How did Oliver Springs get its name? Ask ten schoolchildren today, and you are likely to come up empty. The story of how our little town came to be known as “Oliver Springs” is not well known, but with this article your humble reporter seeks to change that ignominious reality. Where to begin?....

Many of our readers in the Oliver Springs Historical Society may know that our town has been called by several titles. The first name in common usage would have been “Winters’ Gap”, so named after Maj. Moses Winters, a Revolutionary War veteran who came here and settled right at the advent of the 19th century. Moses Winters soon built a grist mill situated right in the gap in Walden Ridge leading toward Windrock Mountain, with requisite pond for turning the water wheel, and before long was doing a booming business. Settlers moving into the area began calling the new settlement “Winters’ Gap”, or “The Gap” for short.

In 1826 a U.S. Post Office was established for this area and Richard Oliver was appointed as the new Postmaster. Richard Oliver had been born in 1800 on the east fork of Poplar Creek, in what is now the City of Oak Ridge. In 1822 he married Mary Jane Butler of Poplar Creek, the daughter of wealthy Thomas Butler, Sr. They bought a tract of land in 1829 that measured several hundred acres in what is now the Norwood area of Oliver Springs. In 1830-31 they built a fine brick mansion and inn on the property, at a spot directly across from the present day Norwood Middle School. The property included much of what is now modern day Norwood. The Post Office was situated in this elegant brick structure. People sending correspondence to area citizens would address it to the recipient located at “Oliver’s”. Many old-timers continue that nomenclature to this day, calling the town simply “Oliver’s”.

Mary Jane Butler died unexpectedly in 1836, whereupon her sister Nancy Butler Nail came to live in the mansion, assisting in rearing the Oliver children who were left motherless by Mary Jane’s untimely passing.

Richard Oliver did not remain as Postmaster for very long, being succeeded in late 1835 by Samuel Galbraith; however, the Oliver’s name stuck through several successive postmasters and being housed in several different buildings around the immediate area. In 1882 the name of the Post Office was changed to “Poplar Creek”, but then changed again in 1884 to “Oliver Springs” as it remains today.

A notable story that no doubt is a contributing factor to the ultimate naming of the town can be traced to Richard Oliver himself. Just north of the Oliver
Estate were the fabled mineral springs of Indian legend. The site of the springs was owned by Moses Winters; however, stories are told of Richard Oliver carrying guests of the inn via horse and buggy down to the springs, apparently recognizing the draw of the reputed healing power of the various mineral waters that emanated from the rock strata at several elevations up the side of Walden Ridge. In the days before reliable patent medicine, no doubt many an early settler sought relief for a variety of ailments ranging from iron poor blood to issues related to digestion. The springs proved to be a huge draw.

By 1838 Richard Oliver had accumulated over 3500 acres of land in Anderson County, utilizing slave labor in the farming and harvesting. By the time of his death in 1861, Richard Oliver had become a wealthy man. The fortunes of the Oliver Estate, however, were soon to change....

When Richard Oliver died in 1861, the nation was being rushed headlong into a civil war that in fact was anything but civil. The land that had produced in such copious harvests was suddenly lying fallow. The slaves had apparently left soon after the onset of war, and soldiers from alternately occupying armies inhabited the mansion. At one point it was utilized as a hospital for wounded soldiers. By war’s end the area was in absolute desolation, being stripped and ravaged of livestock and provenance, and the mansion was in ruins.

After the war, the Oliver Estate was divided in court-appointed auctions, and the mansion ownership changing hands in legal wranglings until 1872 when ownership was passed to George F. Gerding. Gerding lived in the mansion until his death in 1882, whereupon his daughter Charlotte “Lottie” Gerding Lewis lived in the old mansion. Legend has it that the floorboards remained stained with the blood of both Union and Confederate soldiers, the tired old fibers saturated with stark evidence of that horrible conflict.

The old Mansion caught fire and burned in 1892. The Oliver name now lives on in the lovely little burg that we cherish and call home.

(Much information for this article taken from “The History of Oliver Springs and Its People, Vol. IV”, by Snyder Roberts. Once again we tip our collective hats to Mr. Roberts for his labor....)
Train Arrives At the Oliver Springs Depot!

In the summer of 2014, I received a phone call from Dorothy Kelly, wife of the deceased evangelist Dr. Wm. “Billy” Kelly. She asked if I still wanted the train. Did I! She was ready to give it to the Historical Society.

The train was built by Billy’s Uncle Staples Cross, a retired railroad man. With a knife, saw and blocks of wood he built the train. It is an engine and tender car, 98% wood, 8 feet long and weighs 102 pounds. Power to turn the driver wheels and make the exhaust sound came from a little electric motor and a plunger that travels back and forth in a stovepipe hidden underneath the engine, giving it the sound of a locomotive exhaust.

(Note from Robbie... this was a very ingenious arrangement which produced a very realistic “Locomotive” sound).

The bell is one once worn by a horse who pulled a Knoxville streetcar in the horsedrawn era.

The train was finished in 1938.

After his retirement, Staples spent his time doing what he loved: making train engines. That included all the bells whistles, lights, and things he loved to see and hear.

Bringing the Train Home

A rented UHaul, Jerry White, Ed Coker, Wesley Lee, Pat and Cecil Crowe, and myself made the trip to South Carolina to bring the train to its new home.

A special thanks go out to Don Wood, Andrew Freer and Roger Goodman for their work on the train. To Shelly Hall, “Thanks”. To those who helped move it, “thanks”.

We sincerely thank the Kelly family for their generous gift. It is a gift to us that will be seen and enjoyed by so many people for years to come!

I would also like to say a special thanks to Ed and Malba Tuell, Phyllis White, Gail Gilmore, Larry and Shelly Hall, and my daughter Diane for their help at the Depot festival time.

It is surprising at the number of people from out of town and out of state who visit the Depot inquiring about the history of our town. It is heartwarming to see parents explaining to their children the many historical things and places. It makes me proud of Oliver Springs!

When we leave this world it’s what we leave behind that counts. We take nothing with us!

Carolyn
Drive downtown into “Old Town” Oliver Springs, and one of the first things you might notice is a flurry of activity in and around the old storefronts. Over across the tracks rolls a forklift, bringing a huge pallet of sugar over to the main buildings. Looking through the windows you see an impressive array of state of the art Mixers cookers, and wrapping machines. Here and there scurry worker smartly dressed in clean blue smocks and matching industrial head coverings. Not to fear, dearhearts... It’s not a secret chemical lab, but rather the home base of Country Fresh Foods and Confections!

Known locally around town as simply “The Fudge Factory”, Country Fresh Foods and Confections has been in business since 1988. At the time they offered 14 flavors, but in the years since have grown to offer over 100 flavors, INCLUDING sugar-free!

Today the company offers not only bulk fudge in both traditional loaves and precut 2 oz. pieces, but also fudge mix for those who want to make fudge onsite, individually wrapped fudge pieces and fudge cups, a variety of retail packages, gift boxes, and tins as well as private labeling and contract packaging.

Debuting at this year’s Fancy Foods Show will be a new line of premium “All Natural Fudge”.

Young people in “Fudge Heaven”

Display case showing traditional fudge loaves

Founder and Owner Ed Stockton behind one of the retail counters at Country Fresh Foods and Confections
Reflections on “October Sky Festival”
by Julia H. Daniel

I count it all joy to have worked with the October Sky Festival for the last seven years and hope there will be many more. The festival is not just the day of the festival, but it is an entire year of planning with outstanding team members. The team members become family. The festival is a time to promote the Town of Oliver Springs, meet friends and share stories of days gone by. The week before this year’s Festival, my cousin JoAnn Crozier Boyce (Clinton 12) came from California for my mother’s 90th birthday celebration as well to attend the festival. We met a group of her Facebook friends at Hoskins Drug Store in Clinton for lunch and one lady there said she was going to be a vendor at the festival and she made candles. I spoke with my neighbor Nancy Smith at the festival, who was with the Eastern Stars and she related stories of my father and her family during the integration era in the 60’s. I also met many people at the festival who shared stories of their family and how they knew my family. The festival is not just a time of fun, but it is a time for families, friends, churches, and neighbors to come together and fellowship.

Yes, the festival is becoming larger and requires more planning, but most of all, it needs dedicated volunteers. During the year, we need festival chairpersons, promotional coordinator, vendor coordinator, festival budget committee, secretary, website coordinator, entertainment coordinator, decorations committee, historical society booth chairpersons, movie tour coordinator, transportation coordinator, volunteers committee, photographers, traffic directions & parking coordinator, food booth committee, children zone coordinator, street sign setup & take downs committee and October Sky Movie & city tour coordinator. If you would like to volunteer or have questions regarding the festival, please feel free to contact me at 865-789-0846 or you can email me at juliadaniel@comcast.net.

I wish each of you a blessed New Year and may God be with you and your family.

Nannie Hopper would like to thank all her family and friends for making her 90th birthday celebration a joyous and special occasion on October 11, 2014, at the Disabled American Veterans Building. Your presents, prayers, support, and love over the years means more to me than words can express. I have been truly blessed to have so many wonderful friends. Thank and God bless each of you.

(Note from Robbie: I love this gracious lady who has for many years served as an example of Christian virtue and love. How much poorer would be not only the Historical Society, but our community had there not been a Nannie Hopper? What a role model she is for us who seek that lofty and noble nature!

May God continue to bless Mrs. Nannie Hopper all the days of her life….)
Miners Pictured are: Bob Brandenburg, Roger Duncan, Rao Patterson, Alvin Patterson, Arnold Jones, Benny Lowe, Dane Sharp, Gary Phillips, Tommy McCool, Tommy Barber, Squeaky Daniels, Jim Forster, Ron Gallaher, Roy Wills C. 1986

Stained glass mural of the old L&N Trestle was graciously presented to the Historical Society by Shirl and Francis Buck

Amos Pride, Mert Pride, Garve Daugherty, Willie Patterson. The man bending unable to see his face is unidentified (photo by Regina Pride Veenstra)
Dr. Fred O. Stone holds a much honored place in Oliver Springs history. Born in Claiborne County Tennessee in 1887, Dr. Stone graduated from Lincoln Memorial University, then received his doctor’s training at University of Tennessee School of Medicine. He quickly found himself on the front lines in WWI, where he ultimately received the British Military Cross, so honored for repeatedly risking his life in treating the wounded while under hostile fire.

Dr. Stone retired from the U.S. Army Medical Corps, whereupon he came to Oliver Springs in 1940. He served as the company doctor for the Windrock Coal Company, and as examining doctor for the firm Stone and Webster Corporation.

Dr. Stone bought the Dr. J.T. Hayes office building and opened a practice in the second floor suites. Dr. Stone loved masonry, and soon began the enlargement of the building, adding patios and alcoves until the building towered over the other structures downtown.

Dr. Stone was widely known for delivering babies, it being estimated that he delivered approximately 5000 babies, including many of our historical society’s members.

Dr. Stone retired in 1963, ultimately passing away in 1976 at the age of 89, leaving his wife Lorene and his son, Fred O. Stone Jr., who practiced dentistry for many years here in town.


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Receipt from Dr. Fred Stone to Lawrence Russell in April 1944 for delivery of a baby. The cost was $2.00 and a pound of butter. That might seem odd at first glance until one considers the state of the nation’s economy in wartime 1944. Butter was highly valued and in scarce supply due to rationing.

I wonder if the doctors of today would accept a pound of butter as partial payment? ..... Robbie

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Wartime photo I.D. badge of Dr. Fred Stone, required to gain access to the top secret Manhattan Project site that was to become Oak Ridge.

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One of the many fireplaces to be found in the Stone Clinic. According to Dr. Fred Stone Jr., his father tasked him with the job of building a fire in each of the 15 fireplaces every morning when weather dictated. *(photo by Charles Tichy)*
Our Beloved Mrs. Rhudy, longtime teacher at Oliver Springs High School

First row to left; Robert Parrott-Bill Fox- Lewis Shilings, Herman Hackworth- Second row-Gayley Hester, Captain Dewayne Pride, Clarence Nelson  (photo supplied by Mary Hazel Parrott Wren)

Building the Drugstore

Leola Ahler Griffith, daughter of Gustave and Queen Ahler. Married Thomas Griffith. The Ahlers lived off Butler Mill Road on the present site of the Cecil and Pat Crowe home.

L-r: Ruth Williams, Thomas “Harold” Mahoney, Myrtle Walls. Front is Byrd Brown and Louise Whitus.

Winifred “Winnie” DeBlieux. The DeBlieux family owned a soda pop manufacturing plant in Oliver Springs early in the 20th century.

E.B. Booth Home. This home was used for several years as a funeral home, and sat on the corner of Roane Street and Winters Gap Avenue. John Booth family lived there at one time, as did the Craig family. The Terry Hacker home sat there in more recent times until it burned.

Our Beloved Mrs. Rhudy, longtime teacher at Oliver Springs High School
The Oliver Springs Historical Society and the Town of Oliver Springs
Say “Thank You” To the Sponsors of the 2014 October Sky Festival

Citizens First Bank
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Senator Ken Yagar
ORNL Credit Union
Blackbird Hollow and Co.
Anderson County Visions Magazine

Front row (l-r): Jimmy Sheffield, Gayley Hester, Alvin Jones, Dewayne Pride, Hence Mitchell, Lee Phillips, Joe Hileman, Doug Green, Fred Cox, Ralph Collins, Steve Massengill, Jimmy Harvey, Herman Hackworth, and Bill Fox
Photo supplied by Audrey “Cookie” White Murphy
1892 Oliver Springs school picture. This school sat directly across from the present day Harvey’s Furniture. Perusing through the names brings to mind a plethora of stories and details. Top row, Willie Sienknecht, died of Typhoid not long after this picture was taken: Bessie Richards on bottom row, elder sister to Richards sisters who would ultimately be cruelly murdered in the mansion that was home to the family. Bessie died of typhoid in 1900. Next to her is Mamie Richards Sienknecht, who would eventually fall out with her cousins who lived in the big house on the hill. Joe Kelly, who would be killed in Morgan County, is seated next to his pal Gerald Hannah, brother to Harvey H. Hannah. Gerald figured into the Richards murders, it being his gun that was found under the body of Powder Brown. No other connection or complicity was ever proven.

At top left is Mattie Duncan, wife of Thomas Brown. Mattie was the matriarch of the Brown Family, mother of L.N. Brown Sr, and through L.N. Sr., grandmother to Maxine, Barkstel, Roger, L.N. Jr., Thaxton, Lou Ella May, Mattie, and Margaret Ann. Mattie sold dynamite for the mining industry in addition to raising her children.

In the upper left photograph sits young Edith Ross, daughter to W.W. Ross and Elizabeth Butler Ross. Edith and Elizabeth were proprietors of a millinery shop that catered to wealthy clients of the Oliver Springs Hotel.

In the photograph at left are Ida and Mattie Queener, daughters of Mayor Jack Queener. Ida went on to marry a Keebler of the Keebler Store family.

Many more are the stories that could be told of the people in this picture, taken three years before the Big O.S. Hotel was even constructed.
Shown above is a picture of Staples Cross, craftsman extraordinaire and one of Oliver Springs more notable citizens of days gone by. Graciously shared by Buster Harvey, the photograph shows Mr. Cross with one of his beautifully crafted trains; in fact, this train shown is the very one that was bequeathed to us by the Kelly family. Carolyn Kelly wrote poignantly elsewhere in this issue of the train and the journey to get it back home.

On the back of the photograph is a handwritten note from Mr. Cross, detailing the cost of the materials and documenting the hours it required to build the magnificent work of art. According to him, it took him 756 hours to complete, furthering that allowing himself 25 cents per hour, the cost of labor totaled $188.90.

While I am thanking people, I want to just take time to thank Buster Harvey, who is very magnanimously following in the exact altruistic steps of his father. Mr. Sonny Harvey was one of the most sharing spirits I have ever known. The Historical Society calendars would never have had the first copy printed had it not been for Mr. Harvey donating splendid photographs of our town in days gone by.

I see much of the father in the son…. Thanks, Buster…..

The picture above was taken at a trip to the Smoky Mountains by students of Oliver Springs High School, c. 1932. From left, Pauline “Polly” Duggins, Madeline Denton, Ben Whedbee, Beulah Mae Warren.

Young Alfred Diggs, O.S.H.S. class of 1933, in front of the Oliver Springs Drug Store where he worked as a soda jerk. Note the Keebler Building in the background, which was razed to make way for the “new” highway 61 in 1938-39.

Charlie McBee’s restaurant on Kingston Avenue just across the railroad tracks from the Masonic Building. How many can tell the tale of eating hot dogs from Charlie McBee’s?

I have forgotten the name of the lady in the picture.
The house donated to the Historical Society by the Harvey family has been razed and the lot is cleared and ready for future use. Shown is our friend Julian Hopper, who won the bid to demolish the house, which was donated with the understanding that it would be torn down to render the lot usable for the “Historic Square” which was one of Mr. Sonny Harvey’s longtime goals. Much thanks to the Harvey Family for their ongoing efforts on behalf of the Historical Society. What friends and benefactors they remain!
How splendid our museum looked over the Christmas holiday! I love big thinkers and we have them in abundance in our little group. Let the other folks deal with the mediocrity, we’ve got the superlatives right here! Thanks to our folks who took the time to clean, decorate, and create the displays to “show off” to our lovely little town for the Christ holiday. I could say more, but I will just let the pictures speak for themselves! A big ol’ tip of Frosty’s hat to those who made it happen! Robbie
Dr. S.J. Van Hook holds an honored place in many hearts in our little town. Born in Shelby County, Tennessee, Stonewall Jackson Van Hook Jr. graduated from Whitehaven High School, where he excelled as a multisport athlete. Upon graduation, he attended and graduated from Memphis State University where he also played football. His medical studies were furthered at the University of Tennessee School of Medicine where he received his Doctor of Medicine honors in 1943.

After graduating, the young Dr. Van Hook moved to Knoxville where he served his internship. The article at right is from an article printed in the Knoxville News-Sentinel during Dr. Van Hook’s internship at the Knoxville General Hospital. Dr. Van Hook met a young nurse in training named Gladys Scarbrough while serving his internship at the General Hospital. They were married March 1, 1947. Two children were born of this union: Stonewall Jackson Van Hook III and Joseph Henry “Joe” Van Hook.

In 1956, Dr. Van Hook bought an old two story house on the lower end of Roane Street and set up his offices there. Many of us remember seeing Dr. Van Hook in this building that is still standing proudly at the intersect of Estabrook Avenue and Roane Street.

Although Dr. Van Hook has been gone for many years now, his memory and legacy live on in his children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and those of us who remember him well and honor the service he performed for our town for so many years.

Robbie Underwood
(Much information for this article was taken from “The History of Oliver Springs and its People”, Vol. III, written by Snyder Roberts)
Remarkable Results

THERE has been some experimentation with the combined use of penicillin and sulfa drugs and, with remarkable results, Dr. Van Hook said.

Teaming with penicillin, the usual methods of surgery become more effective and safe. For example, at General Hospital, a child had tonsillitis and a throat infection which appeared to be spreading. Sulfa drugs failed to check the disease, which became complicated by an abscess on one leg. Penicillin was used, and the child's temperature dropped from 104 to 98. The abscess opened, and the child got well. In this case, Dr. Van Hook explained, both penicillin and surgery were needed, and made a remarkable team.

Penicillin, he explained, combats disease germs simply by making it impossible for them to multiply in the body as they normally would in body heat. Germs multiply in geometric ratios, for example, 4, 8, 16, and so forth. When their multiplication is checked, nature usually may combat those in the body.

Probably the most remarkable result so far known from penicillin is against diphtheria. At the local VD clinic, no penicillin is used because facilities aren't provided to keep patients there.

The usual procedure for VD cases at the clinic is this: When a patient comes for treatment of gonorrhea, a week's treatment by sulfa drugs is tried. If the patient fails to respond—and 20 per cent of cases fail—then the patient is eligible to be sent to Chattanooga for penicillin treatment at the East Tennessee Medical Center, which is financed by the Federal and state governments. Physicians say that all of the cases which can't be cured by other methods, penicillin hasn't yet failed to cure one, and usually in 48 to 72 hours, with a dosage of around 150,000 units.

Men and women alike are cured in this short time with penicillin, it is said. Moreover, penicillin cures chronic and acute cases of gonorrhea with equal ease. However, since it saturates the blood, skin and body fluids, and also has been found effective against arthritis caused by gonorrhea.

Use of penicillin against syphilis is, in some ways, even more remarkable, since cases have been apparently cured in eight short days. In former treatment methods syphilis required months of painful injections of "heavy metal" treatment. In some places now, penicillin is combined with arsenic and bismuth injections, and even fever therapy, to produce remarkable cures in syphilis.

However, use of penicillin in treatment of gonorrhea is limited to "early and mild cases," because of shortage of supply.

VD cases which become eligible here for penicillin treatment are sent about twice weekly, with transportation paid, to the Chattanooga center. A special truck picks up cases here, as well as throughout East Tennessee, on its trips.

Has Drawbacks

DOCTORS see penicillin as one of the great boosts to medical progress in this century, but remarkable as it is, there are drawbacks and exceptions to its possibilities in the future, it is believed. One physician points out that a patient may be treated with it for an infectious disease, and fail to receive an adequate dosage, thus halting but not curing the disease. In such a case, germs left in the body build up a resistance to the drug, and if spread, the germs retain their resistance, become stronger, and fail to yield to later treatment.

Penicillin and sulfa drugs, the two most spectacular medical discoveries of the Twentieth Century, are as different as day and night.

Sulfa drugs are made by a complicated chemical formula, and its parts are inorganic. One of its basic parts is similar to chemicals used in industrial dyes.

Penicillin, on the other hand, is an organic mold or yeast, similar to the mold which forms on a loaf of bread. One laboratory produces it from fermentation of wheat bran.

Depots for distribution of the drug also have been established at St. Mary's and Fort Sanders Hospitals.

Penicillin is distributed from either of the depots to other hospitals in the Knoxville territory, and for use by private physicians, in cases where the patient is eligible to use the drug.
Elsie McGlothin and Edith Jackson

Irene Mead

Oliver Springs School Faculty in 1927-28. Back Row, L-R: Mrs. Lucy Gardner, Mrs. Maud Brittain, Mrs. Boyd Jones, Miss Ann Shelton, Mr. Boyd Jones.
Front Row, L-R: Prof. D.J. Brittain Sr., Miss Abbie Gillespie,

This may have been the last picture I had Mr. Sonny Harvey identify for me. I have him on video pointing out who is who. He told me that they were, from left to right: Shirley Justice, Margaret Jo Hart, Jean Pride at Center, Ruth Collins, Miss McIver.
The December meeting was held in the Abston Building this year just to show off the work that we had done in the past six months. We had approximately 80 people attend our meeting. It was a great meeting and a lot of fun. I want to give a heartfelt thanks to all who worked to clean up and decorate inside and outside. We had several people stop by the building just to take pictures with their children. Everything looked great and the food was wonderful. Everything went off without a hitch and as smooth as silk. We got our new chairs just two days before the meeting. By the way if you would like to donate money for a chair, we will still accept the $21 donation at our next meeting.

There are many people that deserve our thanks. I want to thank Jerry White for the fine job that he did chairing the January meeting while I was at the UT hospital with Linda. She is doing great now. Thanks for all the prayers, cards and well wishes. Thanks to Wesley Lee for the fine job that he did with our last newsletter.

I want to give a special thanks to Shirl and Frances Buck for the leaded glass artwork of the trestle and the Esso Service Station. It was apparent to everyone how much it meant to Shirl, and it means a lot to me. I remember playing on the trestle while we lived in the two back rooms of the Esso Station when I was a kid. It is part of the history of Oliver Springs and what a great way to remember it! A lot of folks may remember getting gas at the Esso and sometimes at the restaurant next door (Ha!). We have great plans for the Oliver Springs Historical Society this year. Come to our next meeting and take an active role in preserving our history. Hope everyone had a great holiday season. I am looking forward to seeing you at our next meeting.

Your Chairman,

Eddie Coker
Oliver Springs Panorama, taken before 1949. At lower left can be seen the old High School, built in 1922, burned to the ground in 1949. To the extreme right of the picture is Back Street. This is a wonderful panoramic picture, showing the trestle that spanned the town for many years, being erected in 1904 to carry coal from the Windrock Mine on the Cow Creek Branch Line. It was demolished in 1970.