

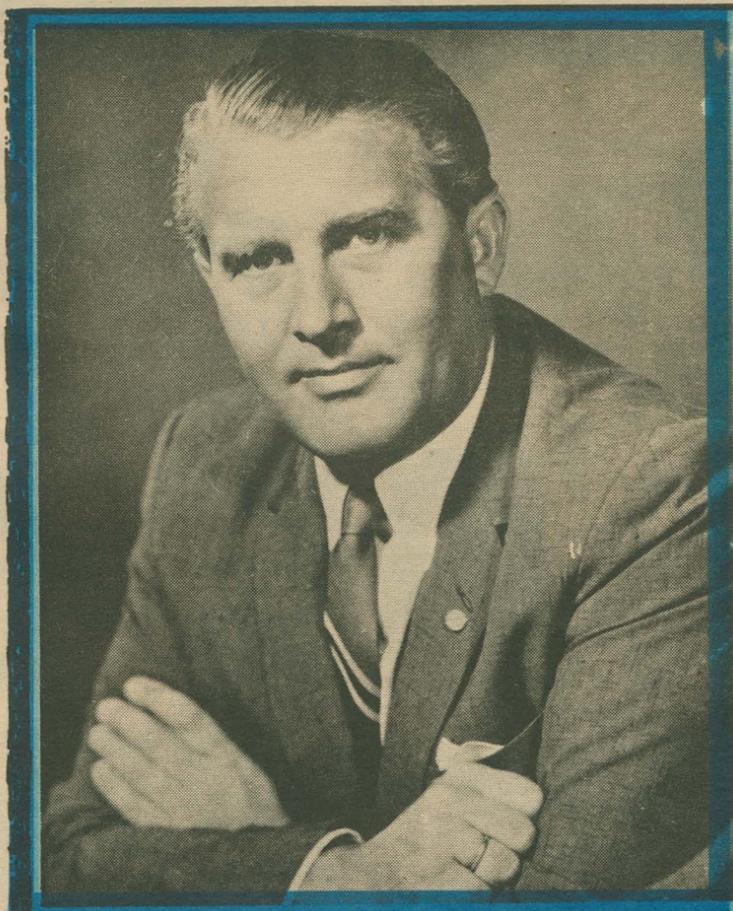
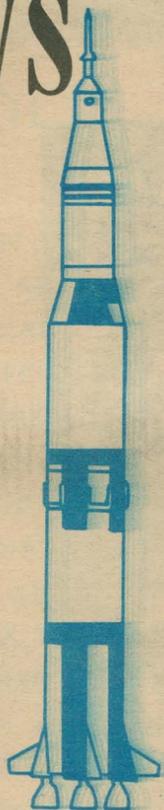
# Huntsville News

Providing the Tennessee Valley with an independent editorial voice  
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 1970

## Commemorative

## Edition

# WERNHER von BRAUN



By Phil Smith, News staff writer

**"It's a large job but we know it can be done."**—P.J. deFries.

Through a strange quirk, Wernher von Braun and his associates officially entered the United States "via street car."

In his own words, von Braun characterized the move as "maybe it was a street car of desire."

In two days, the von Braun era ends in Huntsville though his fellow scientists who came with him from the Baltic Sea and Bavaria tell us von Braun—or, at least — his touch will linger on in these North Alabama hills.

THE MAYOR has issued a proclamation, the county commission a resolution, school children have marched in the streets. Flags have waved. A granite monument has been unveiled.

Because he is a scientist with a sense of humor, von Braun, flattered undoubtedly, probably casts a knowing smile.

His "street car" has come a long way.

It has raced down a highway rung with troops to Bavaria, to the ghostliness of western outlines of Ft. Bliss and White Sands, to Monte sano Mountain, and ultimately now to Washington.

Born under the sign of Ariés— "Rate of advancement probably depends a great deal upon appearances. Let others see how readily you take on new responsibilities—" his horoscope said the other day.

What a laugh on the astrologer.

Von Braun is a classic anti-hero. He

once flunked mathematics, stories tell us. That was until he learned he had to know it to investigate and to learn science, and later on he taught math and physics.

America can no more truly claim him than Poland, Prussia, Peenemunde or White Sands or Ft. Bliss. But, then Spain claimed the Italian Columbus, Arabia the dashing Englishman Lawrence, and the colonies the Marquis de LaFayette. And Huntsville claims von Braun. It also claimed John Hunt who came from nearby Tennessee to give the town a name, von Braun gave it stature. And, von Braun stayed longer than the Tennessean who was "rooked" out of his little piece of land near Big Spring Park. von Braun stayed 20 years, John Hunt barely five.

Near that same spring, the granite marker to von Braun was unveiled last Tuesday. Von Braun's marker will join a similar one placed there in honor of Redstone's Gen. H. N. Toftoy.

What person in Bangor, Me. or Racine, Wisc., ever heard of Huntsville, Ala. until the von Braun era? Only those men unfortunate enough to be soldier-stationed here in the old Army days before Marshall Space Flight Center was born had heard of Huntsville. Most persons, even Alabamians, watching western movies, probably thought Huntsville was a Texas State Prison, which indeed it is in Texas.

But soon, they did hear of Huntsville.

In the 1950s, after the von Brauns and their fellow travelers had settled here, the nation took notice.

Prize-winning writer Hodding Carter, Time magazine, U. S. News and World Report, The New York Times, The Boston Globe, Fortune Magazine, The

Birmingham News, Atlanta Journal, The Orlando newspaper's Titusville bureau, and Zeitungs everywhere wrote about him in Huntsville's von Braun era. The library downtown, another mark of the impact left by the von Braun team, has a file a footlong under the caption entitled: "von Braun and space."

It is in his own speeches that the "street car of desire" is found, under, "Dr. von Braun," simply, "speeches."

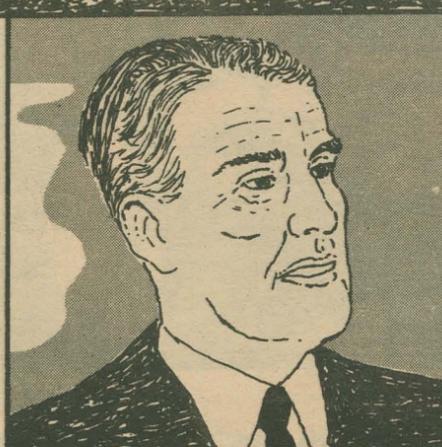
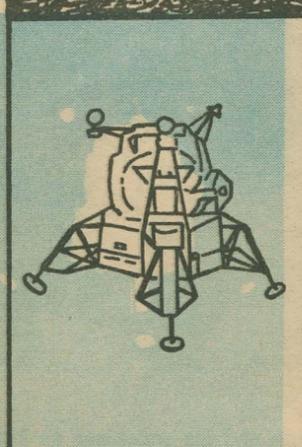
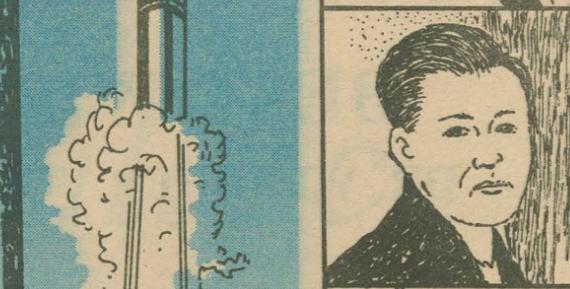
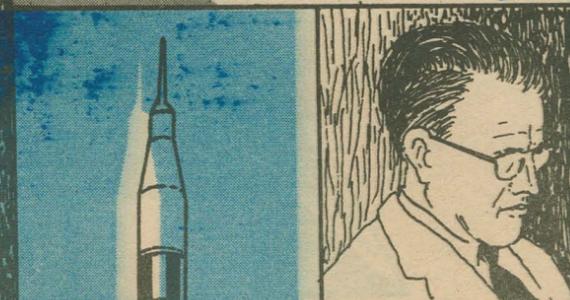
The group of "POPS" (Prisoners of Peace) had gone to Texas in 1945.

As so much of von Braun's career has been marked with red-tape, so the street car journey was, too. It was time to naturalize the scientists. "Some eager beagle," von Braun said, in immigration came up with a legal way to enter the German-born team as red tape on German entry quotas had entered the picture. Von Braun and his companions were taken from El Paso to Juarez and brought back. "Instead of entering on the Queen Mary," their papers read, von Braun said: "Entered El Paso by street car."

TIME MAGAZINE tells us von Braun was born in a part of old Prussia which is now Poland. A boyhood gift was a telescope from his mother instead of long trousers as was the German custom.

After reading Herman Oberth's classic book, "The Rocket to Interplanetary Spaces," von Braun and his friends experimented with flying rockets at an abandoned ammo dump. In 1932, at the age of 20, he became Germany's top civilian specialist on rocketry at Kummersdorf in the Black Forest.

(Continued on Page 26)



BOB SOTHERLAND

# He was hooked on first look



**Early rocket**

Always interested in space travel, in 1930 von Braun, standing behind Klaus Riedel who holds early rocket, joins members of the German Society for Interplanetary Travel gathered in Berlin to witness test-firing of a rocket built by Hermann Oberth. The "Kegelduese" liquid rocket engine was being certified for performance.

## Escape

In 1945, as the Third Reich tottered on the verge of collapse, von Braun, center, his arm in a cast following an auto accident while trying to reach American forces, surrenders. The rocket wizard and his brother Magnus, far left, surrendered to OSS agent Charles L. Stewart at Reutte, Germany in April 1945.



**Redstone team**

Key associates of Dr. von Braun, center, pose with retiring Major General John B. Medaris prior to his leaving in 1959. The general, von Braun's boss at Redstone, commanded the Army's Ballistic Missile Agency. Von Braun served as Director of the Development Operation.

## Faces of von Braun



Dr. Wernher von Braun suits up for a test of weighlessness simulator at Marshall Space Flight Center, left, used to suspend astronauts in water. A bearded von Braun, center photo, returned to Huntsville from a Florida vacation and confirms report that he is being transferred to Washington. Saturn launchings always found von Braun, right photo, at Cape Kennedy scrutinizing lift off through blockhouse periscope.



**Blast off**

A group of NASA officials, including von Braun and his successor as Marshall Space Flight Center head Dr. Eberhard F.M. Rees, far right, observe the early flight of a Saturn vehicle from the Cape Kennedy launch center. Pointing, center, is Dr. Kurt H. Debus, director of the Kennedy missile complex.



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# THE PENALTY OF LEADERSHIP

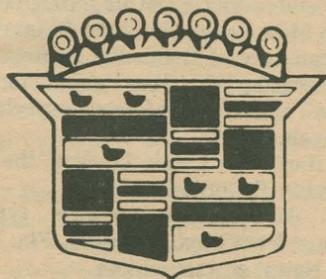
IN EVERY FIELD OF HUMAN ENDEAVOR · HE THAT IS FIRST MUST PERPETUALLY LIVE IN THE WHITE LIGHT OF PUBLICITY ☞ WHETHER THE LEADERSHIP BE VESTED IN A MAN OR IN A MANUFACTURED PRODUCT · EMULATION AND ENVY ARE EVER AT WORK ☞ IN ART · IN LITERATURE · IN MUSIC · IN INDUSTRY · THE REWARD AND THE PUNISHMENT ARE ALWAYS THE SAME ☞ THE REWARD IS WIDESPREAD RECOGNITION · THE PUNISHMENT FIERCE DENIAL AND DETRACTION ☞ WHEN A MAN'S WORK BECOMES A STANDARD FOR THE WHOLE WORLD IT ALSO BECOMES A TARGET FOR THE SHAFTS OF THE ENVIOUS FEW ☞ IF HIS WORK IS MERELY MEDIOCRE HE WILL BE LEFT SEVERELY ALONE ☞ IF HE ACHIEVE A MASTERPIECE · IT WILL SET A MILLION TONGUES A-WAGGING ☞ JEALOUSY DOES NOT PROTRUDE ITS FORKED TONGUE AT THE ARTIST WHO PRODUCES A COMMON PLACE PAINTING ☞ WHATSOEVER YOU WRITE · OR PAINT · OR PLAY · OR SING · OR BUILD · NO ONE WILL STRIVE TO SURPASS OR TO SLANDER YOU · UNLESS YOUR WORK BE STAMPED WITH THE SEAL OF GENIUS ☞ LONG LONG AFTER A GREAT WORK OR A GOOD WORK HAS BEEN DONE · THOSE WHO ARE DISAPPOINTED OR ENVI- OUS CONTINUE TO CRY OUT THAT IT CANNOT BE DONE ☞ SPITEFUL LITTLE VOICES IN THE DOMAIN OF ART WERE RAISED AGAINST OUR OWN WHISTLER AS A MOUNTEBANK · LONG AFTER THE BIG WORLD HAD ACCLAIMED HIM ITS GREATEST ARTISTIC GENIUS ☞ MULTITUDES FLOCKED TO BAYREUTH TO WORSHIP AT THE MUSICAL SHRINE OF WAGNER · WHILE THE LITTLE GROUP OF THOSE WHOM HE HAD DETHRONED AND DISPLACED ARGUED ANGRILY THAT HE WAS NO MUSICIAN AT ALL ☞ THE LITTLE WORLD CONTINUED TO PROTEST THAT FULTON COULD NEVER BUILD A STEAMBOAT · WHILE THE BIG WORLD FLOCKED TO THE RIVER BANKS TO SEE HIS BOAT STEAM BY ☞ THE LEADER IS ASSAILED BECAUSE HE IS A LEADER · AND THE EFFORT TO EQUAL HIM IS MERELY ADDED PROOF OF THAT LEADERSHIP ☞ FAILING TO EQUAL OR TO EXCEL · THE FOLLOWER SEEKS TO DEPRECIATE AND TO DESTROY · BUT ONLY CONFIRMS ONCE MORE THE SUPERIORITY OF THAT WHICH HE STRIVES TO SUPPLANT ☞ THERE IS NOTHING NEW IN THIS ☞ IT IS AS OLD AS THE WORLD AND AS OLD AS THE HUMAN PASSIONS ENVY · FEAR · GREED · AMBITION AND THE DESIRE TO SURPASS ☞ AND IT ALL AVAILS NOTHING ☞ IF THE LEADER TRULY LEADS HE REMAINS -THE LEADER ☞ MASTER POET · MASTER PAINTER · MASTER WORKMAN · EACH IN HIS TURN IS ASSAILED · AND EACH HOLDS HIS LAURELS THROUGH THE AGES ☞ THAT WHICH IS GOOD OR GREAT MAKES ITSELF KNOWN · NO MATTER HOW LOUD THE CLAMOR OF DENIAL ☞ THAT WHICH DESERVES TO LIVE -LIVES

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# Huntsville's first citizen made us 'Rocket City, U.S.A.'

By Bill Sloat, News staff writer

Dr. Wernher von Braun—adopted first citizen of Huntsville, Ala.—leaves Huntsville with three great accomplishments.

The first is the successful launching of the United States' pioneer satellite Explorer I. The second is the development of the giant Saturn 5 moon rocket.

His third great accomplishment, in the words of community political and civic leaders, is transforming this nocturnal north Alabama cotton center (once famous as the world's water cress capital) into a metropolis known throughout the universe as Rocket City, U.S.A.

GOV. ALBERT BREWER saluted von Braun as a "citizen of this state in which everyone takes pride."

According to Brewer von Braun has brought his community, state and nation "world wide fame and glory" for achievements in the field of science.

"He is a great man and will be sorely missed," said the governor. "We all know of the things he has done—in Washington he will have the chance to do greater things."

Like most other officials Brewer said he felt that von Braun, as NASA's number four man, will be in a position to channel funds and work to his colleagues at Marshall Space Flight Center here.

Alabama Sen. Jim Allen said of the Washington switch, although saddening the community, this state will always be home to the missile wizard.

"Along with all other Alabamians and Americans, I salute Dr. Wernher von Braun for his great contributions to science and technology," said Allen.

"His imagination, determination and skill brought together a superb team of scientists and engineers and imagination lead them and his country to the moon on mankind's most adventurous journey," Allen continued, pointing out that von Braun, "one of the world's great men," will always have a place in the hearts of Huntsville.

Back in 1950 though, when von Braun brought his "team" of 118 rocket experts to Redstone from Ft. Bliss, Tex., the town of Huntsville accepted the Germans on a somewhat dubious note.

"When I first met him he had that little brief case with

(SEE PAGE 9)



Brewer



Sparkman



Jones



Allen



Record



Davis

## HE PUT MAN ON THE MOON. AND HUNTSVILLE ON THE MAP. AND IT'S JUST THE BEGINNING FOR BOTH.

When Wernher von Braun is your neighbor for twenty years, you're going to see a lot of improvements in the neighborhood. And that's what happened to Huntsville.

Twenty years ago, Dr. von Braun and his team of German scientists made their home in the small, rural Southern town of Huntsville, Alabama.

Today, Dr. von Braun leaves his home in Huntsville. And he leaves a confident, thriving city.

In those twenty years, Huntsville went from a farming community. To a boom town. To an industrial, metropolitan city.

Von Braun gave Huntsville fame and prosperity. But more than that, he gave it a new spirit. A spirit of enthusiasm. Aggressiveness. Determination.

Of all his contributions to Huntsville, from the huge George C. Marshall Space Flight Center. To the University of Alabama at Huntsville. His greatest gift, by far, was his spirit of confidence in the future.

State National is proud to salute this man who proved confidence and determination could put man on the moon.

And equally proud of the people of Huntsville and their confidence and determination of build a city. A city that has made unbelievable strides in twenty years.

And this is just the beginning.



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## von Braun era

The News' special commemorative edition dedicated to Dr. Wernher von Braun is the culmination of hours of work by not only the News staff but many citizens and officials of government and civilian agencies in the Huntsville area.

News staffers Kay Kent, Evelyn Spearman, A.L. McCarroll, Phil Smith, and Bill Sloat all contributed time and effort to the von Braun edition. Photographer Jim Taylor, who once sold coffee to von Braun at the old arsenal cafeteria and his staff, George Hall, Sparky Waller, Mike Pope, and Bernd Billmeyer captured the von Braun era of Huntsville in pictures.

Of course the help of the Public Information Office at Marshall Space Flight Center, especially Curtis Hunt, was invaluable.

The Huntsville Public Library, the Mayor's Office, the County Commission Office.

SUE BUTLER, nationally syndicated space columnist from Daytona Beach, Fla., also contributed to the News' special edition.

Dr. von Braun will be remembered as the "father of modern Huntsville" These pages trace the history and milestones of the von Braun era, the United States' first small steps of a giant leap into space, a step masterminded and directed by Wernher von Braun.