

*“Our God, Our Genes, Our Greatness”*



**Walker – Pope – Bates – Roebuck  
Family Reunion  
Nashville TN  
July 20-23, 2017**

# Welcome

*To My Illustrious Family:*

*Greeting in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I would like to thank all of you for attending the 2017 Walker - Pope - Bates - Roebuck Family Reunion.*

*Words cannot express how delighted I am that you will be able to make it to our 2017 family reunion. We know that you will really help to make this a special time for everyone attending, and I hope you have the best time as well!*

*Our family reunion is a special time to reflect on the past, enjoy the present, and inspire the future. I've worked hard and diligently to design a reunion that is memorable to each generation with the help of Brandi Walker.*

*Our God - tells us we are to love others, and in doing so, to demonstrate His love for them. He clearly tells us, "We love because He first loved us." And He has given us this command: "Whoever loves God must also love his brother." (1 John 4:19-21)*

*Our Genes - a unit of heredity that is transferred from a parent to offspring and is held to determine some characteristic of the offspring. Our genes have been sketched in the fabrics of Birmingham Alabama and have spread across the United States. It makes us who we are. It's a true fact that knowing who you are and where you came from builds a level of esteem that empowers you to achieve the highest goal. Self-esteem breeds self-love, self-worth and self-pride.*

*Our Greatness - provide an opportunity to make a lasting impact on the generations to come by instilling our values, passion, mission, and vision. Our reunions provide a sense of deep meaning and can be a catalyst for positive, long-term bonds that continue beyond our lifetime.*

*On behalf of the family of Nashville TN we welcome you to the Music City.*

**Thursday  
July 20, 2017**

**Meet and Greet..... 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.**

**Dinner ..... 7:00 p.m. – Until**

**Friday  
July 21, 2017**

**Banquet..... 7:00 p.m.**

**Saturday  
July 22, 2017**

**Picnic..... 1:00 p.m.**

**Bus Ride to Casino ..... 5:00 p.m.**

**Sunday  
July 23, 2017**

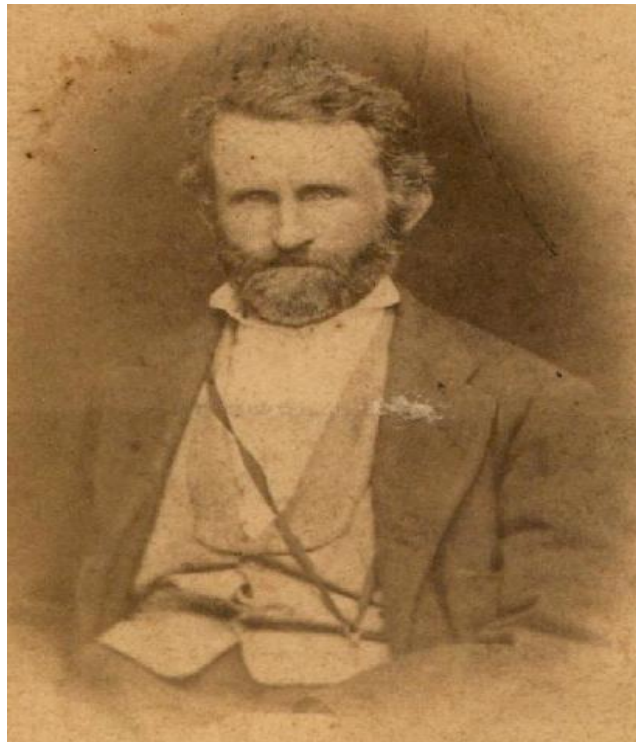
**Breakfast ..... 8:00 a.m.**

**Church Service ..... 11:30 a.m.**

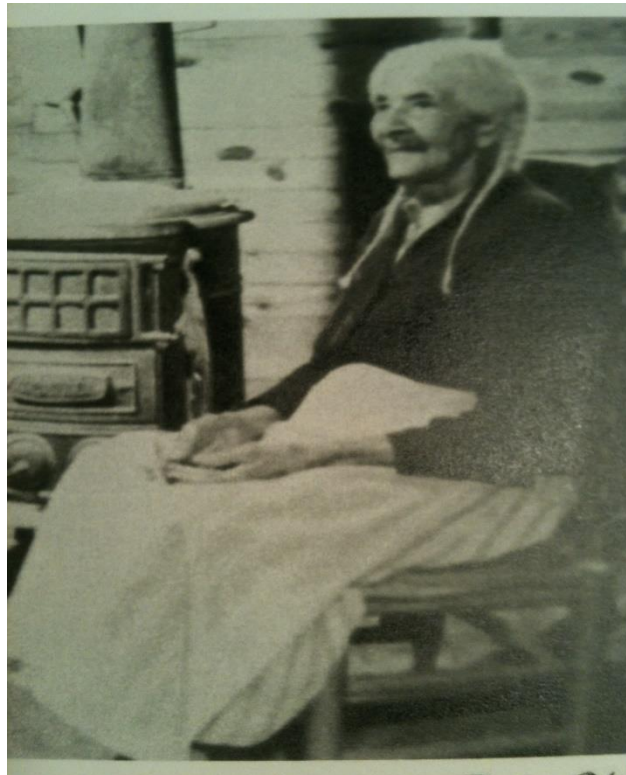
**DEPARTURE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**



*Obadiah Washington Wood*



*Rita Wood Bates (Daughter)*



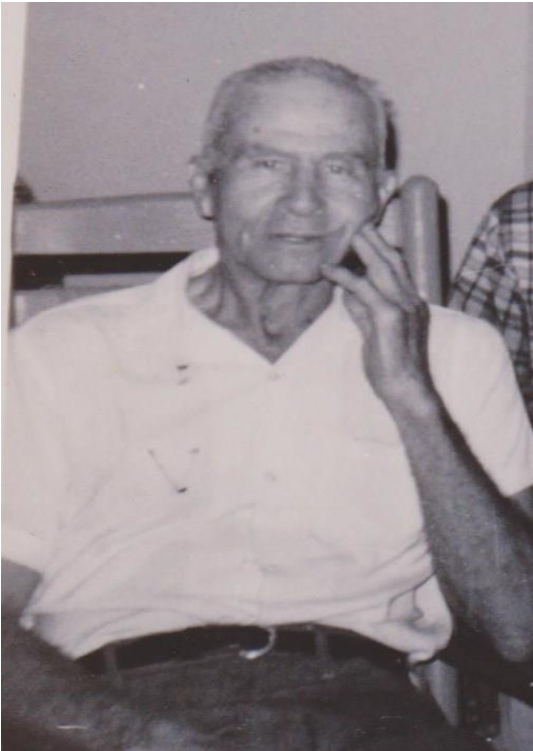
*Robert Pope*



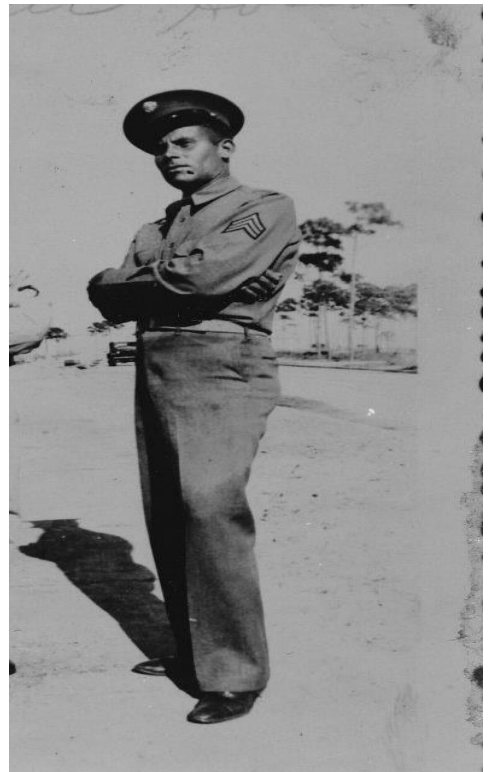
*Mary Bates Pope*



*Tim Pope*



*Hosea Pope (Crack)*



*Claude Allen Pope*



*Hobert Pope*



*Bertha Pope Walker*



*Mary Ann Pope Walker*



*Robert Walker*



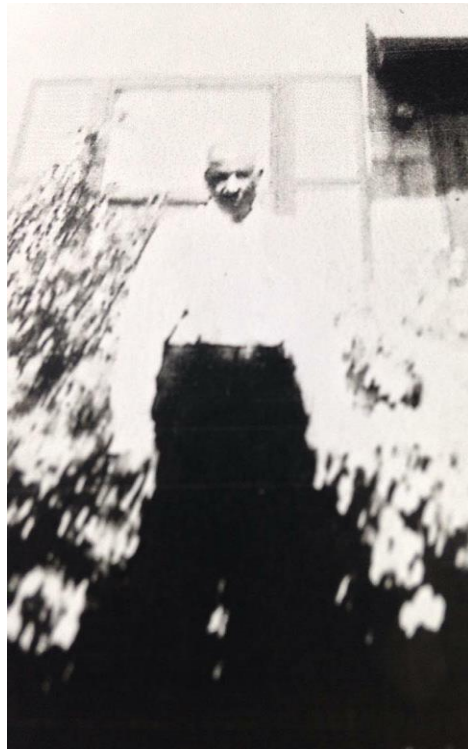
*Henry Walker*



*Henry Walker and Sallie Roebuck*

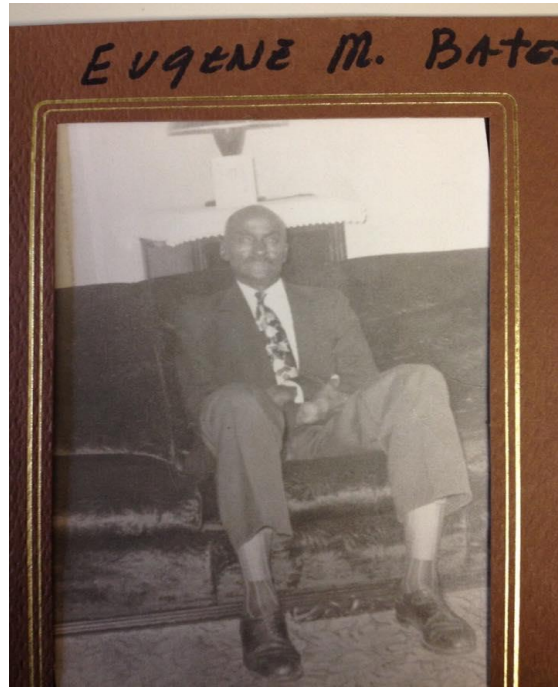


*Reverend Porter Bates (Son of Augusta Bates)*

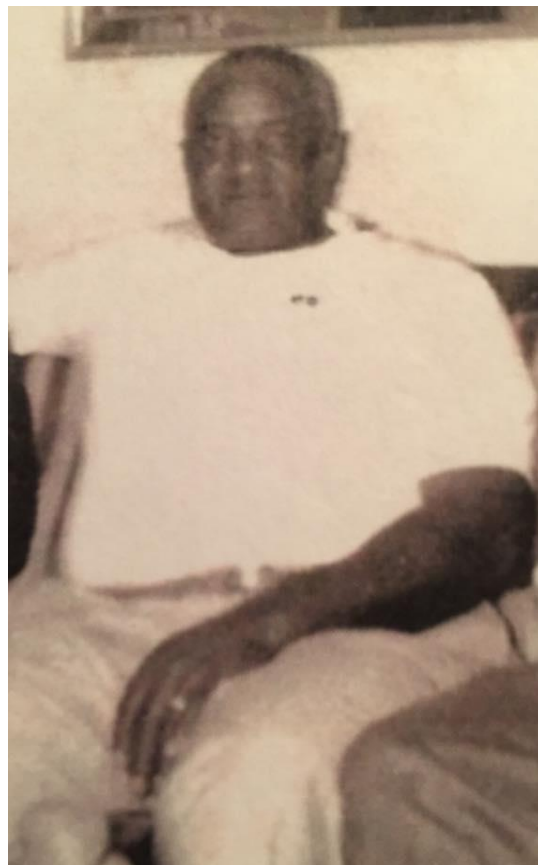




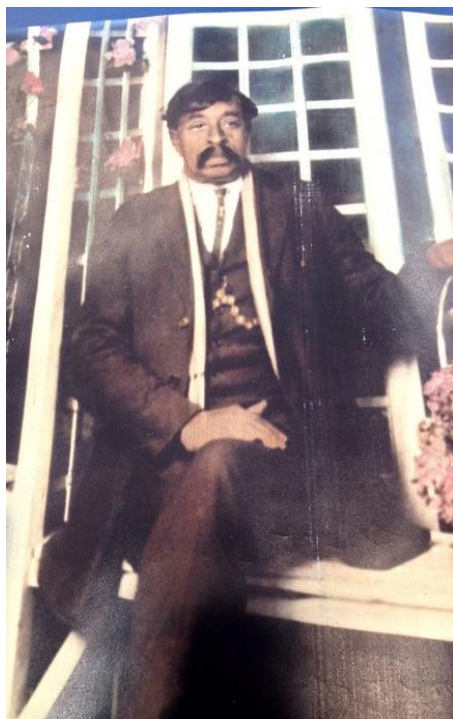
*Eugene Madison Bates (Son of Ophelia Bates)*



*Robert Bates (Son of Augusta Bates)*



*Andy Reed*



*William Bates  
(Son of Cunningham Bates)*



*Porter Bates*



*Katie Roebuck Bates*



## ***Cunningham Bates and his Family***



**One big tree. Our God has created one big tree so solid and tall.**

**Our genes are embraced with many different leaves.**

**Some are light and some are dark some are big and some are small.**

**And although we are at different levels of the status quo with different colors, we are like the rainbow.**

**Which cultivated into a generation with many branches reaching far and wide yet in the way we walk, look or talk, the fruits of the family we cannot hide.**

**Let's not forget the generation that stood for so long and their branches were so strong for so many to climb upon.**

**We can't forget how they fought for civil rights and carried the weight upon their backs for so many years but their strength and wisdom faded away the tears today.**

**Our generation has rooted up fruit from the beaches of sunny California to the frigid cold in Colorado, New York and the Jersey shores, from Tennessee, Maryland and Washington DC. From the rolling hills of Georgia tears back to the injustice of Alabama fears.**

**We are the genes of good fruit nourished by God which cultivated one big tree.**

**And today we celebrate our God our Genes our Generation of our one big family.**

*By Brenda Stewart*

*July 2017*

# Pastor's Paragraph

## True Freedom

Once upon a time, I knew a slave, (an ex-slave). She was 27 years old when the war ended in 1865 and the word went out, shouted from one slave to another, "We are free! Free! We can do as we please. We have no master, Thank God we are Free!!!"

My mother died in 1914 leaving six children, ages 2-12 and Aunt Ritter Bates, the ex-slave came to care for and to love these children. I remember her story about that great day, the day of *liberation*. *She and her husband, who belonged to another farmer, took their two children and started walking. Free! Free!* No one could yell at them. No one could stop them. Night came, they were hungry, and they slept in an old barn. The children cried for food. The night was chilly, they were cold. They went back to her old master. Aunt Ritter said, "If Mr. Wood had food we had food." She quoted Jesus. "We could go in and out and find pasture." Forty years later I had a part in her funeral.

This saint was never a slave from the day she became a Christian at 16 until she died. Her soul was free. She was free from hate, free from anger, from jealousy, from lust and so many other vices. She was free to love, to minister and to talk about Jesus who had given her peace, joy, patience, gentleness, meekness and abounding faith. After all is said, about freedom; this is the only liberty that really matters; the liberty found in Christ. This liberty can be found in China, or Russia or Alabama. "He whom the Son makes free is free indeed."

*By Lee Franklin, interim pastor Coosada Church, Coosada; Alabama.*

## *Rita Wood Bates Obituary*

### EULOGISTIC SERVICES

OF

Mrs. Rita Bates



TO BE HELD AT THE

Mt. Zion Baptist Church

THE REV. O. W. HOLLIDAY, Officiating

Sunday, November 9, 1947

2:00 O'CLOCK P. M.

FORNISE PRtg. CO., B'HAM.

Dearest loved one we must lay thee  
In the peaceful grave's embrace  
But thy memory will be cherished  
Til we see thy heavenly face.

#### PROGRAM

1. Processional ..... "Nearer My God To Thee"
2. Selection by the ..... Church Choir
3. Invocation ..... the Rev. R. N. Hall
4. Scripture ..... the Rev. J. E. Moss
5. Solo ..... Mrs. Frankie A. Cook
6. Three minute talks from the following:  
    Brother Frost Waldrop  
    Mr. Tom Huey  
    Brother Charles D. Pow
7. Hymn ..... Brother Sam Miller
8. Condolences and Obituary ..... Mrs. Velma Hawkins
9. Eulogy ..... the Rev. O. W. Holliday
10. Solo ..... Mr. O. D. Leach
11. Recessional.

#### SANKS' FUNERAL HOME IN CHARGE

#### PALLBEARERS:

Henry Beavers  
James Bates  
Varnell Burton  
O. C. Wood

#### FLOWER GIRLS:

Missionary Society of the Mount Zion Baptist Church

## Former Negro Slave Talkin' To Lord Now After Slipping Away At Age Of 110

The Lord and Aunt Rita Bates probably were discussing things today and somebody maybe was getting a good talking-to.

"I declare," she'd say, "I don't know why He keep me heal so long—the being ready to go since I was 30. But He got His reason. We find out about that later."

As Alabama's oldest former slave, Aunt Rita often said that—before her easy death yesterday at two months shy of 111 years of age—and then'd she pass on to more pleasant things.

### MARRIES AT 15

"Why come I marry-up at 15? Law-dee, you know dey want us to marry-up young and have lots of

chillin'!" She had a notion she may have "sinned come" in her youth and that troubled her sometimes. But she'd think hard about it and mostly the wicked incident would come out in a merry, rolling chuckle.

### LIVES IN CABIN

"Now Ah used to do a little drinking when Ah wuz a young house-gal. De of mahster, He kept a fine keg of whisky with little ar-holes in de sides. Us gals would get little hollow canes, stick 'em down in the holes an' take a suck every once in a while."

The old Negro lived with her youngest child, Mary, 77, in a cabin out in Rochuck so spin-and-spin "eben de ol' mistress would lak its looks."

A horde of grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren heard often how Aunt Rita and that mistress, Susan Hawkins Wood, "refugee'd" toward Talladega, Mrs. Wood wearing six pairs of men's trousers under her dress to save from the Yankees.

Once when an upstart of a 50-year-old grandson tried to help her recall a happening of 30 years back, she called out sharply:

"You keep out of that! You wuzn't dere, now wuz you?"

### BORN A SLAVE

Like the old Wood family Bible which records her birth as Jan. 15, 1837, "the property of Obediah Washington Wood," the former slave, at death, was frail and wrinkled and her skin, naturally light, like old paper had turned an apricot yellow.

Further proof that Aunt Rita lived out five-score and 10 years comes in a history of (white) Ruhama Baptist Church published recently by Thomas E. Huey. "Rita," he wrote, "was baptized at 24 in Ruhama, along with other slaves, in the year 1861 by the Rev. Andrew Jackson Waldrop."

Aunt Rita, herself, only knew "Ah been heah a mighty long time" and "Keepin' in close touch with de Lawd" may have had something to do with it.

But she also observed often: "Ah keeps ready to go at any time but ah wish he'd hurry."

Funeral services are scheduled for Sunday at the Pleasant Hill Baptist Church in Killough Springs where she had been a member in good standing since 1868.

# The Beginning to the Present

1860 - 1939 Brownsville Episcopal Methodist Church  
1939 - 1968 (Central Jurisdiction) Brownsville Methodist Church  
1968 - Present Brownsville United Methodist Church

## FROM SLAVERY TO FREEDOM:

We find through research that ex-slaves started the Brownsville Community Church and

Cemetery:

The legend of *James Arthur Brown our Great-Great Grandfather*. It is recorded that in the year of 1863 James Arthur Brown ran away from his slave master again. Yes, we say again, because it is reported that he had runaway several times from Slaveholders. He refused to be separated from family, he had witnessed wedding vows to God and heard the words “What God has joined together, let no man set asunder.”

The last time he ran away, he had been sold to a plantation in Virginia, he had been taken to the Mobile Bay to be transported by ship to Virginia with belief that he would not run away again because of the water. He swam across the Bay and followed the railroad tracks back to Jones Valley. When he arrived back, it was snowing and very cold. Knowing he was a haunted man, he was afraid to go where his love ones and family were. He then found a covered hog pen with a rail log fastened to the floor, he made the hogs move over; he laid down in the warm place, where the hogs previously were, in order to keep warm and that is how he survived.

He never again returned to his owners due to the “Emancipation Proclamation.” He also made a promise to make the place where the hog pen was located his burying ground. In the years that followed he purchased the land from its owner and gave two acres of this land to each community for cemetery. This community was also named “*Brownsville*” after *Janes Arthur Brown, our Great-Great Grandfather!*

*Loving story submitted by the late great:  
Robert Nathaniel Walker, II and Jesse Henry Walker*

# **The Brown, Roebuck, Walker Connection**

James Arthur Brown was the father of five (5) children. The daughters were Catherine, Jane and Marietta. The sons were Aaron and Buck Brown.

Sally Roebuck married Henry Walker who came south with a Jewish business man from New Jersey. Henry was an educated man. He ran the “Company Store” at Dolcito Quarry Company. These people owned Roberson Coal Company and Birmingham Realty Company. They purchased Dolcito from Tel.

The union of Sally Roebuck and Henry Walker was very good. Of this union twelve (12) children were born. The sons were Claude, Henry, Arthur, Robert, Alonso, Isom, George, Booker and Benny. The daughters were Helen, Alice and Jenny.

Grandfather Henry Walker was high on education. There was no school in the area so he hired Miss Wills to tutor his children. She was their private teacher until a school was built in Tarrant City where Miss Wills was hired to teach and the children attended school there.



# The Bates, Pope, Walker Connection

## Rita Wood Bates

January 15, 1837 – November 6, 1947

Funeralized November 9, 1947

Obadiah Washington Wood (Caucasian) came to Alabama from Greenville, South Carolina with his family about 1824. He acquired a large amount of land known today as Woodlawn.

Rita Wood Bates' mother was slave named Diane. (She came from Greenville, South Carolina with Obadiah Washington Wood). On January 15, 1837, Rita Wood Bates was born a slave in what was known as Jones Valley, Alabama. (Now known as the Eastlake section of the city of Birmingham).

The plantation was known as Woodlawn Plantation. Story has it, Rita had one sister Thannie. (The slave master was the father of both sisters). Thannie later married a Wood.

“AN ALABAMA LOVE STORY” includes the legend of Rita Wood Bates, one of the first citizens of Birmingham, Alabama. (Rita was our great grandmother). On January 15, 1837, Rita Wood Bates was born a slave in what was then known as Jones Valley, Alabama, now known as the Eastlake section of the city of Birmingham. Rita's birth was recorded in the Wood family bible as Rita Wood, the property of Obadiah Washington Wood.

The Wood family was Christians and was reported to have been very good to their slaves. They carried them to the Ruhama Baptist Church which was founded in 1819. A written history of this church is a documented source of this section of the “ALABAMA LOVE STORY”.

This church history was written by Superior Court Judge Thomas E. Huey.

In 1861, Rita was baptized along with some other slaves by the late Reverend Andrew Jackson Waldrop. In 1865 former slaves began to organize their own churches. Rita received a letter of dismissal at the age of 23 and became a member of the Blue Springs Baptist Church (predominately black). Ruhama church members gave this church to the slaves. The church was burned down and later moved to the present location and changed the name to Pleasant Kill Baptist Church which was founded in an area called Killough Springs.

At the time of Rita's funeral on November 9, 1947, she was listed as a member in good standing since 1869 until November 6, 1947 the date of her death.

At the age of 15, Rita Wood married John Adams Bates. When the Wood family gave their slaves freedom, Rita and her husband and her two children started walking. FREE, FREE! No one could yell at them, no one could stop them. Night came, they slept in an old barn. The children cried for food. The night was chilly, they were cold. They went back to old master. Rita said, “If Mr. Wood have food we have food.” They returned to the Wood farm where their former owner gave them food.

## *Cigar Bar / Lounges*

### **Primings Cigar Lounge And Bar**

Address: 701 4th Avenue South, Nashville, TN 37210

Phone: 615-454-2158

Hours:

### **Blend Bar with Davidoff Cigars-**

Nashville Sophisticated lounge offering high-end cigars, cocktails & New American bites in elevated digs

Address: 508 Church Street, Nashville, TN 37219

Phone: 615-730-9641

Hours:

### **Tobacco Road Coffee & Smoke Shop**

Address: 4825 Trousdale Drive, #236, Nashville, TN 37220

Phone: 615-823-3381

Hours:

### **The Wheel Cigar Bar**

Bi-level hangout offering live music, a smoking lounge, a full bar, sports on TV & a relaxed vibe.

Address: 421 Broadway, Nashville, TN 37203

Phone: 615-390-6247

Hours:

### **Westin Hotel – L27 Roof Top Lounge**

Address: 807 Clark Place, Nashville, TN 37203

Phone: 615-248-2800

Hours:

## ***Clubs:***

### **Agenda Nightclub**

Luxe lounge providing finger foods & top-shelf cocktails, plus hookah, a dance floor & VIP sections.

Address: 609 9th Avenue South, Nashville, TN 37203

Phone: 615-678-1290

Hours:

### **Zanies Comedy Night Club**

Address: 2025 8th Avenue South, Nashville, TN 37204

Phone: 615-269-0221

Hours:

### **Exit/In**

Spacious, multiuse performance venue offers live music & unobstructed stage views from every angle.

Address: 2208 Elliston Place, Nashville, TN 37203

Phone: 615-321-3340

Hours:

### **WKND Hang Suite**

Address: 1703 Church Street, Nashville, TN 37203

Phone: 615-739-6345

Hours:

### **Sensations**

Address: 433 Opry Mills Drive, Nashville, TN 37214

Phone:

Hours:

### **Limelight**

Address: 201 Woodland Street, Nashville, TN 37213

Phone: 615-780-3099

Hours:

### **BB King's Blues Club – Nashville**

Musical acts perform on 2 stages while the restaurant serves up Southern specialties & barbecue.

Address: 152 2nd Avenue North, Nashville, TN 37201

Phone: 615-256-2727

Hours:

## **UP, A Rooftop Lounge**

Address: 901 Division Street, Nashville, TN 37203

Phone: 615-690-1722

Hours:

## ***Wineries***

### **City Winery – Nashville**

Address: 609 Lafayette Street, Nashville, TN 37203

Phone: 615-324-1010

Hours:

### **Natchez Hills Winery at Fontanel**

Address: 4125 Whites Creek Pike, Whites Creek, TN 37189

Phone: 615-878-4382

Hours:

## ***Activities***

### **Nashville Shores Lakeside Resort**

Visitors play in the lagoon, slide down water flumes, and ride on a zip lines or rent boats on the lake.

Address: 4001 Bell Road, Hermitage, TN 37076

Phone: 615-889-7050

Hours:

### **Adventure Science Center**

Multilevel museum with hands-on exhibits & a planetarium teaches kids about tech, health & ecology.

Address: 800 Fort Negley Boulevard, Nashville, TN 37203

Phone: 615-862-5160

Hours:

### **Nashville Zoo at Grassmere**

Multiple habitats housing a global array of animals, plus a popular playground for kids.

Address: 3777 Nolensville Pike, Nashville, TN 37211

Phone: 615-833-1534

Hours:

2017

# Families **REUNION**



walker – Pope – Bates – Roebuck  
Family Reunion  
Nashville, TN  
July 20 - 23, 2017



**Have a safe trip home!**