

March 1, 2016

Oliver Springs Historical Society Quarterly Newsletter

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Legacy

JOURNEY TO THE OLIVER SPRINGS HOTEL

If you could go back in time, would you?

Of course you would, if only for the occasional heady experience of life in a simpler time. Some proclaim that the “Good Old Days” were not so good at all, and, to be sure, life in earlier times could be fraught with peril and hardship, heartache and despair. That seems to be inextricably linked to the human condition and no generation is immune. That having been said, many of us



Robbie Underwood

sense nevertheless that life in days gone by contained a charm and a mystical quality that modern life struggles to replicate. But alas, for time travel seems the stuff of science fiction, and we are left with but a smoky montage crafted from memories and photos, oral accounts of people we knew and those who were thoughtful enough to chronicle their lives for future generations. For those of us who can dream, we

can go back, and I am going on just such a voyage with this story. I want you to join me in my journey. I want to help you travel back in time.... To...

Say....1903. Come with me as we travel by train to Winters’ Gap, or Oliver Springs, as many have begun to call it in tribute to old Richard Oliver

who was postmaster way back



in the 1830’s, and who drove guests via horse and buggy down to the fabled mineral springs.

Robbie Underwood, Editor and Publisher

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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..

The editor and staff of Legacy reserve the right to edit submissions for length and content, as well as to determine general interest and suitability of content for print.

For questions regarding “Legacy”, or to submit material, email:

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JOURNEY TO THE OLIVER SPRINGS HOTEL

July 6th, 1903

It's been a long trip from Atlanta, where we started our journey via railroad passenger car. The stopover in Chattanooga was pleasant indeed, with four hours to shop and dine

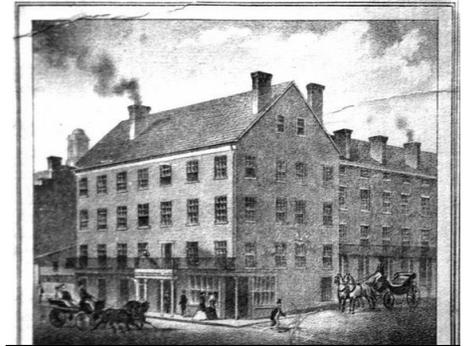


before boarding the thru train coming from Memphis via Decatur, Alabama that would carry us on to Knoxville. Coming up the valley, though, seemed to take forever. It seemed that we stopped at every cow crossing there was... Cleveland, Charleston, Riceville, Niota, Philadelphia. We stopped at them all, taking on and letting off. Finally we are chuffing and smoking into Knoxville. It is 4:37, 8 minutes early by the schedule. Alighting onto the brick walk, we soon retrieve our bags and trunks with the help of a ruddy young redcap. I opine to myself that he can't be a day over



Robbie Underwood

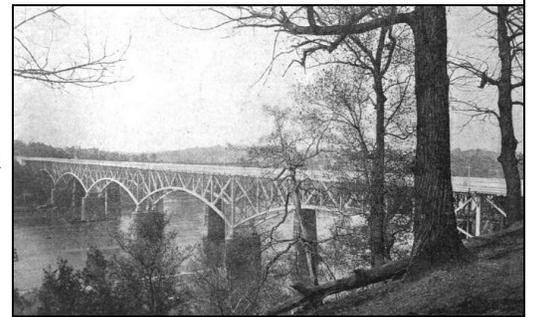
twelve. Young though he obviously is, he's a most stout little fellow, and asks us where we will be staying. You no sooner mention the Lamar House than he has flagged a buggy and loaded our things onto the back. I flip him a shiny new Liberty Head nickel, which lights him up with the realization of newfound wealth. With broad grin and profuse thanks, he is off and so are we, settling in for the short jaunt to Gay Street and the Lamar House. I remark that I do believe every soul in this town is out and running about: heading down Church Street is an awkward fellow with a bowlegged stride, carrying live chickens by their feet, two in each hand. In vain they protest, for he walks with a purpose and vigor that makes me fear for the future of the chickens. Around the corner and we see him no more. Our driver seems to have answered once and for all the question of how much twist tobacco one can possibly get in one's mouth.....



Editor's note: The Lamar House, as it was once known, dates back to 1817. It has undergone extensive expansions and remodeling. Today it is known as the Bijou Theatre, and is a renowned venue for live performance.

July 6th, 1903 8:23 P.M.

The Lamar House is overall a pleasant experience. The food was excellent, and after a stroll over to Market Square for ice cream at Peter Kern's Ice Cream Saloon and Confections Factory, we made our way back to the Lamar House. Just down Gay Street is the new Gay Street Bridge. One gets the sense that Knoxvilleians are proud of this bridge, and rightfully so: it is a graceful and elegant structure. With still time for a walk, we stroll, unhurried, to the far side and back again, pausing to toss pebbles in the Tennessee River. We are far from alone, for it seems that walking the bridge is a thing to be done for its own merit, and not necessarily to get anywhere in particular. The river seems angry tonight, the recent summer storms causing it to veritably boil as it rolls on down toward Chattanooga and the sea. At the bridge abutment there is a plaque boldly proclaiming "For the Use of All the World Except Spain," in reference to the war which had so recently been raging. Upstream a solitary boat struggles to hold sway against the current, and it is with the greatest of exertion that the oarsman holds his own, while his mate tends to some business up in the bow. Upon closer scrutiny I realize they are working a trotline to good effect. Someone will eat well tonight. Far off in the hazy distance are saloons and bawdy houses, and in the dimming light we can see a swarm of activity: shouts, catcalls, the muffled





Harvey Logan
A.K.A. "Kid Curry"

strains of a fiddle being played badly.... a policeman's whistle, then another.... I recall the story told at dinner of the notorious outlaw Harvey Logan, or "Kid Curry" as he was known, having just this past year shot two Knoxville policemen in one of the establishments we are gazing down upon. The bizarre twist to the story comes when we are told that he actually just last month escaped from the Knoxville Jail, stealing the Sheriff's horse and galloping wildly to freedom across this very same Gay Street Bridge. I close my eyes and I can see him spurring the prize stallion with hobnailed heels as he rides furiously by us, his shirt a mere sail extending from his shoulders as he blazes off in the distance . I imagine the poor horse, and feel a twinge of sorrow for the beast, as it surely was ruined by the end of that protracted and desperate charge. Opening my eyes, I pause for one last look at the human drama playing out below. I reckon that the players in this sordid human drama will awake with little memory of the previous night's

proceedings.....

July 7th, 1903 7:45 A.M.

No time for breakfast this morning... a quick coffee downstairs and we are back at the train station to catch the train which will take us to Oliver Springs. Our ride back from the hotel was in a fine looking surrey with black canvas top. Its driver adhered to the maximum tobacco chew practice we witnessed with our driver yesterday. It seems to be a religious order in this town among teamsters and buggy drivers. We were witness to several of the new "horseless Carriages". What a novelty they are! I think they will never catch on, for they are slow and cumbersome, and even an average team of plow horse mules could put them to shame. If one had its own team to pull it out of the mud it is forever becoming captured by, maybe the thing would be a go.....



July 7th, 4:12 P.M.

We are finally nearing Oliver's after a grinding, jostling ride from Knoxville. I must say, the valley defined by Walden and Pine Ridges is most lovely. Over the way I see lumbermen loading a dray wagon with the biggest Chestnut log I have ever seen. A bit further is a lovely field simply bursting with corn in neat rows, all tasseled out. Catching a glimpse down the rows I count one... two... three bonneted heads hilling the rows. No wilting violets amongst the farmers daughters here.... Crossing the boiling creek at Donovan, I can see a dozen or more tenement houses, humble structures with nary a sign of whitewash. As we huff past the wagon road leading to Shoat Lick Mine, I can see a half dozen miners as they make their way down from the mine and toward the shanties. To a man they seem unrecognizable, their faces and hands a uniform black from the day's labor in the mine. On past we rumble, past the watertank with its boards tightly coopered with the exception of one breach that shoots a misty spray out to one side, creating a tiny iridescent rainbow facilitated by the sun starting to wane toward the west....

Suddenly I see it, just as the locomotive seems to calm its anger and slow to a stop, one last huge belch and boil of steam that announces our arrival. Many pilgrims are instantly to their feet, for it seems that most of us shared a common destination.... The grand and elegant Oliver Springs Hotel....

Oh my... everything said and advertised about it instantly has an affirmation of veracity. It is beautiful! My eyes are drawn to the turret and spire that tower stories above the palatial edifice, and I witness a lover's kiss stolen, the young maiden recipient offering feeble protest that obviously belies her joy....



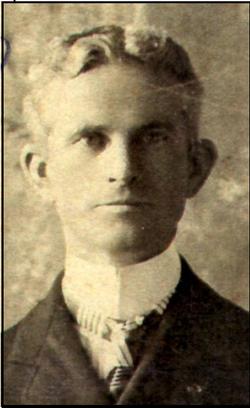
JOURNEY TO THE OLIVER SPRINGS HOTEL



Off we impatiently go, into the care of a bevy of porters, all smartly dressed as if groomed by the same matron. Our papers in hand, we are helped up the steps while our bags and trunks head off below to be hoisted by elevator to our room on the very top floor. Elevation is the thing for me... I love the view from a height.

We are escorted as though we were royalty, into one of the lobbies. There are two, you know...

Just as we arrive at the desk we see a most handsome fellow scurrying this way and that. It is intuitively obvious that he is very much in charge. Two spinsters at your right giggle and exclaim in stage whispers that all can hear. "Why, that's David Richards, the operations manager of the Hotel!" Quite the dashing image, anyone would agree. All the ladies seem in wholehearted agreement. I have heard of Mr. David Richards. He's widely considered to be far and away the most eligible bachelor in these parts, with ladies here and yon vying for his commitment: alas, to no avail.



David Richards

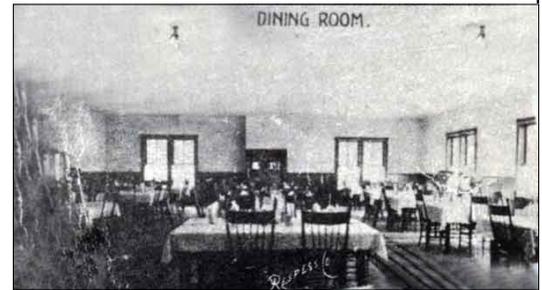
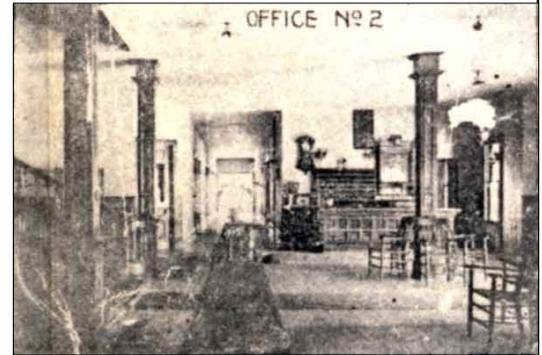
The desk clerk seems most cheerful and pleasant, offering up a steady banter.... "We are so delighted to have you stay with us, and you have our firm commitment to make your stay one of rest and restoration, both of mind and body, of spirit and senses.....Now we know after your arduous journey you must be simply famished. One of our chefs has been expecting your arrival, and has the most delightful entrees in store. This evening will feature roast pheasant with wild plum glaze, new potatoes stewed in heavy cream, all locally produced and harvested just this day."

6:45 P.M. What a blessing dinner has been! The pheasant was simply peerless and the new potatoes were just that.. new. None of that nobbly,



gnarly fare proffered up at some of the big city restaurants. Just before dinner we were escorted by Mr. Richards' assistant Abraham "Link" Williams down below to the hotel's wine cellar. I have seldom been so impressed, both by the remarkable breadth of vintages stocked, and by Mr. Link's affability. This man has a knack for the tall tale... most enjoyable. Long and lanky, he towers well over the townsmen. I'd guess him to go 6'5" easily. Now dinner is a fond memory and it's time for a lei-

surely meander through town. One thing is immediately obvious... most folks walk on or alongside the tracks through town. With the recent heavy rains, it is obvious why. The marks of a dandy section crew are evident. The rail bed is groomed and cindered, and provides a perfectly dry and elevated traversal through town. We stop at a little millinery shop, where we make the acquaintance of the lovely Miss Edith Ross and her mother Elizabeth. I place an order for two hats for Mother and purchase the most exquisite embroidered cake doily for Penelope. What a delight young Edith is!



Edith Ross

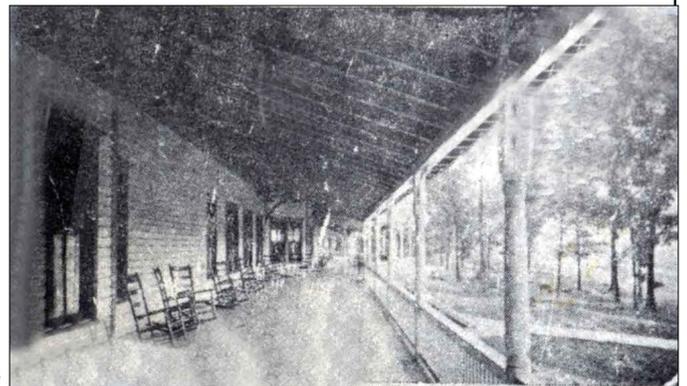
Taking our leave of the gracious ladies at the millinery shop, we wend and wind our way westward along Main Street as it nestles against the base of Walden Ridge, then downward toward the creek. We have made the acquaintance of an aging town marshal named Pony Cash. Marshal Cash is quite a distinguished fellow, with a strong jawline, and quite the talker.... Although his slow and deliberate way of couching a phrase gives me the impression that his stories might take a spell to tell. Marshal Cash has a bit of hitch in his gait: I wonder to myself what the story is, but refrain from asking. I sense that by the end of the fortnight of my stay here, he will probably tell me. I like this lawman already. He has a young lad in tow that I assume is his son. As we approach a creek, Marshal Cash informs me that this is Indian Creek, and is very close to the spot where a Revolutionary War veteran named Moses Winters built his mill pond and started grinding cornmeal not long after 1800. We navigate the crude log footbridge that crosses the creek. Alongside is a shallow ford for teamster and dray wagons to cross the creek, although I would cringe at the thought of crossing it just now: the water is up from all the recent rains, and the creek is boiling as it de-



mands its right of way through the gap in Walden Ridge. It is almost dark now. We find ourselves on Estabrook Avenue as we head back toward the heart of town. It is very soon obvious that Estabrook is the thoroughfare for much of the nightlife in town. We pass one tavern, then another. The traffic in and out of these places is nonstop, and with each there is a cacophony of sound and smell associated. Suddenly as from nowhere a man storms out of a tavern and trots unsteadily toward the gap, beyond which we have been told is Tuppertown. Almost no sooner is he out of sight than another man veritably bursts out of the saloon door, landing in a sprawl no more than three feet from us. He gathers himself and retrieves his hat, whereupon he starts toward the direction of the former saloon patron, with a progression that could best be described as a series of lurches. Marshal Cash flashes a rueful smile as though it is an old story with a tumultuous beginning and no end in sight. "Will West", Marshal Cash elucidates, furthering that West is the son of Dr. Thomas West, the town pharmacist ever since a young druggist named Chapman was killed in his pharmacy a few years back. "Fraid I'm gonna have to bid good evening to you all right here"... Ol' Will cain't hardly find his way home unless somebody helps him along." A tip of the hat and he saunters resolutely in the direction of Tuppertown.

July 7th, 1903 11:25 P.M.

What an evening this has been! Safely back from the night life and back at this splendid hotel, I sit on the expansive porch and ruminate on the proceedings of this most memorable day. I hear a faint rumble over the ridge.... In the sky faraway lightning flickers ever-so-softly. Up toward the springhouse I hear low voices in conversation, punctuated by occasional laughter. I am nursing a Cuban cigar personally delivered by Dave Richards, who sat and reflected a bit before heading off to his house just up the lane. I am loving this quaint little town of Oliver Springs already. One by one the coal oil lamps across the tiny burg flicker and extinguish, leaving only the soft glow of the carbon lamps of the hotel. I am at peace with the world...



Reverend Maceo Roddy

By Julia Daniel



Julia Daniel

The late Rev. Maceo Roddy holds the record of having the longest tenure as pastor of Little Leaf Missionary Baptist Church in Oliver Springs. He became pastor in January 1948 and served as pastor until his death on November 28, 1978. The church membership grew and a new church building was erected in 1964 which is the present structure today. A Roddy Gospel Singers was also established and the members were: Alyce Griffin, Dezora Knaff Wells, Alma Griffin Fletcher, Lillian Stallings, Mary Hall Hardin and Jane Knaff Johnson. Rev. Roddy and his brothers, Neal and Stanley are listed as working at Windrock Coal & Coke Co. In their early years, they stayed in Windrock with family members while working in the coal mining company.



From left to right: Rev. Henry Ray, Ulysses Montgomery, Rev. Maceo Roddy, W. J. Hopper, Rev. Chester Benjamin

Rev. Roddy was born July 1, 1902, to Luke Roddy and Parthenia (Thennie) Doughtly. He attended the public schools in Roane County and continued through high school at Woodstock in Shelby County and then to Le-moyne College, Memphis, TN and Tennessee State University, Nashville. He taught in the Roane County school system for several years and was carpenter foreman for Rust Engineering Co. in Oak Ridge. Rev. Roddy married Beatrice Sadler whom he met at Tennessee State University. Rev. Roddy was a dedicated Christian leader and widely known as a great counselor for those seeking advice. He gave of himself and was a servant to mankind.



Left to right bottom: Mary Hall Hardin, Jane Ann Knaff Johnson. Top, L-R: George Alyce Griffin, Dezora Knaff Wells, Alma Griffin Fletcher, Lillian Stallings

G.A. MEAD



G.A. Mead

Photo by Wesley Lee

George A. Mead age 89, of Oliver Springs, TN, passed away on Wednesday, February 3, 2016 at Parkwest Medical Center in Knoxville.

Mr. Mead lived his whole life in Oliver Springs. He was a Funeral Director and Embalmer at Sharp Funeral Home for over 40 years. He was a member and deacon at First Baptist Church in Oliver Springs, he was a member of the Lion's Club and the Oliver Springs Historical Society.

Mr. Mead also enjoyed hiking and camping.

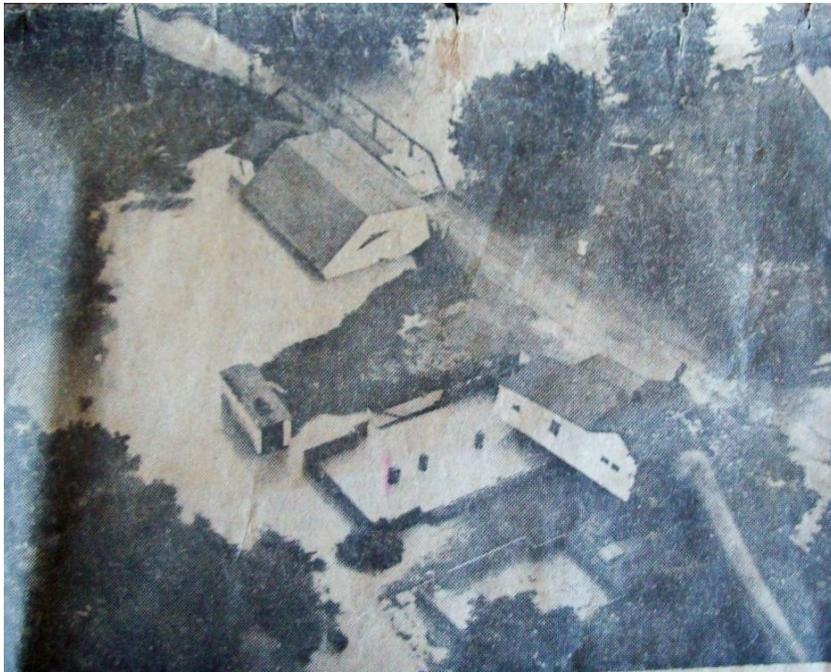
He is preceded in death by his parents, Albert and Ruby Mead, by a sister Hilda Gill, and also by brothers Jack and Howard Mead.

Mr. Mead is survived by his wife Sammie Mead of Oliver Springs, by daughter and son-in-law, Debra and Mike Campbell of Oliver Springs, by grandchildren, Alishia Miller and husband Shane Miller of Oliver Springs and Amy Williams and husband Travis Williams of Greeneville, TN, by great-grandchildren, Shana and Jake Miller and Bryce and Trent Williams.

Also survived by extended family members and friends.

The family received friends, Saturday, February 6, 2016 at Premier Sharp Funeral Home in Oliver Springs. The funeral followed at 3:00pm in the funeral home chapel with Pastor Bill Horner officiating. Burial and graveside services were at Anderson Memorial Gardens. Premier Sharp Funeral Home is proudly serving the Mead family and we invite you to share a message of condolence at www.sharppfh.com

Random Pictures



TORN FROM FOUNDATIONS — A house next door to the church now rests partly on the foundation of the church, after flood waters of Indian Creek hit Oliver Springs.



Bill Sharp with Nancy Stonecipher Hightower and Mary Lynn Reagan

Betty Taylor Borum

Note from Robbie— Betty Taylor Borum was a true champion of the Oliver Springs Historical Society. For years she was editor of the "Legacy" newsletter. Betty labored in the time when footsoldiers were few and it was exceedingly hard to get anyone to actually do anything. Betty was a longtime member of the board of the Society. I wholly regret that most of our newer members didn't get the chance to know and work with Betty before she got sick. I dearly love her, and she should forever remain a sparkling jewel in the crest of the Oliver Springs Historical Society.



Betty Borum, age 85, a resident of Oliver Springs, passed away Thursday, Dec. 31, 2015. Mrs Borum was born Sept. 27, 1930, in Oliver Springs, Tenn., which she called her lifetime home. Mrs. Borum was a member of Dyllis Baptist Church.

Mrs. Borum was preceded in death by her husband, Albert (Buster) William Borum, Jr.; her parents, Jess and Viola Taylor; a sister, Helen (Taylor) Freels; and a brother, Dean Taylor. Mrs. Borum is survived by her four children, Albert William Borum III and wife Mary Ann, of Coalfield, Candy (Borum) Sugiyama and husband Lee of Guatemala, Kelly (Borum) Conn and husband Craig of Knoxville, and Chris Edward Borum and wife Tammy of Midway. She was also survived by a sister, Faye (Taylor) Vann and husband Robert of Oliver Springs; grandchildren, Emily and husband, Jason, Megan, Taylor, Albert IV (Bret), Caitlyn, Danielle, and Kayla; great-grandchildren, Ella, Reece, and Nora; and many other close family and friends.



The family received friends on Monday, Jan. 4, 2016, at Premier Sharp Funeral Home. A funeral followed at 7 p.m. in the chapel at Premier Sharp Funeral Home with the Rev. Charlie Dean officiating. Burial and graveside were

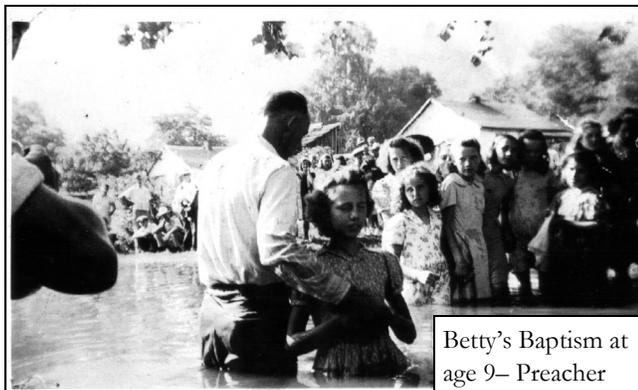
Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2016, at 10 a.m. at the Oliver Springs Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, please make donations to Alzheimer's Tennessee, Inc., 5801 Kingston Pike, Knoxville, TN 37919.



Mrs. Borum first and foremost was a loving mother and wife. Her late husband Buster was the love of her life.

Mrs. Borum was very active in her community and was always signing up to volunteer whenever there was a chance. She served the local 4H, Boy Scout Troops, ETHRA, Meals on Wheels program, and participated in many Alzheimer's Association fundraisers, where she won several awards for raising a substantial amount of money/donations. She worked closely with many senators, representatives and Department of Human Services regarding ETHRA, the Meals on Wheels programs and funding. She was much respected for her opinions at the state capital in Nashville.

When Mrs. Borum wasn't serving others, she was keeping herself in shape by participating in the Senior Olympics at the state and the national level. She has many gold, silver, and bronze medals from the Tennessee State events and one Bronze medal from the National Senior Olympics in St. Louis, of which she was very proud. Mrs. Borum was a member of the Oliver Springs Historical Society, where for years, she was the editor of the Society's newsletter. Two of her passions were gardening and cooking, of which she excelled.



Betty's Baptism at age 9— Preacher Frank Alcorn



Betty and Redonda Davis at Lookout Mountain Park



Betty Taylor at left

Carolyn Kelly

Here we are in 2016, on our way to a new year of opportunities.

The museum is making progress everyday and work is now being done on the theater area. Ready by late spring maybe! Our members are so dedicated to the meetings, working hard on everything that needs to be completed; all in hopes of seeing our dream of the museum come true.



I was happy to have relatives come to the fall festival. They were from California, Texas and other parts of Tennessee. They were so glad to see how much had been done at the garage and hope to see it completed in the near future.



Marinelle Martin is shown doing something she loves, greeting visitors at the depot during the fall festival.

The nice big parking lot by the Depot is such a wonderful and much needed addition for the town, the Depot and soon the museum. Thanks to our city, Dennis Ferguson, Roane County Road Commissioner and all who helped. It is so appreciated.

Two of our kind, generous and faithful members Brenda & Jimmy Smith moved to Nashville and we were so sorry to have them leave us. When asked for a favor of any kind, we were never turned down. We wish them every good blessing where they are. Their new location is lucky to have them.

I received word of the passing away of Katherine Cross Hanson in California. Katherine was the last member of the Hugh & Zona Cross family. She was a very pretty lady and never forgot Oliver Springs. I made a picture of the pretty Bradford trees in bloom in front of Hal Duncan's house where she once lived. She was so happy to see it. Her grandfather was an herb doctor in our town's history. Hugh was a popular country music entertainer in years past.

Have you ever heard of soda pop with these names (Ginger Ale, Iron brew, Kola Nola, all flavors of soda pop and also Keg Cider)? Twenty cases of the soda pops were bought by Windrock Coal & Coke Company for \$12.00. This is from an original bill of sale from the Oliver Bottling Works in 1907.

Ed and Pam Stockton have moved their "candy factory" to their newly purchased building from Beech Park Church. We are all so thrilled they didn't leave our town to go elsewhere. We are so glad to have them in Oliver Springs. For those who may not know, Ed is the great grandson of T. F. Abston of Abston's Garage.



We have just said "goodbye" to another one of our good members and friend, G. A. Mead. He and my James were life-long friends. They had worked and went to church together all their lives. My sympathy goes to the family.

This picture is some of my family who came to the festival (grandchildren and great grandchildren of T. F. Abston).

Oliver Springs Historical Society Museum and Archives



Robbie Underwood

We have been very busy since you last checked in. We now have the green light to occupy the Museum and Archives Building! The building was inspected last week and we now have the paper in hand to move into and set up operations in the front half of the building, including the upstairs archives offices. The part of our group that is able to meet monthly had been brainstorming at and around the last several meetings about a wide variety of issues. Being of the obsequious sort, yet not generally given to puffery, I'll just go ahead and tell you some of what's on our collective minds.

For some time many of us have sensed the need to engage in a comprehensive effort to expand and improve our archives. Since its inception the Oliver Springs Historical Society archives had not been a true dynamic searchable archive, but more of a static repository. This is no reflection on any person or persons, but mainly because to make it otherwise would involve a huge and ongoing effort. Now that the Abston Building has a certificate of occupancy, we have the green light to begin building our archives onsite. Digital and hardcopy storage and archiving will soon be in full swing. Computers, complete with scanners, will have to be acquired for the purpose of scanning and storing the wealth of pictures, articles, newspaper clippings, documents, et al, that we possess or otherwise have access to.

One things we have been attempting to do for several years is the process of scanning said artifacts from a multitude of private collections. I have made my personal collection (which numbers in the thousands of pictures, documents, etc.) available. Mr. Sonny Harvey assisted us in this effort while he was with us. Mr. Harvey had over the years harvested thousands and thousands of such pictures and documents. Many of these have been scanned by myself on my home

computer. These images will soon have a home at our archives.

One notable goal of ours is to scan all articles, documents, clippings, transcribed oral accounts, etc., into the computer, then run ocr (Optical character recognition) on them. For all you computer neophytes out there, what this does is to convert the said article into a text file which is then completely searchable by key word or phrase. For instance, if we accomplished this effort and all our info resided in searchable text form, we could then take any



Photo by Wesley Lee

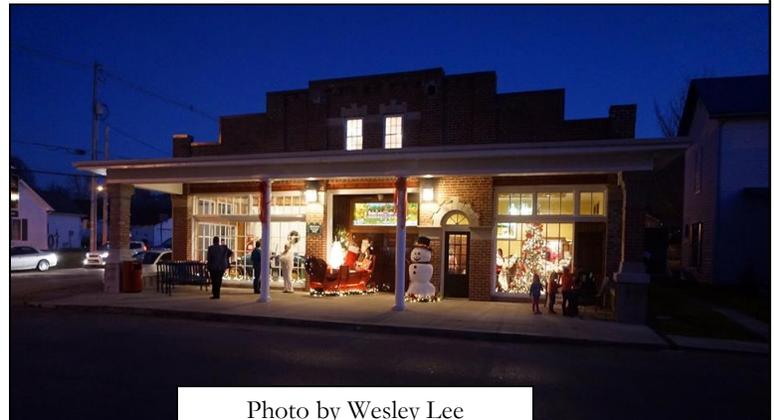


Photo by Wesley Lee



Photo by Wesley Lee

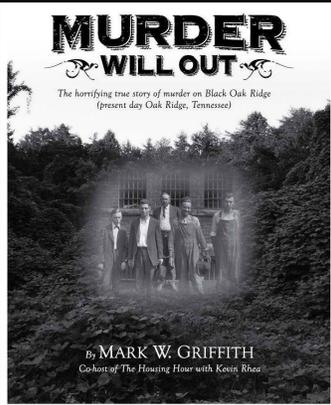
topic.. say, the Oliver Springs Hotel.... begin a text search on those key words, "Oliver Springs Hotel", and the computer would forthwith return the results of the search which would show all of the articles, clippings, etc., that contained the phrase "Oliver Springs Hotel". To broaden the search, simply type in the word "hotel" and all the info on hotels (of which there was a plethora in and around Oliver Springs) would be retrieved. The process works the same for pictures. If all our pictures are appropriately named, one can then do a search on photos only, and return results accordingly. Want to research the Duncan family, for example? Type in "Duncan" and see all the info (words and pictures) containing the word "Duncan" come up at your disposal. Pretty cool, huh?



Photo by Wesley Lee

While we are talking about the Archives, I want to encourage you to become a part of our Archive team. It is such fun that one could hardly call it work, and the fellowship just sweetens the pot. Let me know if this appeals to you.

O.K., now comes the other preachy part. The only way this Archive” thingie works to its fullest is if all our friends, patrons, benefactors erstwhile and present, hoarders, scavengers, et al, help us. How, you say? Simple... by helping to make available for scanning any pictures or documents pertaining to Oliver Springs in its past or present glory. Got the whole pictorial record of your family starting back with the one that first crawled out from under that rock sooo long ago? Why not let us scan it into the computer, thereby ensuring that your family will retain their rightful place in the history of this proud little burg we call Oliver Springs, or more appropriately, "Home".



Do you like a “True Crime” story? How about reading stories of local interest? How about if one were to combine both elements in a book? Hmm... Too good to be true? How about if it was online and made available merely for the minute it takes to download? It doesn’t get any better than that: no, not even at Christmas....

The story is framed around a grisly assault that took place in 1921 within the boundaries of what is now present day Oak Ridge, Tennessee. In 1921 the area was a loose and almost totally rural collection of communities: Robertsville, Elza, Scarboro, etc. It was in this placid and tranquil setting that, in the late hours of May 30, 1921, left one man gruesomely and horrifically murdered and another man gravely wounded and left for dead, who ultimately found himself in a frantic and stumbling race against time

and mortality.

For many years I had heard snippets of this story, but it was largely relegated to the dustbin of history where forgotten tales go to languish. Now, thanks to writer Mark W. Griffith, we can read the story in its entirety and in proper chronology. Included are character backstories, motive, color commentary on local icons of the era, and inside glimpses into the minds of coldhearted killers.

I have read Mr. Griffith’s book more than once, and I found that it answers all the questions I had for years. I found it to be a compelling read, well crafted, not lacking in detail. I also loved the comparison maps showing the area in the days before the Manhattan Project transformed the landscape, forging the Town of Oak Ridge as part of the WWII war effort and the race against Hitler and Axis powers to harness the Uranium-235 isotope and craft it into a super bomb that was to leverage the war effort to the advantage of the Allies.

The book is available for download on the “You’re Probably From Oliver Springs If...” page on Facebook managed by Historical Society vice chairman Wesley Lee, or on the Oliver Springs Historical Society website, WWW.oshistorical.com.

Robbie

Musical Heroes of Oliver Springs

By Robbie Underwood

It has been said more than once that music helps to define any people and culture. Here in Oliver Springs and surrounding environs musical expression has played a vital role in helping both make us who we are, and allowing us to express ourselves in the musical note. Looking back at my life growing up around here, I could not even begin to imagine my life apart from the music that helped shape me, even to this day. Coming from a musical family, my childhood was a montage of back porch picking, family reunions where my dad and all our kinfolks would break out the guitars, fiddles, mandolins, spoons, and sing and rejoice into the wee hours.. Many, many times. Around about the age of ten or eleven I began to earn to plink out chords on my daddy's old guitar, and musical expression has been one of my defining constants ever since. (I just sat the guitar down to write this, in fact) If this sounds a lot like your youth, I am not at all surprised. It seems a fairly common thread to many of us who grew up around here.

You may have gotten the impression that this was the point.. fact is, it weren't the point at all, as Barney might have said, but the background leading up to the point. Point is, over the years we in the Historical Society have been trying to help preserve our legacy in many facets, not the least of which is the musical legacy and tradition of our town. We have had many recordings donated to us, several of which reside down at the Historic Depot... old 78's, 33 1/3's, etc. Many of these recordings are of musical



giants of our town and region in days gone by. Well, that's all fine and dandy, as Wanda Brown might say, but **LOOKING** at a record does precious little to a body if'n you can't hear it.. know what I'm saying? To solve this dilemma I built a listening station for visitors coming into the Historic Depot, where they could actually **LISTEN** to these artists as they read about their lives and times.

Now that we are actually **IN** our Museum, we will need to put some thought into having this kind of listening station available in association with musical displays we might craft in our museum.

Now that the commercial is out of the way, I want to share some data points on several of the stalwarts of our community, beginning back pretty much as far as recorded music itself.

Have you heard of folks like Mac and Bob? These days they are not exactly household names, but back in the twenties and thirties they were nationally known artists, instrumentalists and singers Lester McFarland and Robert Gardner, artists who were heard on the biggest clear channel radio stations in the world. To quote a music publication of the day, “



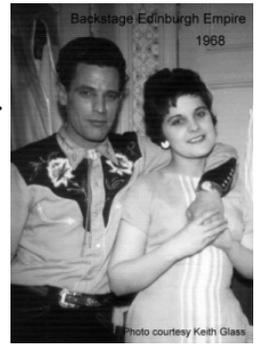
Sixteen years ago the two boys met each other while they were studying music in the "Kentucky School for the Blind." Mac was an artist on the piano, cornet, trombone, guitar and mandolin, consequently he became a music teacher, while Bob made his livelihood as a piano tuner, having a perfect ear for pitch and tone. About 10 years ago they teamed up as a harmony duo and their singing soon attracted the attention of phonograph record companies. To date, they have recorded at least 200 songs with sales totaling over a million.

Ultimately their record sales far exceeded even that amount. Not too shabby, you say? What you might not know is that they lived right here, ultimately being buried side by side in the Oliver Springs Cemetery.

Hugh Cross, (shown with banjo) who was born in Oliver Springs in 1904. Hugh Cross made his first records with his wife for Columbia Records in the late 1920's, embarking on a singing career that found him well known nationally and beyond. He worked with the Skillet Lickers Band, recorded a duet on "Red River Valley" with Riley Puckett and joined the National Barn Dance in 1930 on clear channel megastation WLS out of Chicago, working as a member of the Cumberland Ridge Runners. Moving to WWVA in 1935, he teamed up with Shug Fisher for a successful Jamboree act known as Hugh and Shug's Radio Pals. The team recorded for Decca and later moved the act to WLW in Cincinnati. Hugh Cross wrote, recorded and worked in radio until his death in the mid-60's. (source: "Mountaineer Jamboree", by Ivan Tribe)



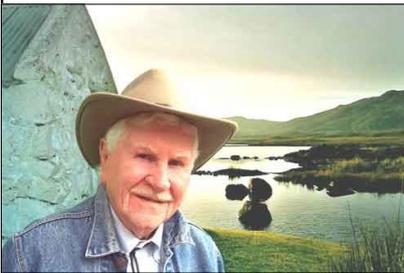
Johnny Duncan, who left Windrock Mountain for the U.S. Army, ending up in England, where he recorded "Last Train to San Fernando", a skiffle song that was a huge success in Europe, launching him on a megacareer that lasted well into the 90's, and took him to heights of fame everywhere BUT here in the States where, inexplicably his music was never promoted. Johnny Duncan was a pioneer in the field of "Skiffle" music that was the rage in Britain in the mid to late '50's. Combining elements of folk, bluegrass, and pop/rock, skiffle was a very distinctive genre of music that drew from all these roots, yet was distinctively unique. And, for a magical season in the late 50's and early 60's, Johnny's star shone very, very brightly. Now here's the real kicker for those of us who know and love Oliver Springs...



Johnny Duncan was one of us!!

Luke Brandon.... Luke was a phenomenal guitarist/singer who toured the United States for many years, always coming back home when the tour was over.

Luke ended up playing for a veritable "Who's Who" of country and pop stars. Trini Lopez, Don Gibson, Cowboy Copas, Michael Landon, stints on the Grand Ole Opry, a much sought after session guitar player who appeared on numerous country and pop hits ... Fats Domino and Ricky Nelson in the late 1950s, "When Will I Be Loved" by the Everly Brothers, and in 1959 he produced the No. 1 hit, "All American Boy," sung by Bobby Bare.



Luke (center) with a much younger Jimmy Dickens

Luke was in my considered opinion the finest guitar player to EVER come from this area. Luke performed almost daily well un into his late 80's, and was in big demand for session work. As a singer he possessed rich timbre and pipes from which emanated luscious notes like molten quicksilver. He was my good friend, and we did several shows and recording projects together. When Luke passed away in 2012, he was eulogized by many writers and news outlets. Writer Morgan Simmons wrote extensively of Luke and his legacy in the Knoxville News-Sentinel.

"Luke Brandon was the quintessential East Tennessee musician," said Bradley Reeves, music and film archivist for the East Tennessee Historical Society. "He lived his whole life to play and make people happy. He could play all genres of music, country and swing and rock, and he could play it all well."

To Be Continued.....

Abston/Daugherty Museum Project Update



To the left is a recent photo of the Abston/Daugherty Museum.

Below is a photo of the theater seating to be installed.

The restoration of the Abston/Daugherty building continues with phase II and we are proud that we were able to purchase 220 theater seats for the community theater that is slated for construction in this phase. The cost of each seat is \$70 and has taken most of our available funds.

We would like to ask if you are able to help the Oliver Springs Historical Society with this purchase by contributing to our theater seating fund by purchasing one or a number of these beautiful seats. Your help will keep the project moving forward toward final realization.

If you can find it in you heart to help please send your donation to the address below. We are a 501c3 organization.



Oliver Springs Historical Society
P.O. Box 409
Oliver Springs, Tennessee 37840

(reprinted from Wesley Lee's
"You're Probably From Oliver
Springs if..." page)

The Oliver Springs Historical Society

Invites You to Help Preserve the History of Our Town
by Becoming a Member



Whether you are joining for the first time or renewing your membership, you will be contributing to the restoration of our new museum and archives.

The Oliver Springs Historical Society is a nonprofit Organization. We meet at 6:00 p.m. on the first Monday of every month at the Historic Abston Building, which has been painstakingly restored, and is now the home of the Oliver Springs Historical Society.

Your support is vital to the Oliver Springs Historical Society, and we appreciate your generosity and confidence.

Please visit our website at www.oshistorical.com.

Membership Application
Oliver Springs Historical Society

Email _____
Phone _____

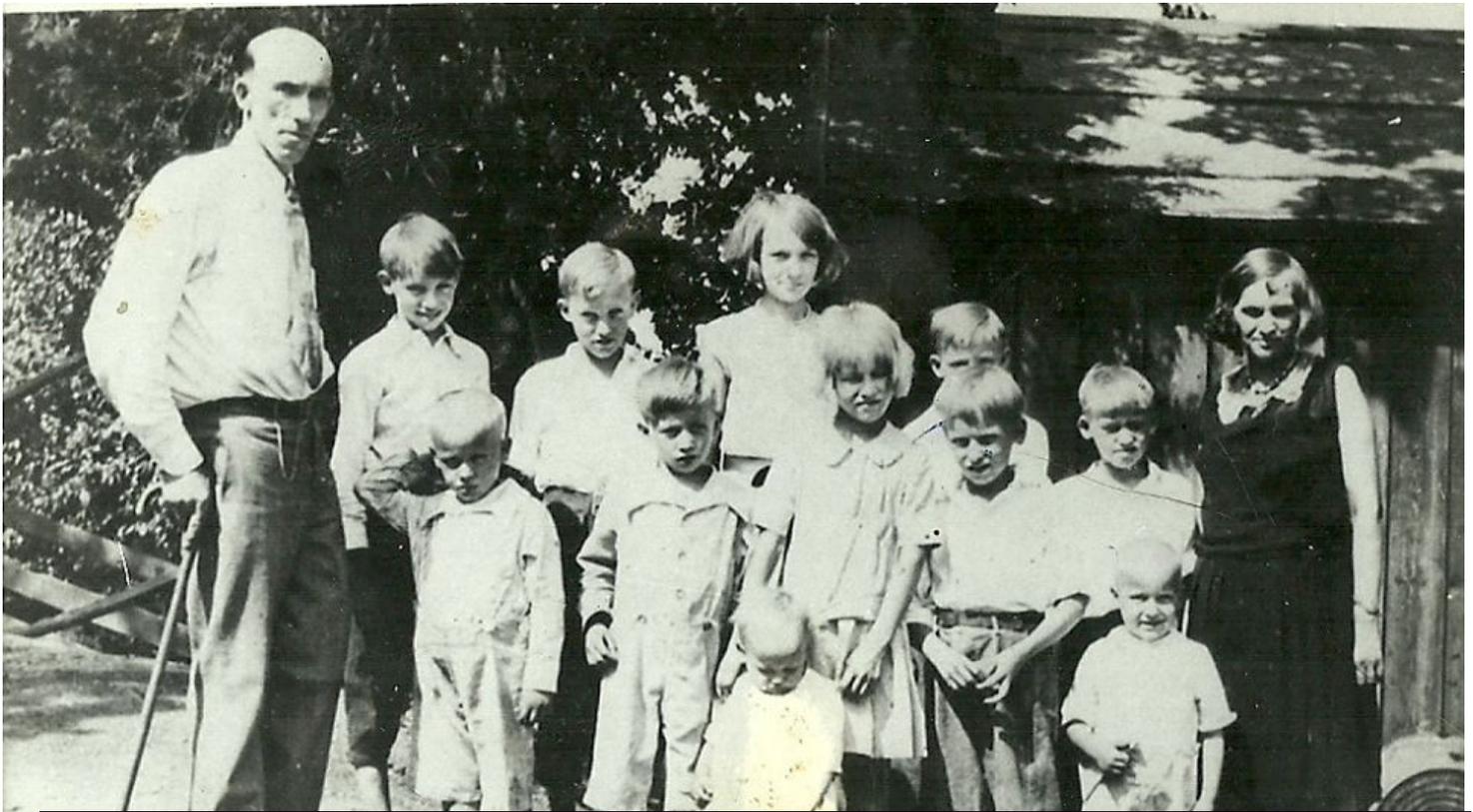
Select Membership Category _____ Individual (\$25) _____ Business (\$100) _____ Gift (\$25)

This gift membership is for:
Name(s) for membership card(s) _____

Address _____

Make check payable to:
Mail to:

Oliver Springs Historical Society
P.O. Box 409
Oliver Springs, Tennessee 37840



Mr. W.O. Duncan & wife Nola B. Duncan, with all the children pictured. Woody Joe and Ivan, are the two youngest. Also pictured are brothers and sisters: Rebecca (Becky) Duncan, Roy E. Duncan, Berlin G. Duncan, Dixie Duncan (Graves), Andrew Duncan, Wilson Duncan, Kyle Duncan, Lee Duncan, Harding Duncan, and Doyle Duncan. (photo and description graciously supplied by Cory Wilson, grandson of Ivan Duncan)

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