March 21, 2015, at Roane Medical Center.

Doyle was born August 5, 1949 in Harriman. He lived in and grew-up in Oliver Springs. Before moving to Harriman in 2000, he lived in Knoxville for twelve years.

Doyle was the owner and operator of Ace, Inc. in Harriman. He was an expert machinist and he formerly worked at the K-25 Federal Plant in Oak Ridge and at TemCo in Oliver Springs with his late father.

He served his country in the United States Army during the Vietnam War. While serving he received several commendations, including medals, citations and ribbons.

He was preceded in death by his father, Hubert "Mutt" Russell and by several aunts and uncles.

Doyle is survived by his wife, Jamie Beal Russell of Harriman, by three children, Lori Russell of Wartburg, Keri Russell of Harriman and Sam Russell of Harriman, by his mother, Laura Nelson Russell of Oliver Springs, and by grandchildren; Wesley Steelman, Holden Russell, Morgan Russell, Mia Russell, Hannah Mayfield, Kera Russell and Kaden Russell.

Additionally, he is survived by a sister, Karen Davis of Oak Ridge, by a brother, Allen Russell and wife Geneva, of Crossville, and by several nieces, nephews, extended family and special friends.

The family received friends Monday, March 23, 2015, at Sharp Funeral Home. In lieu of flowers the family request memorial contributions be made to Wounded Warriors, PO Box 75817, Topeka, KS, 66675. Graveside services and burial with complete military honors were held Tuesday, March 24, 2015, at 11:00 am, at the Russell Family Cemetery. Sharp Funeral Home is serving the Russell family.

# Barbara Griffin

Today as we reflect on the life of Barbara deAllen Coates Griffin, we can now hold in our hearts and memory all of the good that characterized her life for over eighty-nine years. She made her transition from her earthly home into eternity on Tuesday, April 28, 2015, while at home in Oliver Springs, Tennessee.

Daughter of the late Floyd and Eva Coates and sister of the late Floyd, Jr. (late Viola) Coates, she was born in Danville, Virginia, August 6, 1925. Barbara was educated in her native school system, and attended Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia. She transferred to Knoxville College where she graduated summa cum laude with a degree in music and met the love of her life, Bronce Odell Griffin. This union brought her to Oliver Springs, Nashville, and back to Oliver Springs where she began her ministry at Little Leaf Missionary Baptist Church. Before her declining health, she served very faithfully as a deaconess, was a member of the Senior Choir, was Vacation Bible School musician and classroom teacher. Barbara was also a charter member of the Concern for Students Committee. As a highly accomplished musician, she rendered her services during weddings, special holiday programs, and taught piano lessons to children throughout the community and surrounding areas.

During the early years, she was an educator in Roane County and was employed as a receptionist for a very prominent local doctor.

Those left to lament in the memory of her afterglow are her devoted husband of 64 years, Bronce Odell Griffin of the home, two daughters Broncine (Steve) Carter of Laurel, MD, and Ronolda (Robert) Dooley of Falls Church, VA; three sons, Gregory (Mitzi) Griffin of Oliver Springs, TN, Joe Bradley (Marilyn) Griffin and Dr. Tchad (Suzanne) Griffin all of Knoxville, TN, grandchildren, Monika Cope of Lanham, MD, Amanda (Yok) Weaver and Jessica Griffin all of Murfreesboro, TN, Joshua Griffin of Nashville, TN, Chilae Frazier of Knoxville, TN, Charles (Heli) Frazier of San Diego, CA, and Keith Griffin of Knoxville, TN; great-grandchildren, Isaiah Cope of Lanham, MD, Myles and Adelin Weaver of Murfreesboro, TN, and Caidyn Frazier of San Diego, CA; one sister-in-law, Alma Fletcher of Oliver Springs, TN; and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, other relatives, and friends.

The memorial observation and family visitation were held on Monday, May 4, 2015, at Little Leaf Missionary Baptist Church, 228 East Tri-County Boulevard, Oliver Springs, TN. The funeral was held at 12:00 Noon, with Elder Thomas W. Dews officiating.

Burial and graveside services were held at Carters Bluff Cemetery in Oliver Springs. Sharp Funeral Home was in charge of the arrangements.



# Cleopatra Halburnt Brown

It is with great sorrow and sense of loss that I report on the passing of Mrs. Cleopatra Halburnt Brown. In all my years in the Historical Society, I never knew a more meek and gracious soul than Mrs. Cleopatra. I cherished the many times I got to talk to her. She acted like I was a cherished friend, and she never failed to greet me with that shy smile that incorporated her whole face, from her eyes to mouth. What a treasure she was! Intelligent and wise, Mrs. Cleopatra was also a poet, writing the most organic and heartfelt lines that got down where people live.

Whenever a person dies, the world moves on; however, there are a very few who leave us wondering how it **can** continue. This Cleopatra Halburnt Brown was such a one. We shall carry on, albeit that we are forever diminished by her absence..... *(Robbie Underwood)*



Cleopatra Halburnt Brown age 86 passed away on May 14, 2015. She was a member of First Baptist Church, Oliver Springs, where she enjoyed being in the Happy Timers group. She was also a member of the Oliver Springs Historical Society.



Born and raised in Oliver Springs and Windrock, a coal miner's daughter, she had fond memories of living at Windrock and attending school and church there. She later moved to Oliver Springs where she graduated from Oliver Springs High School in the class of 1948. She loved school and cherished the friendships with her classmates. She had many interesting stories about her childhood growing up on Windrock Mountain and life in those days. She was always busy, writing poetry, reading, sewing and trying new crafts. She was very interested in genealogy, family photos and antiques. She always said there was not enough time to do everything she wanted to do. She raised eight children with home cooking, loving patience and soft spankings. Teaching songs, games and crafts, she had as much fun as they did.

Preceded in death by; husband, John Brown Jr. and daughter Barbara Brown. Mother, Cleopatra (Cross) Halburnt Webber, father, Edgar Halburnt and step mother Blanche Freels Halburnt. Brothers; John and Edgar (Bud) Halburnt. Sisters; Ruby Halburnt, June Floyd, Edna Walls, and Wilma Farr. Also grandchildren; Mary Jane McCarroll, Nathaniel Leagan, Lisa Pittman, Jason Neil. Daughter-In-Law, Alice Brown.

Survived by children; Mary Sue (Gary) Leagan, Shirley (Danny) Sweeten, John Brown, James (Vickie) Brown, Edgar (Diana) Brown, Linda (Terry) Gilmore, and Daniel Brown. Grandchildren; Julie (Eric) Quillen, Kristen (Todd) Thomason, Lee (Ginger) Sweeten, Melissa (Jack) Swanson, Brenda Bishop, Robert (Bethanie) Gilmore, Michael Gilmore, Ray (Destany) Brown, David Brown, Holly Brown. 17 great-grandchildren, 1 great-great grandchild.

Also survived by brothers; Jim (Barbara) Halburnt, Floyd (Youngnae) Halburnt, Clyde (Ola) Halburnt, Clarence (Carol) Halburnt. Sisters-in-law; Elizabeth Moore, Mable England, Hannah Brown and many extended family members.

The family received friends Saturday, May 16, 2015 at Sharp Funeral Home. The funeral followed at 4:00 P.M. in the funeral home chapel with Reverend Tony Rutherford officiating. Burial followed at the Oliver Springs Cemetery.

The family wishes to thank Covenant Hospice and RN Cheryl Haynes. In lieu of flowers please make a memorial contribution to the Oliver Springs Historical Society, P.O Box 409 Oliver Springs, TN 37840.

**WEALTHY ME**  
Did you know that I am rich?  
You don't think so?  
Well let me tell you,  
Then you will know.  
My house may not be the best,  
As anyone can see.  
But it is "home, sweet home",  
Just where I like to be.  
I wake up in the morning,  
Have plenty food to cook.  
I sit out on my pretty porch  
And give the world a look.  
My flowers, blooming here and there;  
The apple trees are fine  
Beautiful birds and butterflies  
Live in this yard of mine.  
Oft times my house is full  
Of love and laughter;  
Because children and grandchildren  
Visit here together.  
Neighbors, round about me,  
Would lend a helping hand,  
If any trouble comes my way;  
They always understand.  
So, you see, I'm very rich  
In, oh, so many ways.  
I think I really have enough  
To last me all my days.  
Cleopatra H. Brown - 6-21-01

# Richard Boston "RB" Russell

8

How do you measure a giant? By height and girth alone? By bankroll? By possessions he left behind?

I say nay to all these, for were you to reckon only as the world does, you would sadly be discounting the stuff of which real giants are made... virtues like kindness, loyalty, service, brotherly love, just good old fashioned decency... these are the legacy of men like R.B. Russell.

In the five+ years I spent working with the museum project, I was always glad to see Mr. Russell show up. When we had the prison crew, Mr. Russell was often swinging by, bringing drinks and such for the men. He would speak to them as any other man: not condescending, not reprovingly, but with kindness and the telltale manner of a true Christian.

I spoke to Mr. Russell about his illness. The last Historical Meeting he attended, I asked him about his health. He looked at me with a rueful smile and just shook his head.... He knew the outcome. Never did I hear him complaining, just a firm resolve.

I counted him a true friend.

*Robbie*



Richard Boston "RB" Russell, age 87, went home to be with the Lord, February 4, 2015, at his home in Oliver Springs.

R.B. was born November 12, 1927. He grew up and continued to live in Coalfield until his marriage to his late wife of 51 years, Emma Jean Davis Russell.

While living in Coalfield he was recognized as an outstanding football player at Coalfield High School and his athleticism followed him throughout his life.

He entered into the United States Army and served our country during the Korean War where he received several commendations.

He retired from the Tennessee Highway Patrol as a Captain in 1990. He was a great community servant and he worked in various capacities in Oliver Springs. He was a charter member of the Oliver Springs Historical Society, he served on the Oliver Springs Equalization Board, the Oliver Springs Housing Authority Board and he was a longstanding member of the Oliver Springs Lions Club.

He was a faithful Christian and a member of Beech Park Baptist Church. He served Beech Park as a Deacon and he spent countless hours as the Senior Saints Coordinator. Following his retirement he enjoyed gardening and outdoor activities.

In addition to his wife, he was preceded in death by his parents, John William and Ollie Jarnigan Russell, by a sister, Becky Heydel and by brothers; Linis (Jesse), Junior, Kenneth and Willis Russell.

R.B. is survived by daughters; Tammie Barger and Gretchen Byrge and husband, Danny of Oliver Springs, grandchildren; Brooke Wilson and husband, Nate, Brent Barger and wife, Beth and Jonathon Byrge and his Fiancé Lavenia Whitley, and by great-grandchildren; Javen, Bailey and Kylie Barger.

He is also survived by sisters; Arvana Helton, Betsy McGhee and husband, Eugene, Elizabeth Baker and husband, Joe, Lois "Tiny" Foster and Steva Lane Russell, by brother-in-laws, Allen Davis, David Davis and Kenneth Heydel, sister-in-laws; Sherril Jackson and husband, Jackie, Joyce Davis, Judy Lawson and husband, Larry, and by several nieces, nephews, extended family and special friends, including Brian and Chris Davis, who were considered as grandchildren.

The family received friends Sunday, February 8, 2015, at Beech Park Baptist Church. The funeral followed at 8:00 pm, in the church sanctuary, with Pastor Robbie Leach and Pastor Gary Smith officiating. Burial and graveside services with full military honors, were held Monday, February 9, 2015, at 2:00 pm, at Estes Cemetery in Coalfield. In lieu of flowers the family request memorial contributions be made to the Thompson Cancer Survival Center, the Estes Cemetery fund or to the Oliver Springs Historical Society. An online guest book is available at [www.sharpfh.com](http://www.sharpfh.com) where we invite you to leave condolences and or messages. Sharp Funeral Home is honored to serve the Russell family.

# Mayme Carmichael School Organization, Inc.

The Mayme Carmichael School Organization, Inc. (MCSO) celebrated its 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual School Reunion on Saturday, May 2, 2015 at the Disabled American Veterans Building, in Oliver Springs. This year's theme was "We Are A Family." The family highlights this year were the Hall Family and Knaff Family. Special recognition was given to Omer Cox for his outstanding contribution to the Carmichael Park. Upcoming events: BBQ Cook-Off, Saturday, June 13; 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Banquet, Saturday, August 22; and Fish Fry at the October Sky Festival, Saturday October 17, 2015. For additional information regarding the MCSO, contact Julia H. Daniel at [865-789-0846](tel:865-789-0846).



## Random Pictures



This picture was taken from the front yard of the house that formerly sat where G.A. Mead's house is today. The people are not known, but are possibly from the Cross family. The car picture above seems to have been from the same family pictures.

# Preservation Honor Roll

By

10

Robbie Underwood

One sad fact of life when dealing with the legacy of our precious little town is in remembering all the once proud houses and commercial buildings that have been allowed to deteriorate to the point where they are but a forlorn shadow of their former glory. Sadder still are the houses that have been demolished under the dubious banner of “progress”. A historic structure that is allowed to decay and ultimately fall to the wrecking ball exists from that point as a shameful footnote to shortsightedness and disconcerting lack of historical sensibility. We could quickly assemble a hall of shame were we of a mind to do so; however, once a building is gone, all protestations irrevocably become moot. Many times the structures that follow contribute to a vapid sameness, a lack of distinction. How many communities have fallen victim to the wretched “urban renewal” as did our town in the wake of the flood of 1967? So many houses had stood the test of time, only to be sabotaged by a shortsighted plan that replaced precious landmarks with tract houses and low rent cookie cutter developments. It is to our shame that the dollar so often reigns supreme.

Ah, but on the other hand.....

There are those in our community who understand the value of legacy, who appreciate that not all can translate into dollars and cents, and who happen to think the singular character of our little community is such that it is worth preserving, often at considerable cost. To these individuals we tip our collective hats and offer our highest commendations.



Diggs Home— ancestral home of Bettina Diggs Cox, this house has been lovingly and painstakingly restored, even having the lovely porch rebuilt that was unceremoniously torn away by the highway right of way when the Tri-County Boulevard was graded. We are just in awe of this wonderful restoration!



Maurice Phillips has undertaken the renovation of much of Roane Street as a restoration labor of love. The house above and the two below are testimonials to his perseverance and his dedication to legacy restoration. All who love our town, especially the community in the heart of old town, will certainly appreciate Maurice's work. Well Done!



# STRUTT ST

by

Julia H. Daniel



William Samuel  
Arthur Crozier

What is in a name and where did the name Strutt Street come from? I was told by my Aunt Mamie Lou several years ago that Strutt Street was named for her Uncle Strutt. "Uncle Strutt" was a nickname given to William Samuel Arthur Crozier who was born November 19, 1887, in Oliver Springs, TN, to the parents of Jack (Jackson) Crozier and Lizzie Robinson Crozier. William's siblings were: Minnie Mae (Julian Hopper), Josephine Nora Addie, Laura Anna (Walter Griffin), Hannah Mae (Israel Cross), Frank Hulen, John Roe (Newel Brewer), and Bronce. In an interview with Earl Johnson, he said that Jack Crozier said that William was one of the best mule handlers in this part of the country. Jack had a team of eight mules and he and his sons moved Jeff Ollis' house with those mules. William, his father, and brothers were loggers, sawmill operators (owners), and outstanding carpenters. The 1910 U.S. Census for Roane County listed Jackson, Sam (William) as a Teamster:

hauling logs and his sister Minnie as a cook: log camp.

Samuel enjoyed showing off beautiful ladies in his car. Samuel was also a World War I Veteran. William was killed in a truck accident on Blair Road between Harriman and Oliver Springs. He died at the Harriman Hospital, on Sunday, October 14, 1945, with head injuries. He is buried at Carter's Bluff Cemetery in Oliver Springs.

Here's just a brief background on Strutt Street. Strutt Street has always been a very diverse street - it has never been all Black or all White. One outstanding business was Clarence Fritts' Repair Radio and TV shop. Today, we have the Benjamin Apartments named after the Benjamin Family. We have a bridge named after Jack Crozier. Jack took in and trained young boys to work on the farm; had sawmills in what is now Oak Ridge and in Oliver Springs; logged in Kentucky, Georgia, and Tennessee. There have been several stores over the years on Strutt Street. Harlan Sisson had a general store on the corner of Strutt Street. There was the Oliver Springs Community Center that Rev. Edgar Fritz was over. When Little Leaf was being built, church was held in what was called The Pig owned by Clayton Lide. And yes, there were beer joints. Strutt Street was my first home. My parents lived with my grandmother when they got married. Gail and I would stay with Grandmother Hopper to go to school during the week and we would come home on the weekend. Strutt Street has always been a safe place to live and my grandmother had the best neighbors, The Henry Family who lived next door and three of my grandmother's sisters lived on Strutt Street at one time; Aunt Hannah, Aunt Josie, and Aunt Laura. Everyone was like a family. I wonder, do our children have that today like I did living on Strutt Street?

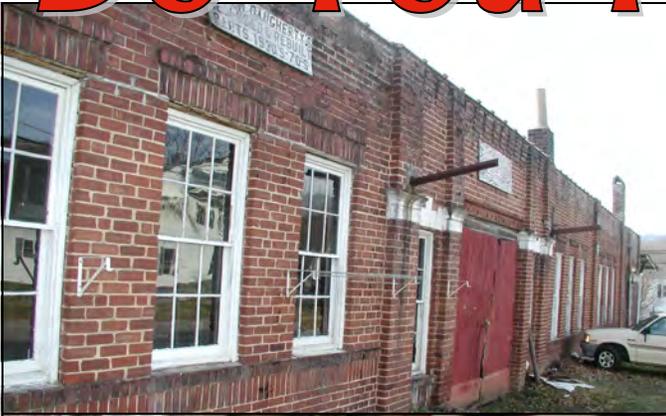


L-R: Jack Crozier, Sons John, Bronce, William



L-R- Hannah Cross, Catheline Lide, Sam Hopper, Mamie Hopper, Stella Cross, Sam Crozier, Josephine Allen

# Do You Remember? 12



# Then... and Now



WWI Troop Train at Estabrook Crossing— c. 1917



Blaine Duggins, Evan Bunch and John Tunnell at Old Bank Building



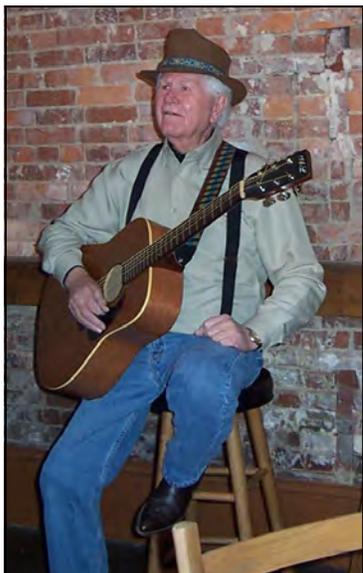
Estabrook Avenue, Named After Dr. Jos. Estabrook, Noted Educator



## In Memory of Luther Thomas Brandon

Born February 1, 1925 Died February 15, 2012

By Richard Childs



*(Note from Robbie– Luke Brandon was probably the finest guitar player I ever played with in my life, and that covers a lot of territory. Luke played the Grand Ole Opry many times, and toured with legends of country music for many years. He and I recorded lots of music in his later years, even partnering on a CD of Civil War Hymns and songs that we recorded for the Daughters of the Confederacy. I considered him a true musical genius, and am quite certain that we shall never see one like him again. Luke Brandon was a true legend in the music industry, moving in circles that included legendary musicians like Chet Atkins, who was a personal friend. I always loved being around Luke, who had the knack of making folks feel like they were the story instead of him. He was a true artist, a true gentleman, and he was my friend. This article by Richard Childs is dedicated to Luke’s memory, and is an insider’s look into the creation and operation of local music studio Cumberland Recording)*

Luther Thomas Brandon played for many of the musical stars in country and other music genres for many years until his death. He was 87 years old. He was my friend and partner in the recording business. And this is the rest of the story.

In the late 1960’s we were on strike at the Y-12 plant in Oak Ridge and I needed a job to help me and my young family survive. I just happened to be at Hal’s Radiator and Brake Shop and I asked if I could help him out as I was out on strike. He was more than generous to say he would. I went to work there and after the strike I continued to help him as I needed the money and he needed the help. This is where the story begins.

One day while working on a brake job, a man drove up and got out. Hal called his name, and he and Howell greeted each other and came over and introduced him to me. Hal said “Richard this the best guitar player ever, he has played with all the top names in country and other music.” Hal called him over and said “Richard meet Luke Brandon”. We shook hands and I went back to the car I was working on. Hal and Luke went to a corner and were talking about their times playing. They stayed for a while, when Hal came over to me and said “I need to talk to you about some electronics”. That was when he asked me if I knew anything about recording equipment. I said “very little, why?” Hal said, “would you like to help us start a recording studio, in Oliver Springs?” Now I had worked for Boyd King at his shop, King’s Radio & Television. Hal knew I had and he was impressed because I had worked on his TV before. I said yes I would be thrilled to help build one.



Luke Brandon enjoying lunch at a break in a recording session in Oliver Springs.

Hal asked me if I could build the electronics to make a studio work, and that if I could we would be in business. We went to Nashville to look at some recording studios. There were some big ones, like RCA, Capitol, and some small ones. Some were in a garage with the whole thing being very small. At every one I would ask questions on how each piece of the equipment worked. After we came home I got down to work on designing what we would need. We had gone to some equipment outlets in Nashville just to look.

I got acquainted with a few of the owners, one in specific, Mr. Johnny Rosen. We were talking with him about what we would need, and right before we left he gave me a set of schematics on how a studio was put together.

15 Needless to say I was impressed with them. When we got home I made a plan for the approval of Hal and Luke, which impressed them because I could remember what I saw and could build them.

This was a time of great learning for me and I went to the library and read books on recording, I was looking at a magazine and found an ad for a book on everything I was looking for. The book was not too expensive so I sent off for it, when it arrived it was about 4 inches thick. It was called the Audio Cyclopedia. this book has been my guide for all these years, and I still have it and still look at it from time to time. With this book to guide me, I would either build outright or modify something we had or was given to us, I would modify it to fit the need.

I was acquainted with a gentleman named Bill Pollard who owned a store in Oak Ridge called “The Music Box”. He would loan us or we got it on credit from him, sometimes we would get it given to us. We purchased a couple of audio mixers. They were some of the best equipment for the price, made by “Shure Electronics”. For the money that’s what we started out with.

Hal and I found a couple of some tape machines by the name of “Viking”. We got them for a small price. I had to modify them for the correct speed which was the industry standard of 15 inches per second. We started in an old paint booth in one end of Hal’s shop. This was a room 10 feet by 12 feet. We cut a place in it for an equipment room, which was open. We used hand me downs and some equipment we borrowed. Luke was instrumental in getting it off the ground. We were looking for a name that fit the area, and came up with the “Cumberland Recording Studio”. We chose this name because we were part of the Cumberland Mountains that ran through Tennessee.

Putting the equipment together was a trial and error method, as I was a greenhorn at this, but we made it work. In doing the job both Hal and Luke helped me do a lot of wiring and helping to get the things right. After we had been in the paint booth for about a year we needed a bigger space. We called a friend I and Hal knew and he worked building a new room in one end of the radiator shop. We worked for many long and hard hours to get it done, but we had fun doing it. We had block walls built that were almost 18 inches thick to kill the noise from the outside. After a while through trial and error we got better and we purchased some better equipment and better microphones. We had found some Ampex tape decks, at that time the recording standard tape decks and after we got them hooked up, we were getting better at the way things were done.

I got an invitation to go to Nashville for a recording seminar put on by the Audio Engineering Society and equipment dealers in Nashville. One was my friend Johnny Rosen who would take me in the down time all around Nashville. He took me to some studios I never had visited before. This was also a time of learning for me. Johnny let me run the sound board for the seminar and gave me OJT (on the job training). In the fourteen days we were there, Johnny would take me to the business that pressed the records. This was fascinating to me. With him I learned a lot on how records were made. After the seminar they passed out Diplomas on recording engineer and audio production. I got an “Audio Engineering Society” membership and was awarded an Associates Degree in audio engineering and sound production.

We laugh together now just how we got things rolling and just like that we were in the recording business. One of our first jobs was the Miles Family who recorded a 45 record and it went very well. We were proud of our first record and just how much trouble we had in doing it. We spent many hours in the studio working with them but it was worth it. At first we had to advertise so we could get word out, but soon we had people calling wanting to book a time to record.

We took a lot of pride in our work and sometimes worked all night, knowing we had to work our “real” jobs the next day. But we made it. Many groups would come from as far away as Nashville, as local as Knoxville, and some good old Morgan, Anderson, and Roane county groups. One of my best moments was when I got to meet

Archie was recording a series of radio shows for the WSM Nashville Radio Station. We worked for all day and into the night. After the session we went to Shoney's to eat and relax. This is where I really found out just how funny Archie was. He would have it no other way but for me to sit by him. He picked on me all the time we were there, but I enjoyed it. Just being with a country star like Archie made me proud. Archie had the whole restaurant laughing. Most everybody managed to get as close as possible. It was like we were on Hee Haw. I really enjoyed myself and so did everybody else



Archie Campbell takes time off from a recording session for a smoke in Oliver Springs, Tennessee

After we had recorded Archie's recording, things really took off! We had more than we could do, working seven days a week for a period of time. We had grown so much and finally were able to make a good recording session. But it was a rough life for a family man while working my paying job.



HOWELL DUNCAN (standing) and Richard Childs makes a last minute check of Archie Campbell's most recent recording prior to sending the tapes to radio stations using the syndicate series of narrations.

I remember Luke played on every album we did for a long time. Then the groups began to bring their own bands and Luke and Hal would direct and produce the albums. When the elementary school burned we put on a benefit to help replace a lot of equipment they had lost in the fire. This where the "Cumberland Mountain Country and Folk Music Festival" was born.

We had everyone from professional to amateur musicians from Nashville and some from other states. We had one of the largest crowds ever in the Oliver Springs High School. From the tickets sold with the advance ticket sales, we had a good estimate of around 1500 or more there. It was standing room only. Every seat was taken and people were standing everywhere. This was the largest crowd ever in the high school gym. If I remember correctly, it lasted for more than four hours. It was hard work but it was worth it. We made enough money to buy some of the expensive equipment lost

in the fire. The people gave above what the ticket cost, just to help the school.

We recorded the "New River Boys" and Luke wanted to take them to Nashville so Chet Atkins could meet them but they wouldn't go. Luke took a demo tape for Chet to listen to. He was so pleased he wanted to sign them right away, but they didn't want to go. We had many singers from this area such as the "Patterson Twins", Ron and Don, who could have been big stars by now but again, they wouldn't go. I remember Luke would take demo tapes for Chet to listen to and many would-be stars just weren't interested in going to Nashville, preferring to spread their music at home.

Many years have come and gone and I'm not in the business anymore but I still miss it and have so many memories. People get older and some are gone now. I can remember Smokey White who played the fiddle, Buck Barger who played bass for us and also Carl Bean, Basketball Coach of Norris High School, and a great musician and singer as well as song writer .

Carl Bean wrote many songs, but the one he wrote about the "Fraterville Mine" accident was a local hit and was well received. He also wrote one about his daughter called "Lisa Drives a Diesel". He recorded it on the "Cumberland Mountain Label". It was on the album we recorded for the Festival to sell. I do remember we ordered 1000 and sold them out in a few hours and had people asking for more, I don't know just how many more we had pressed, I think about 500.

# News and Upcoming Events



**SAVE THE DATE**

## OCTOBER SKY FESTIVAL

At Arrowhead Park  
Oliver Springs, Tennessee  
October 17, 2015

**ACCEPTING VENDORS**

For Additional Information Contact:  
Julia Daniel, [865-789-0846](tel:865-789-0846) [juliadaniel@comcast.net](mailto:juliadaniel@comcast.net)

OR

Teresa Hall, [865-591-5755](tel:865-591-5755)

OR

[www.octoberskyfestivaltn.org](http://www.octoberskyfestivaltn.org)

## Miss October Sky Pageant

Remember the Miss October Sky Beauty Pageant coming up on August 8<sup>th</sup>. This has been a very successful pageant for us, and this year promises to be another good one. We have great people working on it to coordinate it and hopefully make it an even greater success!

Contact Pat Stanberry 603-3087

## Prayers

Please remember our dear friend and partner in crime Cleat Bolling. At time of this publication going to print Cleat was at home and doing a little better, but he remains very sick and in need of our prayers and best wishes. Cleat is one of the very few “good apples” and it would be hard indeed to find anything negative to say about him. A multitalented craftsman, Cleat has the hallmark of excellence in everything he puts his hand to. God bless, dear friend, and get better soon!!

Also please remember C.H. Smith, who is reported to be under the weather at time of publication.



Oliver Springs School Class, year and class/teacher unknown. I would really, really love to figure this one out, as it very probably contains relatives to many of our folks. Somewhere there is a copy with the names on the back, so I am calling on our fine membership to get the word out regarding it. Who knows... maybe someone will come through in a big way. The new school shown was built in 1922, so I'm guessing c. 1928 to 1935. *(Robbie)*

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