

The Quill



T H E C H E A T H A M C O U N T Y A R C H I V E S N E W S L E T T E R

LETTERHEADS

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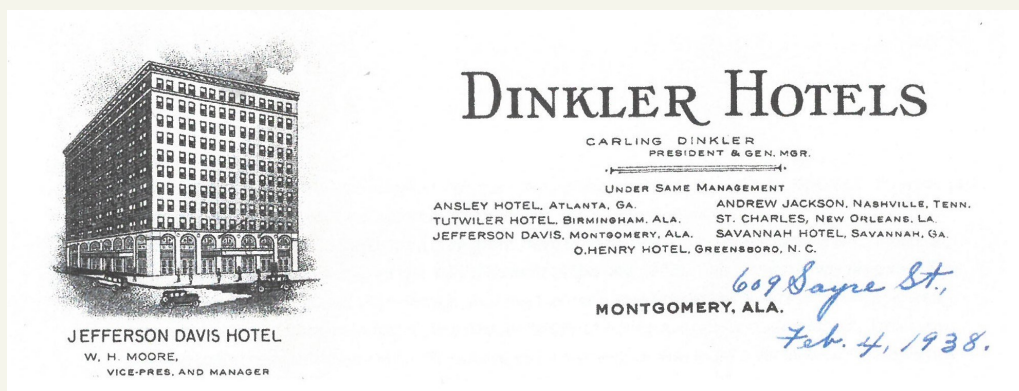
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Letterheads featuring businesses of the past are some of the more interesting items found in the archives. The items often provide a colorful, graphic feature for the researcher to view.

A letterhead featured in this issue is from the Dinkler Hotels. It appears in the estate file of R. P. Perry. Margaret Perry penned a letter to County Court Clerk J. K. Simpkins February 4, 1938 on the stationery.

Many of the fine, luxurious southern hotels of the first half of the twentieth century were Dinkler Hotels. The pictured Jefferson Davis Hotel in Montgomery Alabama was a part of the chain of Dinkler Hotels. The chain also included a hotel which became familiar to local residents for its demolition.

Nashville native Louis Jacob Dinkler, son of a German immigrant from the Bavarian region of Germany was the founder of the hotel dynasty. Mr. Dinkler became a very successful inn keeper. The family business grew to have many hotels in numerous southern cities. Presidents and celebrities, such as Elvis Presley and Bing Crosby often stayed in Dinkler Hotels.

The hotels offered many amenities which were lacking in other hotels. However, the good times would not last. As the buildings aged and society changed, each hotel began to suffer and slowly fade from the landscape.

The Andrew Jackson opened August 29, 1925. It featured modern conveniences along with luxury for the traveler. Presidents Truman, Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson spent nights at the Andrew Jackson. Mae West and other celebrities also spent time there.

As times changed, the Andrew Jackson did not age well. The building became run down and unkempt. There were attempts to renovate the building but none came to fruition. It was closed in June of 1970.

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LETTERHEADS

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On June 13, 1971, crowds gathered downtown to watch the building's implosion. The destruction was also carried live on local television. The entire collapse of the building took nine seconds.

WSM-TV Channel Four featured the fall of the Andrew Jackson for many years on its newscast openings. The vision of the demise of the hotel became familiar to all who watched Channel Four News.

The hotel's site today is occupied by the Tennessee Performing Arts Center.

Today, the Dinkler Hotel chain is no more. The family sold the chain to New York interests.

The only original hotel building still standing is the Jefferson Davis in Montgomery. It serves today as senior citizen apartments.

~Walter Pitt, Archivist

VINTAGE WORLD ATLASES

Siam, Ceylon and Formosa are names not found on maps of the world today. However, they can be found in the world of 1945 and its atlas.

Maps and atlases have always sparked an interest in my mind since an early age. These large books allowed me to be transported from Cheatham County to faraway places. Maps and atlases gave me the desire to learn more about the countries on the page. The interest that these maps inspired led to a minor in geography at Austin Peay. They fed a desire to learn about the world, its people and land, and how things came to be. Even today, the lure of a map or an atlas is irresistible.

The library's vintage book collection is the home to several historic atlases. The copyrights for these are 1937, 1945, and 1975.

When one opens the cover of an atlas old or new, it opens the world both past and present. The Collier's World Atlas and Gazetteer is a prime example of learning history from an old atlas. Published in 1937, the world had not yet experienced World War II. The terrors of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan had not yet been released from their borders.

Germany and Poland still have their pre-war boundaries and the Baltic states of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia had not yet been conquered by the Soviet Union.

Collier's also provides a physical and commercial analysis of the United States for the 1930s. Maps and photographs of cities in the United States and the world are also provided in the book.

The New International Atlas of the World (NIA), published in 1945, is the second atlas we will visit. It begins with a colorful display of national flags and United States military insignias from 1945. Many of these flag designs no longer exist.

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VINTAGE WORLD ATLASES

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The book continues with up to date information on World War II, including the German surrender. A person can also visit the 48 states and experience each state through photographs and written information for the period.

The best is saved for last, 80 pages of full color maps grace the NIA. These maps range from colonial Africa, the Americas, Europe and Asia. In Africa, there is still the Belgian Congo and Rhodesia. Tannu Tuva can be found in Asia and East Prussia in Europe. These names only exist today in history books and old atlases.

Our 1975 national Geographic Atlas once belonged to my grandparents, Noble and Pauline Gunn. Many hours were spent perusing this fascinating volume.

When one looks at the maps in the National Geographic Atlas, the post war changes are apparent. The Soviet Union was at the height of its power and here were still a couple of European colonies in Africa. However, nothing remains the same. Changes between 1975 and today are as stark as those we see from 1935 to 1975. But one thing remains the same: colorful maps which lure the map lover to the book.

Historical atlases are a vital part of learning history. They also fuel the desire to learn about the world and its never ending changes and drama.

~Walter Pitt, Archivist



THE DESERTED WHITE HOUSE

At the corner of Hale and Adkisson Streets in Ashland City sits a white house. It is neglected. The years have taken their toll. Today, it is vacant. Its paint is peeling, leaves accumulating on the roof, and trees and bushes are overgrown. Once it was the home to a beloved teacher and was witness to tragedy and happiness.

Docia Ila Hudgens Christian once lived here along with her husband, Herman W. Christian and their son Bill. Docia Ila was known to most in Cheatham County as "Miss Pinky".

Miss Pinky was a 1924 graduate of Central High School and later the University of Tennessee. Her father J. E. Hudgens served as county Trustee and as a Free Will Baptist preacher. The Hudgens family home still stands across the street from Miss Pinky's house.

The Christians settled in Ashland City and they had one child, William Kerwin Christian, known to all as Bill. H. W. Christian Operated a successful retail store in Ashland City. Miss Pinky would teach English and Latin.

As their son Bill grew, he became interested in attending Sewanee Military Academy. Bill was a well liked young man with a happy disposition. He enjoyed his time at Sewanee. However, in November of 1958, Bill became ill.

The Christians transported their son to Vanderbilt Hospital. It was there they were told that Bill had leukemia. There was no hope for a cure.

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THE DESERTED WHITE HOUSE

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Bill completed his semester at Sewanee and then his parents brought him home to Ashland City. Bill completed his year at Cheatham County Central High School. He was never told of his fatal prognosis.

During the last half year of his life, Bill participated in school as any other student would. He was even a member of the football team. Coach Ralph Spangler and team allowed Bill to run 85 yards for a score in a scrimmage. He knew nothing of the arrangement and the team, public and other students kept the secret.

Bill's condition continued to worsen and by July 4, 1959, Bill passed away.

The strain of Bill's illness also resulted in the end of the Christian's marriage. It could not survive the grief of the loss of a child at age 14.

Miss Pinky continued to teach. She would teach English and Latin at her alma mater for 32 years. Retirement came when she reached the mandatory retirement age for teachers at the time of 65 in 1974.

She reluctantly retired to her home on Adkisson Street where she lived most of the remainder of her life. She died at age 85, November 27, 1994. She and Bill rest at the Hudgens Cemetery.

The small white cottage home of the Christians remains today. It has been vacant for many years. Its age and neglect are wearing on it as it forlornly waits for what may become of it. The future does not seem to hold much promise for the home.

As Ashland City and Cheatham County continues to change and its history and older structures disappear, people like Miss Pinky and others will live in the minds and hearts of those who knew them.

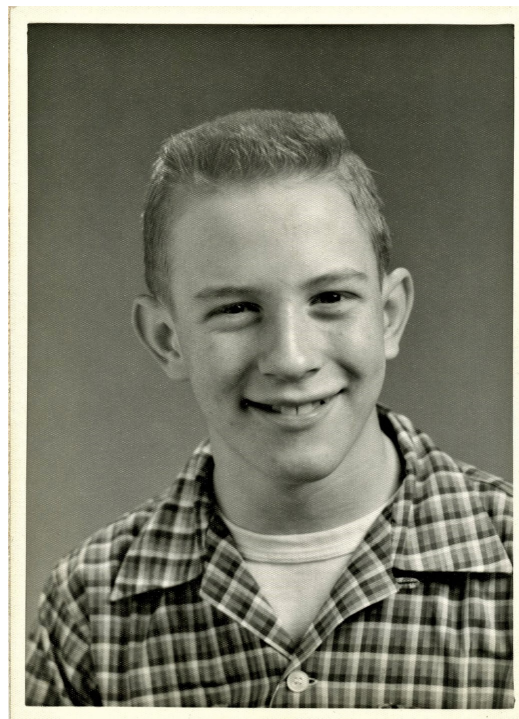
The memories will live on in people until they are all gone too.

Note: Please visit our website and Facebook page for the collection of items about Miss Pinky and her family which were donated to the Cheatham County Public Library by her great-nephews, Tommy and Danny Morris.

~Walter Pitt, Archivist



Miss' Pinky is shown cutting her birthday cake given to her by her Advanced Comp. class.



Left: Miss Pinky

**Right: Her son, William Kerwin
"Bill" Christian**

ASHLAND CITY TIMES APRIL-JULY 1979

Looking back...



Wrestling, school drama and gypsies were all players in the months of April through July of 1979.

The Ashland City Times microfilm from 43 years ago reveals some interesting items in Cheatham County.

March 28, brought the arrest of eight women on charges of theft from the Trade Fair Market in Ashland City. Today, the market is the Circle K. In March of 1979, the town and several local businesses were visited by a group of people termed as "gypsies". The gypsies in particular targeted the small market. The group of women kept manager Leslie Dukes and his wife busy while they took a large amount of merchandise from the store. The group fled town and were later arrested in another part of Tennessee.

April 2, saw the junior class at Cheatham County Central set a record for sales in the USA for magazines and records. The proceeds would be used for expenses for the soon to be seniors.

Today, Dale McCarver is known as a filmmaker and college instructor. April 5, 6 and 7 saw Mr. McCarver direct the Cheatham County Players production of the Glass Menagerie at CCCHS Little Theater. The cast included Michael Stuart, Suzanne Allen, Karyn Lockert and the director himself.

In other dramatic news, Catch Me if you Can finally was performed after being delayed by lead actress Sharon Jones' Injury. The 1979 senior play also included current County Mayor Kerry McCarver, Tony Ellis, Brian Farmer, Gina Binkley, Todd Ellis and Wayne Knox. Walter Pitt served as the lighting technician for the play.

Macho Man Randy Savage was the key attraction as wrestling came to Cheatham County Central on May 9. The Disco Kid, Pistol Pez Whatley, the Mexican Angel and George Gulas also headlined the event. The wrestlers also visited the school during the day to promote the event.

The class of 1979 was scheduled to graduate on May 21 on the school's football field. However, as fate would have it, rain forced the ceremony to be moved into the gym. The overflow crowd packed the gym and many had to watch the festivities on closed circuit television in the cafeteria. Parking also was at a premium and shuttle busses were run from Ashland City to the school in the Bethlehem community. David Gleaves served as Valedictorian and Myra Walker as Salutatorian.

Pansy Ellis passed the state board exam to become a LPN June 6, and Bert Howington resigned as Rescue Squad leader due to health reasons on June 20.

As the calendar turned to July, the post office in Ashland City looked for a new home. The location on Main Street no longer met the needs of the community. The office would settle later on a parcel which was part of the town's playground and was the site of the tennis courts.

Finally, the county was beginning to prepare for the opening of Sycamore and Harpeth Junior High Schools. The elementary schools would be grades 1-6 and the junior highs 7-9. CCCHS would not have a freshman class.

This concludes a look a spring and summer of 1979. We will take another trip back in time in our next issue.

~Walter Pitt, Archivist

RANDOM NOTES

A mystery concerning the identity of a woman and an explosion are two items we have featured on Facebook. Since many people do not use social media, we will also share these items here in our newsletter.

Anyone who knew Mr. Palmer Smith often heard him speak of his Aunt Don. She lived in the house which sat next to our property on Smith St.. He mentioned her often, but never revealed her real name or anything about her. She remained a mystery to me and others who knew Mr. Palmer.

One afternoon, while researching an item on the Ashland City Times microfilm, a death notice caught my attention. The notice was for a woman named Emma R. Hunt.

Mrs. Hunt had died in April of 1927 at her home. The article stated that she was known to family members as "Aunt Don". Her burial was at Forest Hill Cemetery in Ashland City.

Her grave may be unmarked as no record is available for her or her husband's grave are available. She may or may not be resting in the Smith family plot. The identity of Aunt Don has been solved forty years after Mr. Palmer's own death. It's unfortunate that her final resting place is unknown.

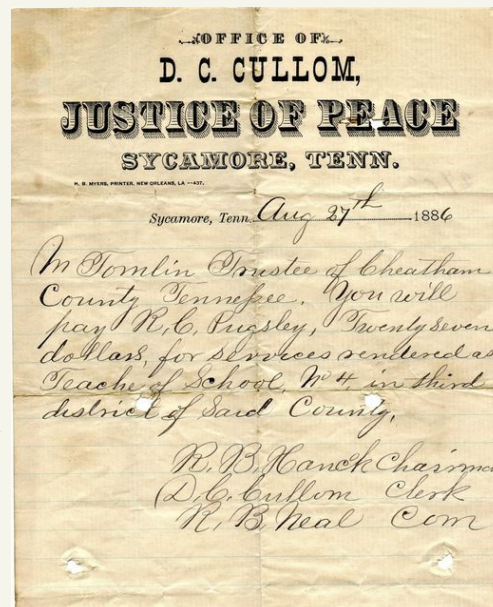
The second item concerns the letterhead of D. C. Cullom. The letterhead was among the items of the 1880s school pay vouchers. The August 27, 1886 pay voucher requests that county Trustee M. Tomlin pay teacher R. C. Pugsley the amount of twenty-seven dollars. At the moment, I have no information on Mr. Pugsley. Mr. Cullom's life would come to a tragic end.

David Cullom was born January 7, 1836. he and his wife, Mary Boyte, lived in the toll house on the road at Sycamore. D. C. Cullom had served as magistrate for the third district in 1866. He always said that one of the big explosions at the powder mill might kill him. On May 26, 1891 his fears became reality. David Cullom was killed in an explosion at the powder mill. He was 55 years old. Mary Boyte Cullom would eventually remarry and move to Pleasant View.

There were many explosions at the mill. It was said that when the powder mill had an explosion, it could be felt several miles away in Ashland City. Mr. Palmer Smith often stated that their house would shake and dishes would rattle when the explosion occurred. Dr. J. B. Smith, his father, would immediately hitch the carriage and travel to Sycamore once the explosion was felt. There were usually several killed and many injured during these incidents.

In the next newsletter we will feature more items from our social media page.

~Walter Pitt, Archivist

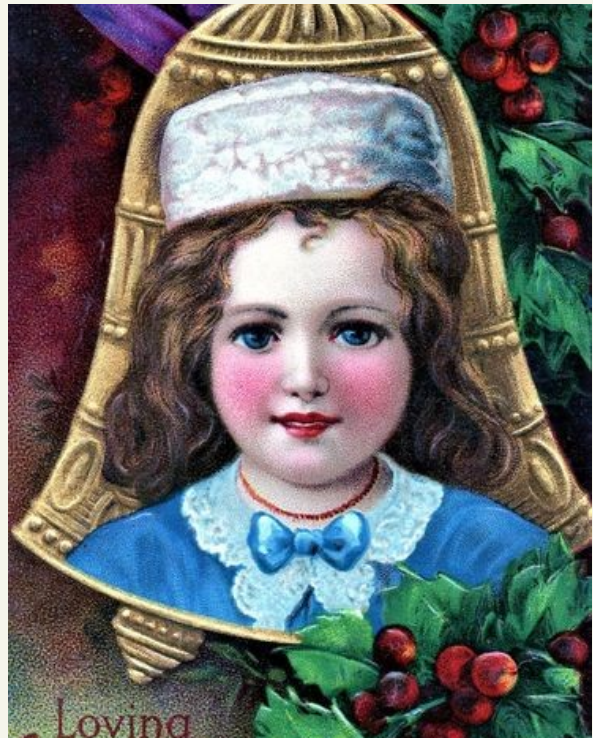


HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR FACEBOOK PAGE

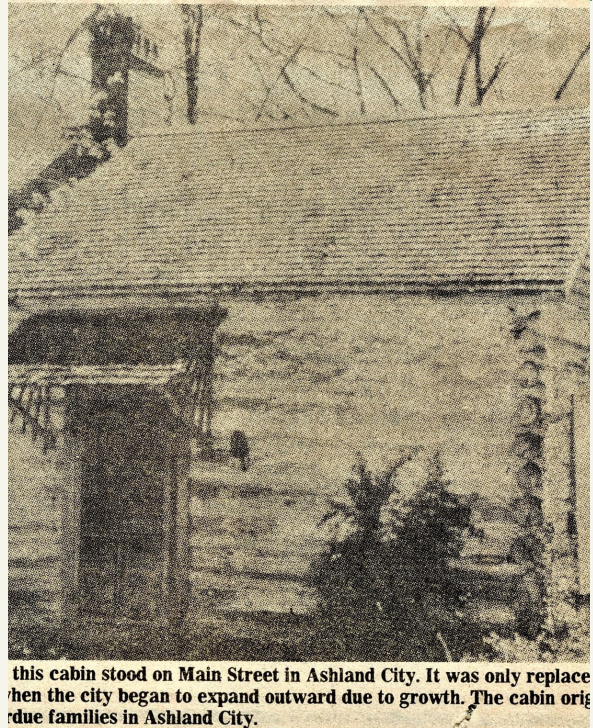
Picture from the 1964 annual The Echo from Cheatham County Central High School.



A vintage post card from the library's Vivian Everett Hudgens Christmas post card collection



Photograph of Mary Gladys Hudgens (1923-2015), daughter of Mrs. Vivian Hudgens.



this cabin stood on Main Street in Ashland City. It was only replaced when the city began to expand outward due to growth. The cabin originally belonged to the families in Ashland City.

The cabin pictured was featured in the January 24, 1990 Ashland city Times 100th year special section.

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CHEATHAM COUNTY ARCHIVES

Cheatham County Archives
188 John Mayfield Drive
Ashland City, TN 37015

Phone: 615-792-4828 (Library)
Fax: 615-792-2054
Email: archives@cheathamcountyttn.gov

The Cheatham County Archives houses, maintains, & provides public access to County Government records and historical documents; and serves as the primary repository for these records.

It is the mission of the Cheatham County Archives to support and provide public access to County Government records in our custody and control.

We have a vision of promoting innovative approaches to historical preservation and research.

We desire to expand the accessibility of historic resources to the community.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR FACEBOOK PAGE

1921 commencement program Cheatham County Central High School.

