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TOMMY LEE FRANCIS
PUBLISHER@MOCOTODAY.COM

EDITOR:
HEATHER FRANCIS
EDITOR@MOCOTODAY.COM

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**Ms. Avery Pearl
Pet Columnist**

Pet Perspective with Ms. Avery Pearl

Fun With Amelia

Little Ms Amelia came to stay with us. She is so sweet and she gave Ms Ivory and me lots of hugs.

She kept telling me that she wuffs me and I am just the sweetest and smartest doggie ever. She gave me loads belly rubs and I kept giving her 5, in return.

Well, she decided to put Ms Ivorys bed on the couch and tuck her in. It was so sweet.

Mimi said she will be a good little mama, one day.

While Ms Amelia was here, she went to the dock with Pap and caught her very first fish, ever! She said it was gross and didn't want to touch it. Pappy laughed at that.

Ms Ivory and me really enjoyed having her around and we were happy to play with her.

Hope you have a great week.

For more of my Pet Perspective like and follow me on Facebook at Ms Avery Pearl.



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Anyone having reason to believe that this permit should not be issued, must appear before the Morgan County Beer Board on the 14th.

The Deer Lodge Abner Ross Center meet on the third Monday of the month at 6:00 PM.

Coalfield Genealogical and Historical Society meets the second Tuesday of every month at the Senior Citizens Building at 6:00 PM.

Morgan County Republican Party meets the last Thursday of every month at 7:00 PM at the American Legion in Wartburg.



David Zubler
Columnist

Take advantage of a college savings plan

A 529 college savings plan is a valuable tool for saving for future education expenses, offering tax advantages and potential for investment growth. It's tax-deferred, so you don't pay taxes on the earnings each year.

Anyone can contribute to a 529 plan. This includes parents, extended family, or a family friend. As a tax-advantaged savings account specifically designed for educational expenses, a 529 college savings plan gift can provide tax benefits to those who want to help with a child's education

expenses.

A 529 plan allows you to contribute after-tax money into an investment account on behalf of a designated beneficiary (usually your child, but it could be a grandchild, niece, nephew, family friend, or even you). The money grows tax-deferred, and withdrawals are tax-free if the distributions are used for qualified education expenses.

Qualified education expenses include:

- The full cost of tuition, fees, books, computers, and related equipment, and, in some cases, room and board (assuming the student is attending at least half-time) at any college or graduate school in the U.S. or abroad, accredited by the U.S. Department of Education.
- The cost of certified apprenticeship programs registered with the U.S. Department of Labor.
- Student loan repayments (up to a \$10,000 lifetime limit per beneficiary and \$10,000 per beneficiary's siblings).
- K-12 tuition expenses up to \$10,000 per year.

Though 529 plan contributions are considered gifts for federal tax purposes, you can contribute up to a certain amount per year without incurring gift tax consequences.

Most states offer at least one 529 plan. Most plans are savings plans, and the value fluctuates with investment performance. However, some states offer prepaid plans, which allow you to lock in the cost of future tuition at an in-state public school. You can find information about state plans on the College Savings Plans Network.

For 2025, an individual can gift up to \$19,000 per beneficiary, and married couples can gift up to \$38,000 per beneficiary without using any of their lifetime gift tax exclusion or utilizing the 529 plan superfunding provision.

Some states offer residents tax deductions or credits for contributing to their in-state 529 plans.

Withdrawals that are not used for qualified education expenses are taxable income and subject to a 10 percent penalty.

When setting up a 529 plan, it's best to do some research to find the ideal plan for you. The best plans offer low fees, a diverse range of investment options, and a proven track record of strong performance.

David Zubler is a nationally known tax accountant and Enrolled Agent that resides in East Tennessee. He is the author of six tax books and a syndicated columnist who has shared tax advice on podcasts and national TV and has been referred to as America's Tax Guru. He is the founder and president of Your Tax Care. He represents clients nationwide before the IRS and provides tax strategies, and tax education, including David's one-minute tax tip radio recordings at YourTaxCare.com. David can be reached at (865)363-3019 or by email at david@yourtaxcare.com.

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— In Loving Memory —

Tony Shannon, 65



Tony Shannon, age 65, of Wartburg, TN, went home to be with his Heavenly Father on Friday, July 25, 2025, at 11:42 p.m., surrounded by love and held close in the hearts of those who meant the most to him.

Tony was born on April 13, 1960. He was a devoted father, grandfather, son, brother, and friend.

Tony's greatest treasures in life was his family. He was the proud and loving father of three sons: Jeremy (Amanda), DJ (Savannah) and Zachary Shannon, and an even prouder grandfather to his eight grandsons: Jayce, Dalton, Jayden, Braelynn, Kyler, Titan, Camden, and Kyzer. To know Tony was to know how deeply he loved his family, he never left, or ended a call, nor walked away without first saying, "I love you."

Tony lived by the principle, "Family First" and he didn't just say it. He lived it. Whether cheering his sons on at the racetrack or supporting his grandsons at their sporting events, he was their biggest fan and loudest cheerleader. His life was filled with pride for the legacy he built, and he never missed a chance to brag about the boys who meant everything to him.

Tony was the beloved son of Sue Russell and the late Vaughn L. Shannon. Tony had only one sibling, a bother, Terry (Vanessa) Shannon who he loved dearly and lovingly called him "Red."

Tony is survived by the mother of his sons, Teresa Shepherd Robbins, a woman and a Best Friend who remained a constant presence in his heart and life, all the way through his final breath.

He is also survived by his nephew Jaylon Shannon, uncles, aunts, cousins, great niece's, and many friends!

Tony was blessed to have several special life long friends that were also constants in his life, they had his back from youth age til time he left this walk of life; Burt Sumner's, Basel Gunter, Darrell Wilson and Jason Brown!

Tony Shannon is and will be deeply missed by many, but we take comfort in knowing that he is now walking those streets of gold, hand in hand with his Heavenly Father, and reunited with his dad and other loved ones gone before him smiling down and telling stories of the sons and grandsons he loved more than anything.

Our hearts are shattered, but our faith remains strong. We love you, we miss you, and we will carry your memory in everything we do. Please keep our family in your prayers during this incredibly difficult time.

Until we meet again, We love you dad and one more time, Just like he always said back to us, "I LOVE YOU SON."

Receiving of family and friends will be July 29, 2025 from 5-7 and funeral will follow at 7:00 p.m. at SCHUBERT's Funeral Home with Brothers, Charles Webb and Josh Kidd officiating Tony's services!

We are honoring Tony's wishes in having traditionally funeral with cremation to follow! Rest in peace dad, your work here is done!

Doug Sise, 55



Doug Sise, age 55, of Wartburg, TN, went to be with the Lord on Sunday, July 27th, 2025, at 6:36 p.m. Doug was born on August 16th, 1969.

He was a devoted husband, father, grandfather, son, brother and friend. Doug's greatest treasure in life was his family.

He is survived by his loving wife, Melissa Sise, and his children: Lacie and Josh Wilson, Dylan and Katlynn Sise, Dakota, and Devin Armstrong. Doug was a proud grandfather to eight beloved grandchildren: Raelynn, Rylan, Xander, Aaleiya, Lincoln, Nova, Zaylee, and Aliviah. He shared a special bond with his mother-in-law, Carol Armes; brother-in-law, Terry Kennedy and family; Tina and Mike Fritts; Amanda and Joedan Taylor; Angela and Jose; and a host of nieces and nephews.

Doug also leaves behind life-long friendships, especially with Henry Taylor and many coworkers who became like family. To know Doug was truly to love him. Doug was preceded in death by his parents, Bill and Ruth Sise; his brother, Tommy Sise; his sister, Teresa Kennedy; and his father-in-law, Terry Armes.

Doug spent 35 years devoted to spending his Saturday nights at Wartburg Speedway. When he wasn't at the racetrack, you could find him cheering loudly on the sidelines of his grandkids' sporting events. He was their biggest fan, their loudest supporter, and always their problem solver.

Doug was also passionate about coaching and spent many years with the Wartburg Boys & Girls Club. He loved every child he worked with, treating them as his own and giving his all to his teams. A true Dallas Cowboys fan, Doug was known for his big heart, work ethic, and willingness to fight for those he loved. He worked hard all his life and held the same job since the age of 18 — a testament to his loyalty and dedication.

Doug was a man who would do anything for anyone. And if you thought differently, well... you just didn't know Doug. If Doug could leave one last message for the world, it would be: "Saturdays are for racing — don't ask me to do anything else!"

The family will receive friends Friday, August 1, 2025 at Schubert Funeral Home from 12:00-1:00 p.m. with the funeral to follow at 1:00 p.m. The service will be officiated by Brother Daniel Parker. Interment will follow in the Sunbright City Cemetery.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Doug Sise.

Obituaries must come from a funeral home to be in the newspaper.

Psalm 123:1

**Unto thee lift I up mine eyes,
O thou that dwellest in the heavens.**



— In Loving Memory —

Barbara Elaine (Woods) Hall, 72



Brianna Moore and Zackery Hall; son Eric M. Hall and children Savanna Hall and Taylor Branstetter; and son Shaun L. Hall and children Sean Steven Hall and Samantha Alyssa-Jo Hall. Brothers Leslie (Diane), Stanley (Cathy), and Wayne (Pam) Woods. Sisters Charlene Hall, Gail Walker, and sister in law Gail Woods.

Barbara Elaine (Woods) Hall, age 72, of Wartburg went home to be with the Lord on July 26, 2025. Barbara loved her boys and loved to crochet.

Barbara was preceded in death by her parents Charlie and Estie Woods, infant siblings Mary Magdalene, Dolly, and Charles, brothers James, Gary "Pete" Woods, Robert Woods, and sisters June Francis, Betty Hawn and Helen Putz.

She is survived by her son James R. Hall and children

The family is receiving friends Tuesday, July 29, 2025 at Schubert Funeral Home in Wartburg from 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. with the funeral service to follow at 1:00 p.m. with Bro. Daniel Parker officiating. Interment will follow in the Morgan Memorial Gardens in Wartburg.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of Barbara Elaine (Woods) Hall.

Melinda Cherie Garrett, 57



She is preceded in death by her mother Leta Garrett, step-father Dairl Garrett, father Jerry Taylor, and sister Amber Taylor.

She is survived by her loving husband Bill Garrett; daughters Christy Taylor and Emma Hawn; grandchildren Serenity "Princess" Shillings, William "Bubba" Shillings, William "Billy Bob" Hawn, Jonathan "Hot Rod" Hawn, Eli "Pickle" Hawn, Gunner "Romeo" Hawn, and Andrew "Andy Rae" Claunch, expected in November. She also leaves behind sisters Heather (Willie) Jones and Amanda Taylor; brothers Terry (Amy) Taylor, Hank Taylor, and Ronnie Taylor; and a host of nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends who will carry her memory forward with love.

Melinda Cherie Garrett
October 23, 1967 – July 26, 2025

Melinda Garrett, age 57, passed away surrounded by the love of her family. Born on October 23, 1967, to Henry "Jerry" Taylor and Leta Garrett, Melinda lived a life full of heart, grit, and unmistakable charm.

Melinda's smile could light up a room, and her giggle, pure and contagious, was unforgettable. She loved fiercely and without hesitation. If she loved you, you felt it in every word, every hug, and every laugh. And if she didn't—well, you likely knew that too. She was honest, strong-willed, and never afraid to speak her truth.

For 35 years, Melinda shared her life with her devoted husband, William "Bill" Garrett. They were inseparable, the truest of soulmates. Even when apart, her heart was never far from his. Together, they built a family and a life rooted not in material wealth but in love, laughter, and togetherness. Her greatest treasures were her children, her grandchildren, and time spent swapping stories and making memories.

Services will be held Wednesday from 5–7 PM at Schubert Funeral Home in Wartburg.

Melinda lived a hard, simple, and beautiful life. Her legacy is one of fierce love, laughter, and unshakable strength. She will be missed beyond measure.



Obituaries must come from a funeral home to be in the newspaper.

Psalm 86:4-5

4 Rejoice the soul of thy servant: for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.

5 For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.



— In Loving Memory —

Jacob William Bradley



Jacob William Bradley known to many as Jaybird or just JW, and big Brother, Daddy, or Papaw to his family, passed away July 27, 2025, at Methodist Medical Center of Oak Ridge. Preceded in death by his parents Judson David Bradley and Jamie Irene Bradley and sisters Aunt Jackie and Sueanne. Also, his wife of 67 years Emma Ruth "Kate" Bradley (Hobbs) passed away on July 29, 2019.

JW lived a life of shameless persistence. A retired electrician who provided a life and a home for his family, friends, countless critters, and even some

strange hippies from Vanderbilt who wanted to help make Petros and Morgan county a better, more just place to live. He never retired from answering every knock on the door, helping anyone who asked, and inventing newly difficult yet effective ways of doing things.

In 1972, he co-founded the activist organization, Save Our Cumberland Mountains (SOCM), which still operates today under an updated acronym and broader mission. SOCM's flagship efforts to push back against the destructive practices of strip-mining empowered local landowners and communities to stand firm against this extractive industry and destructive practices. Ralph Nader has referred to JW as a "fighter for justice," and JW did fight with the same shameless persistence his entire life. Even in his very last days, many visitors would leave with full stomachs and a list of tasks that JW thought needed done.

The world has lost a fighter. A family has lost a daddy, a big brother, a (great) papaw. A multitude seeking to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable has lost a great mentor. For those of us who knew him and loved him, it's now up to us to do what needs doing, shamelessly and never ceasing.

He is survived by his; Children: Connie Bradley, Chip Bradley and Faith Wayland.

Son-in-law: Teddy Wayland

Grandchildren: Trevor Loy & wife Shawanna, Taylor Loy & wife Rebecca, Harley Wayland and Cassidy Wayland.

Great-grandson: Evan Loy

Brothers: Bobby and Leon

Several special Nieces and Nephews

Special thanks to his nurses/caregivers from Quality Private Duty Care who took great care of him and became like family. Thank you, Rhonda Smith, Mandi Jones, and Joel Lasig.

The family will receive friends Wednesday, July 29, 2025 at Schubert Funeral Home in Wartburg from 5:00-7:00 p.m. with the funeral to follow at 7:00 p.m. with Bro. Tony Cathey officiating. Graveside services will be at 11:00 a.m. on Thursday in the New Petros Cemetery.

Schubert Funeral Home is honored to serve the family of J. W. Bradley



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Historically Speaking

Meet Kenneth D. Nichols, the Father of Oak Ridge - Atom Bomb Day

By Ray Smith - Oak Ridge City Historian

Barbara Scollin, grandniece of Major General Kenneth D. Nichols continues her series on his life.

Ample reasons, most notably leadership skills, personality traits and qualifications, led to choosing General (then Colonel) Kenneth D. Nichols as Deputy District Engineer and subsequently as District Engineer of the Manhattan Engineer District (MED). In this capacity he had supervision of the research and development connected with, and the design, construction and operation of all plants required for the production of plutonium and uranium-235, including the construction of the towns of Oak Ridge, Tennessee, and Richland, Washington.

The responsibility of his position was massive as he oversaw a workforce of both military and civilian personnel of approximately 125,000; his Oak Ridge office became the center of the wartime atomic energy's activities. He also was responsible for internal security operations in the production facilities that helped keep the development of the atomic bomb secret.

In this nineteenth installment of several articles covering the life and accomplishments of Kenneth D. Nichols, we learn of his involvement and reflections on the dropping of the first atomic bomb over Japan on August 6th, 1945.

By the end of December 1942, Dr. Vannevar Bush wrote President Roosevelt of the "high probability that [atomic] energy may be released under suitable conditions in such a small interval of time as to make a super-explosive of overwhelming military might" but that no one could "be absolutely certain." Nichols explained the Manhattan Project's mission and success: "Practically all aspects of the Manhattan Project were directed by the most outstanding leaders in their field, and it was a great team.

"Having the best talent allowed us to issue mission-type orders. Supervision was required primarily to coordinate the various activities of many organizations toward achieving our common objective. Moreover, we had the advantage of having a clear-cut objective, producing an atomic bomb that could be delivered by a B-29 at the earliest possible date, to end the war and save hundreds of thousands of lives."

Late in 1943, discussions by Bush, Dr. James B. Conant, General Groves and Colonel Kenneth Nichols with Britain's Lord Cherwell, Chadwick and Oliphant, took place while touring the Clinton Engineer Works (CEW) facilities and dining at the Nichols' home on Olney Lane. The British questioned the use of an American B-29 instead of the short-range British Lancaster (larger bomb bay); Conant and Bush were adamant that the B-29 would be used due to the long-range needed for Japanese mainland bombing.

Of the use of the atomic bomb, General Nichols said, "I always believed that the atomic bomb should and would be used as soon as available. In addition, I had the impression that most of the key scientists with whom I had close contact believed likewise."

And, "Fire-bombing and high-explosive bombing had resulted in more casualties than we anticipated or that actually did occur at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. An important difference was that in these conventional bombings, such as of Leipzig and Tokyo, 500-600 planes had been required instead of a single one we intended to use."

Groves and Nichols were well aware of differing opinions on the use of the atomic bomb. Many refugee scientists had fled Nazi Germany, had family or friends in the concentration camps and understood the horrors of totalitarian Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. After Germany surrendered, the question of dropping the bomb on

Imperial Japan was a different matter to some scientists.

During the war, Dr. Arthur Holly and Betty Compton lived across the street from the Nichols and were close friends. AH's personal opinion regarding the use of the bomb was unknown until Groves pressed Nichols to obtain an answer. Compton had a survey conducted at the Met Lab by Farrington Daniels (see Nichols' book for a complete breakdown of the five questions posed in the survey and findings: *The Road to Trinity, A Personal Account of How America's Nuclear Policies Were Made*, pp. 186-187) concluding 61% of the scientists responding favored use of the bomb against Japan in a military setting. Upon receiving the survey from Compton, Nichols also received his personal opinion: "Compton's vote was not negative; he finally told me 'My vote is with the majority. It seems to me that as the war stands the bomb should be used, but no more drastically than needed to bring surrender.'"

Compton's secretary Kay Tracy (whose husband was a Marine serving in the Pacific) conducted her own survey. She informed Nichols that 90% of those Met Lab scientists signing her survey had a close relative in the Pacific, whereas those signing the other survey did not.

Nichols sent Daniels' survey, signed petitions (including Szilard's), Compton's cover letter, and Clinton Lab scientists' letter to Groves on July 25th. The package included Nichols' cover letter recommending the papers be forwarded to the President.

On August 1st Groves delivered the papers to Stimson's office but evidently the president never saw the papers as he was at the Potsdam Conference. The one decision to drop the two available atomic bombs had already been made by Truman and Churchill. Nichols' concluding remarks on these events are: "The majority opinion of the Met Lab scientists was not materially different from the decision made and the manner in which it was executed.

"However, as usual in public issues of this type, a vociferous minority makes itself heard to the extent that the public gets the impression that most if not all scientists opposed the use of the bomb to end the war. Many did, but many more approved use of the weapon they had worked so long to perfect."

CEW shipped the last uranium to Los Alamos late July 1945, ahead of schedule. Meanwhile, Nichols continued work in Oak Ridge on increasing the rate of production of the fissionable materials. Hoping that dropping one or two bombs on Japan would end the war, nevertheless he planned for uncertainty. "There was a third [bomb] available to go, but on that I have a copy of Groves' letter to Stimson which had Marshall's comment on it, 'Not to be used without the specific written authority of the President of the United States,'" recalled Nichols.

Planning for the invasion of mainland Japan tentatively set for November 1st with approximately 1,900,000 soldiers, and related vehicle/transport support (a much bigger invasion than Normandy), had reached final stages. Projections submitted to President Truman indicated defeating Japan could cost 500,000 to 1,000,000 American lives. Nichols planned for the supply of about 15 atomic bombs to support the troop invasion.

Throughout the summer of 1945 fighting continued unabated in China and southeast Asia; the new data from Iwo Jima and Okinawa raised American casualty projections for invasion. Meanwhile, Japanese leaders began issuing directives to "liquidate" all POWs when Allied forces approached the camps. And Japanese leaders began planning against an invasion of the homeland suffering a death toll estimated in the millions. In short, the Japanese enemy remained undeterred to fight to the bitter end.

Working at his busy office on the morning of August 6th, 1945, Nichols was not sure what the news would be. He recalled, "As with the Trinity test, my optimism was tempered with

anxiety. The Trinity test had proved that one implosion-type plutonium device could be set off under controlled circumstances on a tower. Moreover, we did not test the gun-type weapon, since the production of U-235 took so long, ... if the theories of atomic energy were correct, the bomb should go off. But without a test and under combat conditions, I knew that anything could go wrong.

Groves called Nichols from General Stimson's office at the Pentagon that the bomb had been successfully dropped. Groves remained in Stimson's office to revise the president's release of the story before the Japanese might do so. President Truman aboard the USS *Augusta* announced to the world on August 6th, 1945, at 11:00 a.m. EST of the use of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and issued another warning to Japan if unconditional surrender was not immediately forthcoming.

Truman said in part, "We have spent two billion dollars on the greatest scientific gamble in history – and won. But the greatest marvel is not the size of the enterprise, its secrecy or its cost, but the achievement of scientific brains in making it work. And hardly less marvelous has been the capacity of industry to design the machines and methods to do things never done before.

"Both science and industry worked under the direction of the United States Army, which achieved a unique success in an amazingly short time. It is doubtful if such another combination could be got together in the world. It was done under high pressure and without failure."

Nick had promised Jackie to reveal the secret project before the rest of the world knew. She recalled she was, "terribly disappointed that the bomb had been dropped on civilians. Some of my close friends had suffered terribly at the hands of the Japanese, husbands had been on the [Bataan] death march or were missing in action. ... I was so relieved it was finally over, and glad that my husband had had such a big part in it.

"So I can't say that I wasn't overjoyed; it had been a success and all this effort had worked, and worked in time. I am perfectly reconciled to the fact that this needed to be done and I'm glad they dropped it. Certainly, it was horrible but -- no more horrible than war itself."

That evening while many in Oak Ridge were celebrating, Nick and Jackie Nichols were not. Their neighbor June Adamson recalled, "For many families, the celebration of the evening was quiet. I remember my surprise when a knock came to the door and I opened it to find Colonel Kenneth D. Nichols

– District Engineer for Oak Ridge – standing there with his wife, Jackie. They had stopped to see Francis [Smith] Gates, who wasn't home yet. They said they had been taking a peaceful walk on Olney Lane (probably their first calm moment of the war years). They spoke quietly about their hopes that this meant no more wars – ever. But they were both smiling."

We continue to share their hope of no more wars.

Next up: News Release: Oak Ridge Attacks Japanese Grateful acknowledgements to K. David Nichols, Jr.; Ray Smith; Sandy Fye; Quinn Argall; Dr. Bianka J. Adams, Alisa Whitley, Douglas J. Wilson and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Office of History; Emily (Westcott) and Don Hunnicutt; Michael Stallo and the staff at the Oak Ridge Public Library; Diane Gulley; Gerald A. Potts; and Bruce W. Scollin for their assistance with this article.

Thanks for this Historically Speaking column and series goes to Barbara Rogers Scollin, grandniece of General Kenneth D. Nichols.

Historically Speaking

Meet Kenneth D. Nichols, the Father of Oak Ridge - Atom Bomb Day

By Ray Smith - Oak Ridge City Historian



Colonel Kenneth D. Nichols, District Engineer (MED) Photo taken July 27, 1945, anticipating press releases re: Hiroshima bombing. Photo by Ed Westcott. (Courtesy of Emily [Westcott] and Don Hunnicutt)

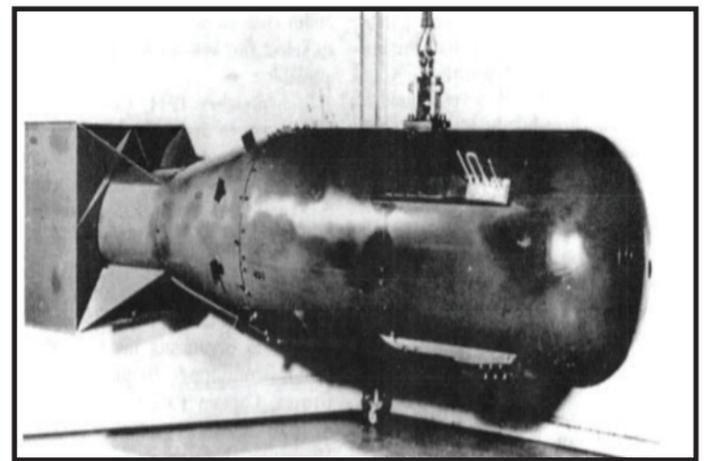


Safing Pin (safety plug) used in both Fat Man and Little Boy.

General Nichols' son explains: "When the bombs were being transported there was a green handle plug impacting the circuitry of the bomb so it would not explode. When it was time for the bomb to be deployed, the green plug was removed, and the red plug inserted in the bomb activating the bomb to explode. My understanding was there were two sets of plugs for Little Boy, and three for Fat Man." (Courtesy of K. David Nichols, Jr.)



Dollar Bill signed by 34 men involved with the dropping of the bombs over Japan, including Paul Tibbets, Jr (1 st signature on face of bill), K. D. Nichols (6 th), L. R. Groves (1 st on backside of bill), and F. L. Ashworth (18 th). <https://www.flickr.com/photos/rocbolt/8219885860/in/photostream/> (Courtesy of Kelly Michals)



"Little Boy" Gun-type uranium bomb dropped on Hiroshima, August 6, 1945. Wikipedia/Public domain.

Acts of the Apostle's Chapter 2



Melvin Howard

(Acts 2:1-13) The outpouring of the spirit: Pentecost, the feast of first fruits, came fifty days following the Passover. The apostles were all together when the sound of a mighty wind filled the house where they were, and flaming tongues like fire rested upon them. They were filled with the power of the Spirit and began to speak in foreign languages (v. 4). Many Jews from the ancient world were in Jerusalem and the unusual sound brought them together. They were amazed to hear native Galileans speaking in languages they had never learned (v.8). Those from Mesopotamia in the east to Rome in the west, Jews and proselytes, could understand the messages in their own language (v.9-11). The crowd mostly was puzzled, though some mocked, accusing the apostles of being drunk. The "tongues" were human languages, not the jibber-jabber of modern Pentecostalism.

(Acts 2:14-36) Peter's sermon: Peter addressed the crowd. He denied the charge of drunkenness, affirming instead that this was the fulfillment of prophesy. Joel had foretold the outpouring of God's Spirit in the "last days" and "this" was "that" (v. 17; Joel 2:28-30). The "last days" heralded by the prophets (Isa. 2:2-4) had begun (2 Tim. 3:1). Certain church members would be endowed with special gifts. "Wonders in heaven" and "signs on earth" may be apocalyptic language borrowed from the prophets (Isa. 13; Ezek. 32) that hints of the coming destruction of Jerusalem (v. 19-20). **There was the promise that "whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (v. 21). This cannot be a mere call, "Lord!" (Mt. 7:21). Calling is the equivalent of obeying (v 38; 22:16).**

The apostle introduces his audience to Jesus of Nazareth, a man of whom God approved (in a special way), as documented by works of power that produced wonder and were signs pointing to God's endorsement. Some of those assembled had witnessed these miracles. The great plan of redemption reached back into eternity, when the Godhead foreknew and made a determination that Christ would become incarnate and die to purchase forgiveness of sins (v. 22-23). **(What is to be said of those radical dispensationalists who contend that Jesus' death was not a part of God's original plan of salvation?)** Peter indicted the Jews of crucifying their own Messiah by means of the "lawless" hands of the Romans. "Lawless" confirms Isaiah's prophecy that the Lord's "judgment" of innocence would be taken away from him (Isa. 53:7-8; Acts 8:33).

However, as David had prophesied (Psa. 16:8), God raised his Son from the grave. His "flesh" was not to experience corruption, nor would his "soul" be retained in the Hadean realm---a generic term for the "unseen" intermediate state of the spirit (a domain of punishment for the wicked (Lk. 16:23) but bliss for the righteous (Lk. 23:43). Peter noted that David could not have spoken of himself, since his undisturbed tomb was observable still. God had sworn to David that the king's illustrious descendant would inherit his "throne" in a spiritual sense (2 Sam 7:12-13; Lk. 1:32-33), and David, as a prophet foreseeing this event, spoke of Christ's resurrection, which was to precede the enthronement (v. 29-31).

As Peter spoke these words, Christ was on his throne, exalted at God's right hand, the Father's promise having been fulfilled. **Jesus is reigning now; there is no future millennial reign upon this earth. Evidence of the Lord's reign is established by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, administered by Jesus himself (Mt. 3:11), the effect of which they both saw and heard.** Again, David is quoted to establish that God would place "my (David's) Lord" at the Father's right hand (a position of authority) until his enemies were vanquished (Psa. 110:1; 1 Cor. 15:25). (See also Christ's use of Psalm 110 at Matthew 22:42-46.) **Thus, assuredly (without contradiction) all Israel should know that this Jesus, whom they crucified, has been confirmed as Lord and Messiah (v. 36).**

(Acts 2:37-42) the Hebrew response: when the Jewish audience heard these words, they were deeply moved and asked: "Brothers (as descendants of Abraham), what shall we do?" Having thus expressed their faith in Christ, **they were commanded to: (a) repent, convert their contrition into reformation; (b) be immersed by Christ's authority in order to obtain the forgiveness of their sins. As a result, they would be blessed with "the gift of the Holy Spirit."** Most scholars see this as a non-miraculous gift, consisting of the Spirit himself (1 Cor. 6:19, 12:13; Gal. 4:6).

The divine promise to them and their offspring---and eventually to the "far off" ones, the Gentiles (Eph. 2:13, 17)---was the realization of "Heaven's divine" via the gospel (2 Thes. 2:14). These called ones would be known as the ekklesia (called out), rendered "church" in most modern version. Peter urged his auditors, "Save yourselves" submit to God's plan to escape the fate of this "crooked generation". Salvation is not independent of human response. About three thousand people (those who received Peter's word (v. 41) were immersed that day, being added to those already prepared by the ministry of John the Baptist and the Lord's apostles (Mk. 1:4; Lk. 7:29-30; Jn. 4:1-2).

The new converts "continued steadfastly" in (a) the apostles' teachings; (b) the fellowship (including generous giving); (c) the observance of the Lord's supper; and (d) prayers, faithful worship on the Lord's day (Acts

20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2).

(Acts 2:43-47) the effect of the movement: a profound sense of reverential awe came upon every person; wonders and signs were done by the apostles. All those who believed were united and shared their substance among themselves and with those in need. **("Believed" v. 44 and "received his word" (v. 41) are comprehensive expressions that embrace all the components of the plan of salvation.)** Every day they continued their familial relationship in wonderful harmony. For a while the church met in an area of the temple compound. The region covered some twenty acres and could accommodate two hundred thousand people. They praised God for their blessings, and their demeanor impressed the community. That would not last long! The church grew daily, God adding the obedient together in the one body.

New Birth: Baptism as a new birth is one way of describing what God does at baptism. He forgives sins and gives the Holy Spirit. Another way of expressing these gifts is to say that God imparts new life at baptism.

The key passage here is John 3:3-5: "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above [or born anew]...No one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit." The new birth described here is one birth of two components, not two births. The two parts of this one birth are water and Spirit. A lot is said about "born again Christians"; actually there is no other kind of Christian. The way one becomes a Christian is to be born again. Those who use this phrase usually mean by it a subjective, emotional conversion experience. I would not want to take away from the importance of experience, but the Bible by rebirth refers to an objective change, an objective act which changes a person's status and relationship. There are two elements of the new birth, despite the efforts of some to dehydrate the rebirth.

The new birth is accomplished by God. "By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1:3). The agency of the new birth is the word of God. God initiates the new birth through the preaching of the gospel: "You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God...That word is the good news that was announced to you" (1 Pet. 1:23-15).

A parallel verse to John 3:5, but using a different word with a different conceptual background, is Titus 3:5: "God saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water [washing] of rebirth [regeneration] and renewal by the Holy Spirit." The word rendered "rebirth" in the NRSV is paligenesia. This word was used in philosophical literature for the regeneration of the world, hence for a new age (Matt. 19:28 for the word in an apocalyptic sense). The concept of a renewed world seems more likely as the background of Titus 3:5 than the idea of rebirth based on the imagery of physical birth. The bath, then, is related to the new world, the new age. It is accompanied by a renewing that is accomplished by the Holy Spirit. One preposition, "though," governs both phrases, "bath of the new age and renewal of the Holy Spirit." These two phrases follow an a-b-b-a pattern. The new age and the renewal are related respectively to the water and the Spirit. Titus 3:6 may be a generalizing statement about the role of the Holy Spirit or may be a reference to the separate act of giving the Holy Spirit to indwell the convert. Although there is a continuity between what the Spirit does in baptism and his indwelling, conceptually these are different functions. The similarity with John 3:5 is that once more the newness involves two elements, water and Spirit.

Reference to the water precedes the Spirit in both John 3:5 and Titus 3:5. It seems likely that these verses speaks not of something the Spirit does before baptism but what the Spirit does in baptism. The Spirit imparts the new spiritual life. This is something objective. The renewing by the Holy Spirit is what God does, not what a person feels. The Spirit gives a new heart and new spirit (Ezek. 36:26), so that one becomes a new creature (2 Cor. 5:17) who lives a new life (Col. 3:8-11). In view of this, translators of John 3:3 and 5 might have done better, in spite of the reference to the mother's womb in verse 4, to render "begotten" rather than "born." The Spirit recreates and renews life in connection with baptism, but more than that he also takes up residence in the one baptized. This further activity of the Spirit may be included in Titus 3:6, "This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior."

The Lord's church began in Acts chapter 2 and through-out this book. Many thousand's were born again and added to his church for this is the way, the truth and the life (Acts 2:47 and John 14:6).

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