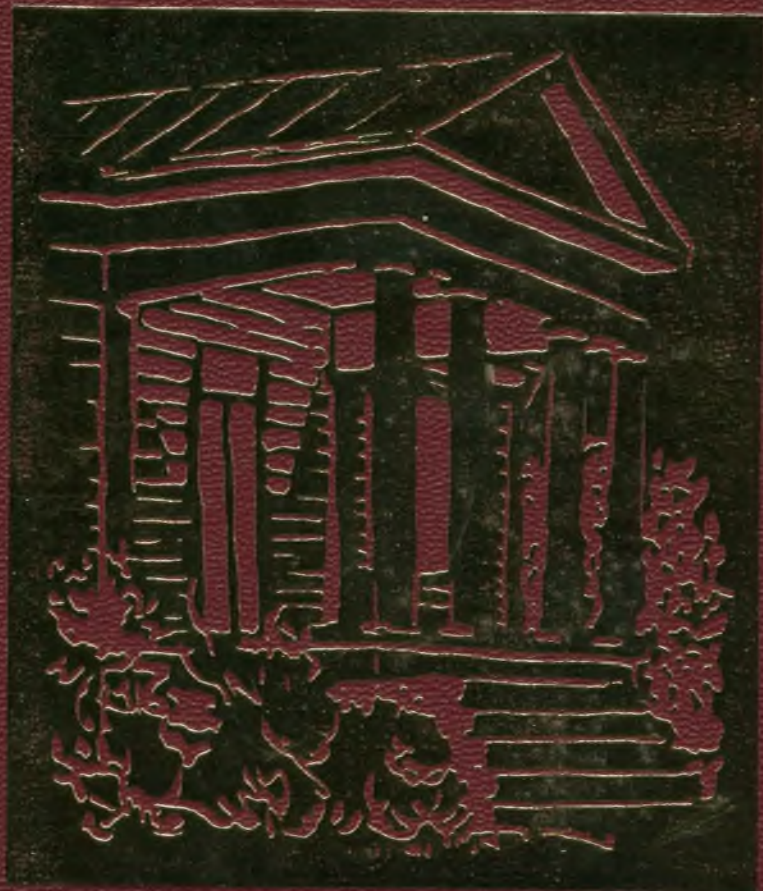


-CHANGING-
HUNTSVILLE



—1890-1899—

ELIZABETH HUMES CHAPMAN

CHANGING HUNTSVILLE

1890-1899



By
Elizabeth Humes Chapman

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ELIZABETH HUMES CHAPMAN

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Preface

Only a fortunate few have discovered *Changing Huntsville, 1890-1899*. History buffs browsing through the rare book collection of the Huntsville-Madison County Public Library and researchers in the local college and university libraries are almost the only ones. Those few must surely have been enchanted with their find. It is a treasure trove of information on life in Huntsville during the last decade of the nineteenth century, but the sparkle and verve with which it is written make it much more than a collection of facts.

So few copies of the book have been accessible because it was privately printed in a limited edition of one-hundred. The Historic Huntsville Foundation edition now makes *Changing Huntsville, 1890-1899* readily available for the first time.

The attitudes and opinions expressed by individuals quoted in *Changing Huntsville, 1890-1899* are characteristic of the late 19th century. They do not necessarily reflect those of the Historic Huntsville Foundation membership.

The original edition does have a most attractive format with many illustrations, both photographs and drawings. Our Foundation edition almost exactly duplicates the original. The illustrations are all included. The charming brush drawings were done by the well-known Alabama artist, Rosalie (Pettus) Price who is Miss Chapman's niece. Mrs. Price states, "Aunt Elizabeth occupied a special place in my life. She, never having married, lived with her mother in Huntsville. After her mother's death she came to live with my family in Birmingham."

We extend our sincere appreciation to Meg Pattillo for designing the new cover and to Lee Harless for original drawings of the Church of the Nativity, "Abingdon Place," and "Piedmont" to replace illustrations of the same locations which would not reproduce properly. The credit for the format goes to Dorothy Scott Johnson who edited and published the first edition for the family.

February, 1989

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Foreword

Changing Huntsville, 1890-1899, is published in memory of my sister, Elizabeth Humes Chapman (1884-1967), who wrote it in 1932 as her thesis for her Master of Arts in History at Columbia University.

A teacher in the public schools of Alabama for over fifty years, she spent the last years of her professional career in the History Department of Woodlawn High School in Birmingham, Alabama. Although widely travelled and thoroughly knowledgeable about the histories of the United States, Western Europe and Egypt, she chose as the subject of her thesis that small part of the world that she knew best, her native city.

During the documented decade she grew from a thin, brown-eyed little girl with bright red hair into a slim, graceful teenager. Her memories of this youthful period in her life are an essential element of the thesis. Among the members of her family whom she mentions are her mother, Rosalie Sheffey Chapman, and her grandfather, Reuben Chapman, Governor of Alabama from 1847 to 1949.

It is my hope that her report of this decade will be significant to those who wish to explore this moment of history.

Ellelee Chapman Pettus
(Mrs. Erle Pettus, Sr.)

Birmingham, Alabama
March 10, 1972

Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to reproduce life in Huntsville, Alabama, from 1890 through 1899. It was a period of change from the ideals of the Old South to the new industrialism which swept away old families, old culture, and old customs. I have given the conditions accompanying the change, and have tried to keep the spirit of the men who instituted it. Then I have gathered as many of the old manners and customs as I could get authentic record of and reproduced them in their several settings as closely as I could.

My sources of information have been the newspaper files in the Court of Records office at the Court House in Huntsville. Judge Thomas Jones, of that court, gave me as much assistance as he could. Wherever the account of a person was not full enough to be clear, I have solicited their relatives for further information. In the case of Miss Howard Weeden, I used information given me about her life and education by Mrs. Milton Humes who was one of her intimate friends. I have also used her books, *Shadows on the Wall*, *Old Voices*, and *Bandanna Ballads*. Mrs. Tracy Steele and Miss Katie Steele gave me access to old papers and family records. Mrs. Eugene Gill gave me family records of the Mastin family.

The Church of the Nativity files were opened for me by Mrs. John Kirkpatrick, Reverend and Mrs. Cary Gamble; Mrs. Gamble also gave me a copy of Mr. George Gordon's composition, *Hark! Hark! My Soul!* The music for old dances was copied by me from *A Casket of Dance Music*, an old book which the Clays used for their music and dancing classes. Some old songs which Mother, Miss Jennie Sheffey, Mr. Frank Newman, and other singers in Huntsville used during these years as songs or encores. The resume of Professor Cramer's teaching system was excerpted from one of his books, *How to Start Beginners on the Piano*.

Elizabeth Humes Chapman

Chapter 1

Northern Influx

The traveler coming to the top of Russell's Hill has before him an expanse that any artist might envy him, a wide valley encircled by long, blue, flat-topped mountains. In front of him to the east is Monte Sano, with a spur jutting out in steps toward him into the valley. On one of the lowest levels of this spur, a church spire rises over a large clump of trees. Twelve miles to the south the gray-blue outline of Sand Mountain guards the curve of the Tennessee [River] which disappears in a silver line behind Madkin's Mountain on the southwest. To the north another spur of Monte Sano, known as Chapman's Mountain, runs westward into the valley. Fertile fields broken occasionally by groves and hedges fill the great rolling basin.

The road before him leads directly into the clump of trees signalized by the church spire. Following it he passes along rich red fields, by one ante bellum home set in a pine grove, crosses two railroad tracks and enters the town of Huntsville, Alabama, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and ninety. The houses along West Holmes Street are shaded in summer by maples and oaks. They are set on large lots, large enough to yield vegetables, fruits, and flowers for the table. Each is enclosed by a fence - two fences to be exact; the front one iron or paling, the back solid impenetrable boards, yielding the privacy that a home connotes. Four blocks of dwelling, then the traveler turns into Jefferson Street, one of the two principal business streets of Huntsville, and chooses between a lodging at the McGee or the Huntsville Hotel, the former on the corner of West Clinton and Jefferson; the latter on the corner of Jefferson and the Square.

As the Huntsville Hotel is centrally located and the traveler is out to see all he can, he pulls his horse up to the curb before the door and dismounts. A Negro takes the horse down the hill to the Roger's Stable on the Spring Branch, while he passes between the line of loungers in the windsor chairs on the pavement in the front of the hotel, enters the lobby, registers, takes the elevator to the third [floor] and is ensconced in a room overlooking the Square.

From this elevation he can see a great deal. The Square is a block each way with a street intercepting each corner. In the center, the Courthouse, a large white stone building surmounted

with a tower containing a town clock, stands in a shaded yard encircled by a wrought-iron picket fence. That is not unusual. Tied to the pickets of the fence, however, are an amazing number of horses and mules harnessed to buggies, surreys, sulkies, cabs, wagons, and runabouts. There are groups of people on the Courthouse steps, groups of men on the street corners, and men coming and going through the swinging doors of the Huntsville Hotel Bar, just under the spectator. A carriage drives up to the curb on the north side of the Square just two doors from the corner of Jefferson Street. The coachman, dressed in livery, gets off the box and helps a lady out. She enters W. R. Rison's Bank. After a short stay she emerges, leaving on the arm of a gentleman. She is put into the carriage, conversing with him for a few minutes before giving the orders for the coachman to drive on. Occasionally a grocery wagon scurries across the Square. Open drays pass leisurely by. As it is January each of them has a pot of live coals, either immediately behind the driver or at his feet. Each has a long whip, either in the driver's hands or sticking erect in the whip-stock. By and by a lady, followed by a maid carrying a market basket, threads in and out of the stores on the east side of the Square.

Everyone seemed to have blessings in abundance, time and friendliness. The stranger looked on the remnant of a great people, who while holding gentility above riches deems kindness a duty and enjoyed life as they lived.

Progressive Huntsvillians of the Eighties had begun a systematic advertisement of Huntsville and Madison County. They had pictured the fertility of the beautiful Tennessee Valley in such terms as to attract many summer visitors to Monte Sano, winter visitors to Huntsville, and permanent settlers to the county. The organization that did most of this advertising was The North Alabama Improvement Company with Mr. Charles H. Halsey¹ manager. To him Huntsville is indebted for the Alabama Nursery, Dallas Mills, the improvements in farm products which were influenced by the Madison County fairs, and the influx of Northern capital in the Nineties. His co-workers and abettors were Messrs. W. R. Rison, R. B. Rhett, Milton Humes, Oscar Goldsmith and W. W. Newman. After the Northerners came Mr. T. W. Pratt. They lent legal and financial aid while Mr. Halsey used his ingenuities in attracting the attention of as huge a radius as he could to Huntsville. Perhaps neither he nor his associates realized that their work was the beginning of an era, and a very different kind of an era from the one they planned. They dreamed of humming business, of great com-

1 *The Weekly Independent*, January 24, 1890. 200,000 pamphlets advertising Huntsville. *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, March 16, 1892.

merce, of better schools and of plenty for their townsmen. What they brought was a new Huntsville: a Huntsville devoid of the culture and ideals of the old, a progressive Huntsville, a Huntsville not devoid of talented and aggressive men, but of men talented and aggressive in a new way. Not one among the newcomers was a C. C. Clay, a Leroy Pope Walker, a Richard Walker or a Robert C. Brickell. No. But there were business men, organizers, and inventors. They came for work while many of the older type of statesmen and lawyers had avoided it.

In January, 1890, the Chase Brothers, having large nurseries at Rochester, New York, purchased four hundred acres of the Betts' place two and a half miles from Huntsville at Twenty Dollars an acre. It was incorporated under the name The Alabama Nursery Company. The possibilities of the location were so great that they planted seventy-five acres in three hundred thousand apple trees and the rest in pears, cherries and plums.² From the beginning they intended to try out roses and other flowers for commercial purposes. Their civic pride and genial personalities soon made them leaders in social as well as business affairs. It was a rare tribute to the soil and climate of Madison County to be chosen by such educated horticulturalists as a nursery site. The Chase Brothers were not, however, the only ones to see its possibilities.

Here too, Mrs. Jessie Moss founded the Huntsville Wholesale Nurseries. At the time of its founding it was the largest wholesale nursery in the United States. As Mrs. Moss was a medical doctor, a cultivated gentlewoman, it was remarkable at that date for her to open a business of her own. Her husband, Mr. M. Moss, was a Jew. She went with him to Holland. Seeing the possibilities of intensive horticulture there she came home with the determination of starting a nursery of her own. Huntsville, she thought, would grow better fruit trees than she had seen in Holland. Her husband agreed to let her put her ideas to work and the nursery was begun. Not trusting herself, she employed Mr. Heiks, a trained scientist, to manage her places. Her business thrived. She added land and flowers, hundreds of acres in shrubs, roses, and masses of old-fashioned blooms. She was from Ohio as was Mr. Heiks.³

These nurseries were confronted with a serious problem: that of getting expert labor. The negroes who applied had to be able to remember orders, to use judgment, to learn the deft arts of pruning, grafting, budding, plowing the right depth, and using the right sprays. These standards made the nurseries pay higher wages for farm labor than the farmers on contiguous lands could afford to

2 *The Weekly Independent*, January 17, 1890

The Huntsville Weekly Democrat, February 12, 1890

3 Mrs. Moss gave me these facts about the nursery in 1912.

pay. It resulted in the nurseries getting a large proportion of the competent labor near them and in actual loss to adjoining farms.

It was one of many blessings that cost innocent neighbors pain. The business that the nurseries brought to Huntsville far outweighed these disadvantages. Carloads of their produce were handled by the local roads each month.⁴ The Huntsville Wholesale Nurseries had to maintain offices in Huntsville as well as at Gladstone. That meant office rent and employment for native workers and importation of trained men. By 1898 the Chases were shipping a carload of stock a day to the north. It was the beginning of one of the industries for which Madison County is adapted. Other nurseries have followed this tip to fortunes.

The beginning of the cotton cloth industries was not as quiet as the modest beginnings of the nurseries. For months the papers had talked about nothing else. Early in February, Mr. Trev B. Dallas had published a statement that if the citizens wished the mills, twenty per cent of their pledges would have to be paid before the Probate Judge could issue him a Certificate of Corporation under Alabama law.⁵ They paid very promptly, as the certificate was issued to him on February 27, 1891.⁶ The location was supplied by ceding twenty-five acres of land in East Huntsville, from The North Alabama Improvement Company to the Dallas Mills Company for One Dollar on March 18, 1891.⁷

As an inducement for their locating the mills in Huntsville, the Board of Mayor and Aldermen had passed an ordinance giving them five hundred thousand gallons of water daily for a term of ten years.⁸ They promised, also, to pipe the water from Walker Street to the mills. The ground was broken with great public rejoicing. The Board of Mayor and Aldermen, accompanied by carriages filled with ladies and gentlemen from Huntsville and Nashville, went out to the grounds. The Mayor confirmed his gifts. Ground was broken by Mr. Charles H. Halsey and two mules, and the work of construction began on April 20th, 1891.⁹ Almost every process in the construction was a news item. Lockwood Green and Company, Boston, were its architects.¹⁰

Arrangements for side tracks from the Memphis and Charleston Railroad's main line were made by the Road's representative, Capt. R. B. Pegram.¹¹ The mill's reservoir was dug on the railroad side

4 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*

5 *The Weekly Mercury*, February 18, 1891

6 *Ibid*, February 27, 1891

7 *Ibid*, March 18, 1891

8 *Ibid*, April 22, 1891

9 *Ibid*

10 *Ibid*, January 7, 1891

11 *Ibid*, March 4, 1891

and landscaped so that it was really an advantage to the road in two ways. The work was pushed rapidly through the year. The mill's fly wheel was put in motion by Miss Pearl Mitchell on November 8, 1892.¹² Eight days later it began operating twenty-five thousand spindles and its seven hundred and fifty broad looms.¹³ At that time it made the widest cotton sheeting in America, and shipped its whole output to Canton, China. Mr. Alexander Dallas was its first president. Some of the Huntsville stockholders were Mr. R. Barnwell Rhett, Mr. W. R. Rison, Oscar Goldsmith and Colonel W. W. Garth.

By 1895 the stockholders received a three per cent dividend on their investment and the mill was doing such a great business that its orders far exceeded its capacity. Under those conditions it was decided to add a Six Hundred Thousand Dollar wing to the mill.¹⁴ In 1899 the City of Huntsville was asked to renew its gift of free water and exemption from taxation. Mr. A. S. Fletcher, who led the fight in the Council on this renewal, was a large stock holder in The Huntsville Cotton Mill which did not receive such gifts from the City.¹⁵

Another transaction of The North Alabama Improvement Company was the sale of the Huntsville Hotel block, including a five story brick building, red sandstone structure, the Opera House, the Monte Sano Railway and Turnpike drive with eighteen hundred acres of land in the suburbs of Huntsville, to a group of capitalists who formed themselves into a company with the following officers: W. S. Wells, president; T. W. Pratt, vice president; W. I. Wellman, secretary; James A. Ward, treasurer. All of them were from Pierre, South Dakota. The directors, also including the officers, were: James F. O'Shaughnessy of New York; P. C. Fisk of Cedar Rapids, Iowa; and R. F. Pettigrew of Sioux Falls, North Dakota. Three Huntsvillians were also on the Board but they will be mentioned later.¹⁶

Nothing could be more significant of a changing South than the sale of this block to a group of Yankees. The building had been owned by the late Reuben Chapman, sometime Congressman, one-time governor of Alabama, emissary of the Confederacy to France, and one of those who could not be an office holder after the War. The hotel had housed many Confederates. Its parlors had echoed their wit and its mirrors had reflected the images of crinoline

12 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, November 9, 1892

13 *The Argus*, September 29, 1892

14 *The Weekly Mercury*, June 19, 1891

15 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, December 6, 1899

16 *Ibid*, January 20, 1892

skirted belles and their beaux when it was the life to be gay. In the old Opera House at the next corner the politics and drama of the old school had had their day. The old house must have felt out of place with its new masters.

Ahead just a decade, the influence of this new group will have almost obliterated the ideas and aims of the first masters. The future of Huntsville was entirely committed to them. They were a city-building and manufacturing group. They had great aims. Of their aims at least, the stingy, calculating Reuben [Chapman] would have approved, though no doubt he would have wished the aim and energy for execution had been in Southern brains. His son-in-law, Milton Humes, with J. R. Stevens and Charles H. Halsey were consorting with the Yankees. The old Governor must have chuckled at that. Milton Humes, ex-Confederate soldier, who had all but lost two perfectly good legs fighting Sherman, connected with a parcel of Yankees!¹⁷ And Major Stevens, too! Surely they did not realize what they were introducing along with manufacturing and money. They hoped to better the land. Their associates were high class financiers, though Yankees - that was their misfortune, not their fault.

The history of the next eight years is permeated with their ideas. There is hardly an important transaction that they do not direct, not all of them at once, but some of them all of the time. Their names appear as agents to secure mills for the Chamber of Commerce, as realtors, developing waste lands or destroying old property for new business. They appear as Chairmen of town meetings and, finally, as the Directors and Presidents of the Chamber of Commerce.

Another old landmark, just a block east of the Square and holding even greater traditions than the Huntsville Hotel block, was the next to fall into the hands of the new regime.¹⁸ The Calhoun house was an antebellum residence belonging to the Calhoun family, only one of whom was living in 1892.¹⁹ A high, brick wall insured privacy to the place. Although the house was extremely ugly on the outside it had been a very beautiful residence. As the basement was nearly as high as an ordinary story, a very long flight of steps led to the wide front door. The rooms were huge rectangles and squares, frescoed in plumes and flowers on the coping and around the gas jets. Each mantle was of marble. In its better days it housed great art treasures collected by Mr. Calhoun in France, and Italy.²⁰ There was a dungeon in one of the cellars where the

17 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, December 6, 1899

18 *Ibid*, January 2, 1892

19 Milton Humes was her lawyer

20 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, September 14, 1892

family silver was stored. Rare wines were also kept there. Mrs. Virginia Clay Clopton said that Harriet Beecher visited the Calhouns once and that she thought she got the idea of the dungeon in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* from the one in this house. The roof was mansard copper. Formal gardens were there but all that remained of them in 1892 were a few English boxwoods. Mr. Wells purchased it, tore down the fence, leased a large part of it to Messrs. Hummell, Schooke & Company,²¹ and built cottages on the Randolph Street side.

Beside the syndicates that have already been mentioned, there were other land agencies. The first of these was the Southern Building and Loan. Under the management of Mr. Solon Whitten it encouraged savings and ownership of homes. By January 2, 1890 it had \$4,000,000 worth of stocks. The deposits were weekly, monthly, or yearly. A person who wished to buy stock in the company could do so on the installment plan. One who wanted a home paid a certain amount down, and a given monthly rent, which included part payment on the property. The Association bought and sold land, erected houses for rent and sale, and dealt in mortgages. Through its activities many poor persons were enabled to purchase property. It employed a lawyer to examine deeds, make abstracts, and record transactions. In 1890 this advisee was John H. Sheffey.²² Later, his practice became too heavy to give the company enough of his time and he then resigned. Major Joseph H. Slass was elected to succeed him.²³

In the association's report of May 31, 1890, it had \$91,605.28 in loans; \$75,650.05 due in installment stocks; \$9,120.00 paid up stock; \$215.40 suspense account; \$6,619.83 accumulation.²⁴ A year from that date its loans had increased to \$288,440.²⁵ And by 1895 it was One and a Quarter Million Dollars.²⁶ It took pride in its steady growth, counting it as increased interest. It made for interest in two ways, no doubt.

Quite a different kind of company was the Huntsville Land Company²⁷ which was incorporated in 1892 with a capital stock of \$100,000.00. The financiers on this occasion were Messrs. Oscar Goldsmith and W. R. Rison, president and vice-president, respectively, and Judge D. D. Shelby of Huntsville; Messrs. S. Blumenthal

21 Now [1932] owned by Milton Humes

22 *The Weekly Mercury*, February 11, 1891

23 *Ibid*

24 *Ibid*, June 17, 1891

25 *Ibid*, February 11, 1891

26 *Ibid*, January 9, 1895

27 *The Argus*, June 23, 1892

and M. M. Newman of Philadelphia, directors. Large tracts of land were purchased by them and subdivided for cottages. Their development included all of the land between Walker Street and the William Moore place on the north, and Meridianville Pike and the Steele place on the east. Lawrence Village, Dallas Mills, was the first unit. The village was named for Mr. Goldsmith's small son; its streets, for prominent families in Huntsville. It was for the time a model village. The cottages were double, but each had its own front and back porch, and water piped to the yard. None of them had bathrooms but neither did a great many more pretentious houses in Huntsville. As rented property these cottages were a fairly safe investment for at that time workers' wages could be garnisheed in Alabama.

Lands in West Huntsville were under the management of The Huntsville Land, Building, and Manufacturing Association. They were sold by Mr. Alexander Campbell, president of the association, to The Huntsville Loan and Investment Company in March, 1892.²⁸ The latter company laid out the village for the West Huntsville Cotton Mills.

This mill was due to the effort of Mr. Tracy Pratt. It was established in 1892 with a capital stock of \$100,000.00. Mr. Pratt and Mr. J. Coons owned the largest block of stock. Mr. Pratt was also its general manager.²⁹ The same year he secured a knitting mill which was built near the West Huntsville Cotton Mill.³⁰ It made very good stockings and underwear but for some reason it was not a success.³¹ Most persons, who knew anything about it, thought that the wrong type of machinery was installed. Whatever the cause, it failed and was bought in by Mr. W. I. Wellman. Managing this mill and the bank for some years, Mr. Wellman was kept in close touch with extremes of society. It was beneficial to both extremes.

On North Jefferson Street near the Memphis and Charleston Railway depot there stands an old brown brick mill. It bears the distinction of being the first cotton mill in Huntsville and one of the oldest cotton mills in the South. On October 1, 1891, its directors declared a dividend of eight per cent (8%) on capital stock after having bought its supply of cotton for the next season.³² By 1899, they declared a dividend of fifteen per cent (15%). In the latter years it had another distinction: it was managed entirely by Southern

28 *The Weekly Independent*, March 11, 1892
29 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, May 4, 1892
30 *Ibid*, December 14, 1892
31 *The Weekly Tribune*, May 19, 1896
32 *The Weekly Mercury*, October 7, 1891

men. Colonel W. W. Garth, General S. H. Moore and Mr. Luke Matthews were among its directors. The Huntsville Cotton Mill Company manufactured only cotton thread and worked about one hundred and twenty-five "hands".³³

While The Huntsville Cotton Mill was thriving so, it saw the establishment of another kindred mill in West Huntsville: The Merrimack Manufacturing Company of Lowell, Massachusetts. Its directors bought the Fennell Place and Brahan Springs. Among many other inducements to these mills to leave Massachusetts for Alabama, was the State exemption from taxation to new manufacturers. It was by no means certain, however, that they would be induced to locate in Huntsville. Both Athens and Anniston had better railroad facilities and could give better freight rates. Both were trying to attract this kind of business. But Brahan Springs had the chemicals necessary for their dyeing process, and Mr. Tracy Pratt and Mr. W. S. Wells had the salesmanship to sell their product. A big business was at stake. They were to build seven mills, to install only the finest machinery, and to employ expert workmen.³⁴ The people of Huntsville felt that this was a big victory. This company promised to operate two hundred thousand spindles and five thousand operators.³⁵ Its construction was of unusual interest to the town. Ladies made a sport of taking their afternoon drives to Merrimack. Watching one hundred and fifty workmen making and carrying brick to the "huge pile" was an instructive diversion. Mr. Sam North, brick contractor, was using a Chambers Brick Making Machine, a marvelous thing, with almost human intellect. It dug clay, carried it to a pulverizer, moistened and pressed it, under a five hundred pound pressure to the square inch, into moulded strips, cut it into bricks, dropped them into boxes, passed them into a kiln, and took them out as baked bricks at the rate of twenty-five thousand every ten hours.³⁶

At the rate they worked, the first unit would soon be completed.³⁷ It was magical; better than magic, for there before their own eyes was rising a building which was three hundred and forty feet long by one hundred and eighty feet wide, and which was to be three storeys high with machinery in it ready to work by January.³⁸ Mrs. Moss and Miss Davis were not the only ladies who had to protect their complexions from the glare of the western sun by turning

33 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, October 11, 1899

34 *Ibid*, February 22, 1899

35 *Ibid*

36 *Ibid*, October 4, 1899

37 *Ibid*, December 27, 1899

38 *Ibid*, August 30, 1899

their sun-shade parasols vertical with the handle, while they watched these amazing operations, and imagined the future of this plant.

Mr. W. S. Wells conceived the plan of connecting East and West Huntsville by trolley. The old dummy line charter stood in the way. Finally, the dummy line charter was declared void. The company had not used the tracks since 1890 and that violated their agreement. A charter for a street car line was granted Mr. Wells in 1892.³⁹ It did not reach the Square until September, 1899.⁴⁰ Some people objected to streetcars on account of the noise, others on account of the dust, and still others because they frightened their horses. If Mr. Wells heard the complaints he pretended deafness. The work went on. His short little legs lifted his heavy body out of his buggy to oversee the construction. His keen blue eyes looked to the convenience of many mill workers to whom his plan would be a boon, rather than to the wry faces of a few particular housewives and to nervous dyspeptics who would be better citizens if they had to get out and do a little digging. He said in a public meeting in 1899 that Huntsville was the hardest place he had ever seen in which a worker could make an honest living, and hold his head up.⁴¹ It seems to indicate that he was not as stony toward public criticism as he seemed.

Huntsville had been unusually fortunate in the type of men who have opened banks within her limits. The W. R. Rison Company Bankers have been in business since 1866. Mr. William R. Rison, who was president of the firm in 1890, was a man of ability, of unblemished integrity, and conservative in lending the funds intrusted to him. So far-sighted was he that his business had neither felt the stringency of the Reconstruction period nor been affected by the panic of 1873. The people of Huntsville and Madison County needed no guarantee when they entrusted him with the investment of their scanty treasuries.

The First National Bank had enjoyed a like reputation. It was directed by such men as Mr. James Hervey Mastin, Major William Echols, Major James Stevens, Colonel W. W. Garth, and O. B. Patton, each of whom having been successful with his own funds was, the public felt, capable of handling theirs to the best ability.

But in 1892 times were changing. The old elements in the community liked the conservative methods of these old firms, but there were newcomers who had brought preconceived ideas of investments with them from newer, more rapidly advancing communities than Huntsville. They had connections in other places

39 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, November 2, 1892

40 *Ibid*, September 27, 1899

41 *The Weekly Mercury*, March 27, 1895

which would enable them to invest and borrow more money than was available in the vicinity of Huntsville. They had plans for industrial developments that required large outlays of cash, larger than could be gathered for immediate use in Madison County. They had hopes of an industrial clientele needing the convenience of a safe deposit for small weekly earnings. They had ambitions for a clientele of Northern capitalists who would be willing to trust them with their investments in the South.

With such hopes they organized the Farmers and Merchants National Bank with a capital stock of \$100,000. The organization took place on January 20, 1892. Mr. W. I. Wellman of Rochester, Minnesota was elected president; Mr. J. S. Mayhew, vice-president; with the following board of trustees: J. S. Mayhew, Milton Humes, Charles H. Halsey, Oscar R. Hundley, Henry McGee, C. L. Nolen, D. D. Shelby, W. S. Wells, and W. I. Wellman. The Halsey Building opposite the Huntsville Hotel on Jefferson Street was fitted up. Mr. E. H. Andrews was appointed cashier.⁴²

The name of the institution indicated another economic change in Huntsville. The older banks, of course, were agents for all classes of depositors. This new bank, whose president hailed from the Northwest, seemingly favored two classes of business men on whom the wealth of the region rested. Many of the farmers and merchants would be flattered by such a recognition. It is a break from the old English custom of a family name's guaranteeing conscientious service from a firm for the name's sake, a break with individualism. It is, maybe, a tribute to group consciousness, or a psychological appeal to caste. There were, too, enough old citizens on the board to attract depositors from conservative groups in the community.

Mr. J. S. Mayhew was a Northerner who had lived in Huntsville since the Civil War. Mr. Henry McGee came to Huntsville from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1866. Since 1869 he had run the McGhee Hotel. Mr. C. L. Nolen was a Tennessean who came to Huntsville during the Reconstruction period. He had amassed quite a fortune. His ability was unquestioned. He was a respected citizen of the hardware firm of Nolen and Jones. Mr. W. S. Wells was from Pierre, South Dakota. There he owned the Wells House and was President of the Pierre, Duluth, and Black Hills Railway.⁴³ Mr. W. I. Wellman was from Rochester, Minnesota, although he came to Huntsville from Pierre, South Dakota. He was an unusually handsome man, a friendly person and a good business man. Mr. C. H. Halsey has already been introduced. Mr. O. R. Hundley

42 *The Independent*, January 22, 1892

43 *The Huntsville Independent*, January 29, 1892

was a financier and a politician who had already accumulated a fortune. Milton Humes, a Virginian by birth, was a lawyer of promise, an excellent mixer, a convincing speaker and owner of one of the handsomest homes in the South.

Between 1890 and 1895, The North Alabama Improvement Company, the Board of Trade and its successor, The Chamber of Commerce, and other land agencies had attracted and located: The Huntsville Fertilizer and Milling Company,⁴⁴ The Spoke and Handle Factory,⁴⁵ The Boyd Flouring Mill, The Farmers' Alliance Canning Factory, The Lownes Mill,⁴⁶ J. N. Mazza's Candy Factory, and one owned by Mr. J. Murphy in West Huntsville, The Huntsville Furniture Factory,⁴⁷ and the cotton mills already mentioned.

Two of these are particularly interesting on account of the product that they use. Wheat is generally a Northern monopoly, but the Tennessee Valley gives a very good yield per acre. On The Barracks and Gladstone Places the yield was as high as thirty-five bushels per acre. Mr. Boyd evidently had no dearth of patronage as one paper states that "from fifteen to twenty wagons are a usual sight in the line at the flouring mill."

The yield of hard wood is not quite as surprising. Alabama has one hundred and ninety-six different trees and Huntsville is in the red cedar belt. Monte Sano is said to be the only place in the United States except southern Illinois where shittimwood is indigenous. The wood is very hard and unusual. It makes beautiful furniture for the collector and was a specialty of Mr. Taylor, Huntsville's great cabinet maker. In the White yard on The Hill in Huntsville, there is a great cedar of Lebanon. It was brought from Palestine by Mr. Thomas White before the middle of the nineteenth century. An English yew tree guarded the entrance to the Figures place on Randolph Street.⁴⁸ Tremendous oaks of various species, clumps of laurel, sweet and black gum, and redbud are everywhere. Scattered patches of long and short leaf pine, and hickory, including scaly bark and pignut, black walnut, sycamore, linden and hackberry are common. Magnolias are grown for ornament but are not indigenous. Tulip, poplar, aspen and catalpa, black thorn and oswego orange beautify land and landscape.

One of the best cabinet makers in town was a Negro, Jake Fulham. He knew the location of trees and took great interest in doing creditable work. He was always kept busy. His shop was

44 *The Weekly Mercury*, January 14, 1891

45 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, August 24, 1892

46 *The Weekly Mercury*, May 22, 1895

47 *Ibid*, January 9, 1895

48 It has been felled by some vandal

at his little cottage on Adams Avenue where he displayed his work for customers. Jake, of course, was not an importation from South Dakota, or a protege of the companies. He was a wiry, gingerbread-colored Negro with a mustache and a ready smile. The smile won and kept many customers.

The citizens of Huntsville were called into partnership with the realtors early in 1892. The fact of Huntsville's isolation from the rest of Alabama, her dependence upon Tennessee for big papers, terminals, roads, and political interests had been a sore question almost since Alabama's admission as a state. Reuben Chapman, when Congressman, had written to Dr. Thomas Fearn of Huntsville to try to get a canal from the Tennessee to the Coosa River. Both gentlemen were agreed that such a communication would bring Huntsville into better relations with the rest of the State. That was in 1831.⁴⁹ A canal was built from the Big Spring to the Tennessee River, but no further. In the sixty intervening years business went North. Freight rates grew. The path to the South was still blocked by the Tennessee River. Even the railroads seemed to conspire to keep it so. The Memphis and Charleston went east and west like the river. The Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis was only a branch with terminus at Huntsville.⁵⁰

At a mass meeting of business men on January 26, 1892,⁵¹ the Board of Trade was formed to care for such civic needs. At this meeting an executive committee consisting of Milton Humes, W. R. Rison, W. I. Wellman, Charles H. Halsey, W. R. Van Valkenburg, W. P. Newman, A. S. Fletcher, J. Coons, Oscar Goldsmith, J. M. Hutchens, and A. W. McCullough was chosen. The committee elected Milton Humes, chairman, Oscar Goldsmith, secretary and treasurer, and called a mass meeting of citizens for February 4th.

To them Mr. Humes presented the advantages of a railroad connecting Huntsville with some town across the Tennessee River. The Board of Trade needed, he said, a \$50,000 subscription for this project. Each subscriber would receive twelve and a half percent (12-1/2%) on the face value of his subscription in stock in the Northwestern Land Association. This was the market price of that stock. Right-of-way through property to be crossed by the railroad from Huntsville to the river would, also, have to be guaranteed by Huntsville, and terminal facilities not to exceed ten acres.

Mr. James A. Ward, representative of the Northwestern Land Association, when presented by Mr. Humes, agreed to sell and to deliver to subscribers \$400,000 in transfer stock of that company

49 Letters from Reuben Chapman to Dr. Thomas Fearn, 1831

50 *The Weekly Mercury*, January 28, 1891

51 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, February 3, 1892

to build a railroad to the Tennessee River at Whitesburg two miles below Leeman Ferry, to map the location, and to establish sufficient freight and passenger depots and switchyards in Huntsville and along the lines of the railroad. He guaranteed to construct a single track standard gauge railroad and to operate it with sufficient cars and engines to accommodate the traffic. He promised to build a wagon and foot bridge over the Tennessee. The bridge would be a draw span pontoon bridge, built upon pontoon boats, corked on top and bottom and safely anchored. Traffic would be protected by railings on both sides. It would have, over the top cork, a road bed of 2/12 joints, and a draw span for passage of steamboats. He guaranteed to begin construction of this bridge as soon as permission could be received from Congress. He also gave bond for \$50,000 as a guarantee of earnestness. The final stipulation was that the railroad should never be sold except under the above guarantee to the people of Huntsville.⁵²

Wise men see, but fools cut their plans short. The year 1900 came but no bridge spanned the Tennessee. The railroad stopped at the river.

Other ways of entering Huntsville were by macadamized pikes. These pikes were owned, built, and operated by The Madison Turnpike Company. They were maintained by revenue from toll gates. The one on Meridianville Pike was near the old Mastin place. The one on Whitesburg Pike was on Mr. W. F. Garth's place, *Piedmont*. There was a regular charge for double teams to a wagon, double teams to a carriage, single horse to either vehicle, or a person on horseback, or on foot. There was also a gate at the Schrimsher house half way up Monte Sano Pike, but that was owned and maintained by the Monte Sano Company. Huntsville papers, particularly the *Mercury* began an agitation for State maintenance of free roads. The paper, voicing probably public opinion, thought toll was a method of private taxation that should not be dumbly borne.

The agitation had effect. The Madison Turnpike Co. offered to the County fourteen miles of turnpike assessed at \$20,000 for \$22,000. As the assessment in Alabama is based on sixty per cent (60%) real value, the offer sounded reasonable. The writers were not convinced. Their opposition brought out a statement of expenditures on roads for 1894 by Mr. Samuel H. Moore, one of the directors. He stated that the company had expended \$56,750 in 1894 in road building in addition to the earnings of the road for ten years. They also sold to the County the Russell Hill road, which cost them \$10,000., for \$3,500. They were offering the County new roads at a minimum of \$1,670 per mile. The same road had cost the

52 *The Independent*, February 12, 1892

company over \$4,000 per mile.⁵³

The County decided to take the bargain on January 29, 1895. The stockholders confirmed the sale on February 28, 1895. The County issued bonds. The money was advanced by W. R. Rison Company Bankers, and the gates were opened by Mr. William J. Mastin, President of the Madison Turnpike Company, on March 5, 1895.⁵⁴ The bonds were purchased by Stiener Brothers of Birmingham.⁵⁵

Freeing those pikes from toll brought up the question of a free pike to Monte Sano.⁵⁶ As that was a mountain road and hard to maintain, a great many people agreed that the North Alabama Improvement Company should be allowed the toll. The class of people affected had, too, weight with public opinion. Only the privileged could own cottages on the mountain and they were usually able to pay toll. So the question was left for time to settle.

The Chamber of Commerce, always on the outlook for means of advertising Huntsville, once employed the backs of commercial envelopes which every member of the association and their families used. The slogan on one set was: "The Biggest Town for its Size in the World - Huntsville, Alabama." Thousands of pamphlets on Huntsville were mailed to all parts of the United States and manufacturers were personally solicited by the president, Mr. R. E. Pettus.⁵⁷ Having this predisposition for publicity made them peculiarly gracious to a group, The New England Newspaper League, who came in 1899.⁵⁸ Their price was only \$500,000 to have Huntsville and other points in the South properly written up in *The Boston Traveler*; *The Fall River News*; *The Hartford Post*; *The Portland Express*; *The Providence News*; the *Lowell Mail*; the *Concord Monitor*; and the *Burlington News*. One of the pleasures of their visit was to see them enjoy Huntsville. They were entertained by the Chamber of Commerce with Colonel R. Barnwell Rhett presiding. After breakfast they were taken in drags over the estates of The Alabama Nursery, Piedmont Farms, Monte Sano, and the Agricultural and Mechanical College for Negroes. During the trip their artist, Mr. West, sketched scenes to be used as illustrations to the articles.⁵⁹ One of the last official acts of Mr. Pettus was to request his secretary to write a sketch of Huntsville for this League.⁶⁰

53 *The Weekly Mercury*, February 6, 1895

54 *Ibid*, March 6, 1896

55 *Ibid*, April 3, 1895

56 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, September 15, 1897

57 *The Weekly Tribune*, April 23, 1896

58 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, April 5, 1899

59 *Ibid*, April 5, 1899

60 *Ibid*, June 14, 1899

It is a queer law that faults instead of virtues bring some men into written history. Probably we should never have known St. Stephen if the crowd had not murdered him. But for their crime, his gooddeeds, like those of the nameless of the Church at Jerusalem, his co-workers might have been lost. So we might include the work of the Mayor and Aldermen of Huntsville with other civic movements of this decade if it were not for two mistakes in judgment and a few indiscretions. Then there are facts, having nothing to do with their mistakes, which make them a very interesting body. These had better come first.

Amazing to the uninitiated investigator is that in 1890 there was in Huntsville a colored ward sending two Negro aldermen⁶¹ to the City Council. Charles Jones and Lucien Ware, colored, worked on committees with W. R. Van Valkenburg, J. R. Stegall, and John G. Baker, whites.⁶² They not only worked on committees but discussed situations and policies as freely, if not as frequently, as their white associates. They reported on public opinion in their wards as the white men reported public opinion in theirs. They appointed officers to work in their wards. They helped direct the work on the streets, in the cemeteries, in the schools. Though of course, their work in schools was for colored children. At the same time the Mayor of Huntsville was a Republican, elected by Democrats. It seems to indicate that prejudice was not one of the community's faults. *It seems* - notice.

Now for the mistakes in judgment.

In March, 1891, the Mayor said that in a former meeting the question of the Mayor's salary had been presented⁶³ and that in fairness to the candidates in the approaching election, the question should be settled at once. The amount proposed at a former meeting was \$1,000 a year. Did he hear a discussion on the question?

As the Mayor was himself a candidate for re-election, what he heard must have made him winch. His present salary was \$800. The first proposal was to keep it at that; the next, to reduce it to \$200; and then, this parenthetical remark from the mover to the amendment: "The majority of intelligent tax payers thought it was \$600 until it was discussed in the newspapers after our last meeting." The amendment lost by one vote.⁶⁴

Some of the newspapers, carrying reduction to an exaggeration, proposed \$300⁶⁵ as a fair salary for the amount of time required for business.

61 *The Weekly Independent*, April 8, 1892

62 *Ibid*, April 8, 1892

63 *The Weekly Mercury*, February 25, 1891

64 *Ibid*, March 4, 1891

65 *Ibid*, February 25, 1891

Pre-election editorials in the *Mercury* and *Tribune* convinced their readers that either Mr. A. S. Fletcher or Mr. William Mastin was to be Huntsville's next mayor. On the eve of the election, the *Mercury* says, "Mastin's forces are deserting to Fletcher."⁶⁶ Any normal prophet would account that a wise move - not to desert Mr. Mastin, of course, but to concentrate on one candidate. The voters seemed to argue in some such fashion. They concentrated on and elected Mr. Jere Murphy.

This was a period when the city was building anew. The city bought a steam boiler,⁶⁷ laid new sewers, installed electric lights, and donated five hundred thousand gallons of water daily to Dallas Mills. Mr. A. S. Fletcher protested this grant on the grounds of free water under the first exemption; that the city had paid for having eight inch pipes between Walker Street and the Dallas Mills; that the water cost the city Four Dollars a day; that the city lost several thousand dollars by change of contract; that the city would have to make every future manufacturing company which came to the city such a grant; that Dallas had enough exemption by the exemption set for new manufacturies by the State of Alabama. The papers took that up. As it was a discriminatory grant it was finally rescinded.

Some persons may wonder where the city had so much water to give. Huntsville is built around a big limestone spring that flows from under a bluff just west of the Square. Originally it was owned by Dr. Thomas Fearn who, in 1825, dug a cistern on the old Faust place at the point of McClung, Adams Avenue, Spragins and Williams Streets. From there he conveyed the water in wooden cedar pipes to different parts of town. It was the second public water works in the United States. He later deeded the spring and the spring branch to the city on condition that no bridge should ever be built across the branch on Spring Street, and that his heirs should never be charged for water. If either of these conditions were ever broken the spring was to revert to his heirs.⁶⁸

The water flowed directly from the base of the bluff into a natural basin over a natural dam into a creek. Its capacity is variously estimated at from 24,000,000 to 50,000,000 gallons a day. In 1890 the pump house stood at the dam.

In 1898 Colonel Hiram Chittenden of the Engineering Corps of the United States Artillery became interested in the source of the spring. Getting a canoe and an orderly, he pushed the canoe into

66 *The Weekly Mercury*, April 1, 1891

67 *Ibid*, September 30, 1891

68 A bridge was built around it last year [1931] but the Garths did not receive the property.

the opening of the spring. He afterwards said that they sailed back on a wide stream about two and a half miles. At that point the stream divided, half going toward Huntsville, the other toward the southwest.⁶⁹ That division may account for Byrd and Brahan Springs. The city then commissioned Colonel Chittenden to beautify the spring. The natural dam was blasted, a wider basin made, and the banks of the branch were walled in and curbed with white stone. There are still three levels: the basin, the park stream ending in a small falls, and the branch. A new pump house was erected in 1899.⁷⁰ It is at the extreme north of the park so that it does not mar the grounds as the old pumphouse must have. Everyone seemed willing for the city fathers to spend money in this way.

They were not always so acquiescent. In 1896 the Council passed a privilege tax and license for operating a business in the city. It threw the city into a turmoil. A mass meeting was called to demand an audit of the city's books.⁷¹ In receiving the transactions of the Mayor and Aldermen, the citizens learned that much of the goods, materials, and labor used by the city were furnished by members of the City Council. The crowd were scandalized. More was to be learned. The city books were kept irregularly. Only an audit could prove how deeply the city was involved. Excitement mounted. It was only sensible to appoint a committee of citizens, a representative of the city council and a paid accountant, to examine the books and make a report to a mass meeting. The suggestion was adopted.

At a mass meeting at the Opera House on Wednesday, May 19, 1896,⁷² Mr. Frank Goodman, auditor, reported his findings of the conditions of the city's books as follows:

"First: I find your system of accounts, making and filing reports, creating liabilities, and keeping track of the same; also the records of accounts against parties, chargeable with revenues due the city are not sufficiently complete to be of that assistance to the officials, convenience to the citizens, or value to the city that it should be.

"Second: There are omissions of items and records that cannot help resulting in the financial disadvantage of the city.

"Third: By consulting the tax duplicates and financial re-

69 Colonel Chittenden's report
70 Date on keystone in front door
71 *The Weekly Tribune*, May 5, 1896
72 *Ibid*, May 26, 1896

ports that have been made from time to time, it is clearly shown that more than \$12,000 of property taxes remain uncollected during a period of four years."

The committee, under Mr. W. I. Wellman and Mr. Oscar Goldsmith, made this statement: "From a period of the past six years, two years during this six, the real estate, personal, water and street tax are all included in the annual report, so that we are unable to arrive at the amount of taxes unpaid; in the time at our command. However, taking the other four years as a basis, we estimate that the unpaid taxes for the past six years is in the neighborhood of \$18,000."

"Fourth: There is no register or book of accounts in which parties, firms and corporations responsible for the payment of privilege license are charged and, therefore, no record from which to ascertain the total amount chargeable to the amount annually."

Mr. Wellman: "Subdivision 6 of Section 77 of the Ordinance in reference to this subject seems to have been ignored. Said Ordinance is as follows: 'We shall keep a book to be called and labled The License Book, in which we shall enter each license, to whom granted, and for what length of time, and for what business or pursuit, and the price paid therefore, and the number of it, and this entry shall be made as soon as we shall issue the license.'"

"Fifth: The account of street tax which show produces over \$1,500 per annum is imprecisely the same condition as the license account."

Mr. Wellman: "The following ordinance as far as it refers to the street tax has been ignored, to-wit: Section No. 121. 'The assessor shall each year, between the 15th of May and First day of July, make a full and complete assessment of all taxable property, real and personal, and other items of taxation in the city, and a complete list of all persons liable to street and poll tax.'"

Mr. Goodman: "The system keeping the accounts showing the indebtedness of the city is very defective. The books do not show the full indebtedness, either in open account, bills payable, or the bounded debt. This should be remedied at once, and a correct method of handling the accounts adopted."

As Mr. Goodman sat down Mr. Wellman said, "Your committee further finds by reference to the annual report made April 10th,

last, that in several instances city officials have entered into contract with the city in violation of Section 24 of the City Charter which especially forbids and makes unlawful such contracts. These unlawful contracts aggregate several thousand dollars."

Mr. Goodman rose and proceeded:

"Sixth: The water tax is almost in the same condition as those of the licenses and street tax, except a pocket memorandum book, containing in alphabetical order a list of water consumers, where their assessments are kept."

Mr. Wellman: "The committee suggests that as the assets of the city cannot be ascertained from the books as now kept, the citizens shall resist the privilege tax which the Board is seeking to enforce. As the supplementary report, published in the *Mercury*, April 10, 1896, shows a liability of \$9,257.51 and Mr. Goodman's report shows uncollected taxes for \$12,000.

"We do not deem it just to the people of Huntsville to pay an onerous privilege tax, while the Board of Mayor and Aldermen have failed to comply with the laws and ordinances governing the city."

Wild applause from the audience.

Mr. Wellman continued: "Be it resolved, therefore, (1) That the Mayor and Aldermen employ a paid accountant to ascertain as nearly as possible the present financial condition of the city, and employ a system of keeping city books to be suggested by Mr. Goodman. (2) That the Board is requested to curtail the expenses of the city and to dispense with all officials not absolutely necessary to run the city government."

The resolutions were adopted and put into immediate practice.⁷³

On June the third the city appeared in a body before the Council in the City Hall to protest the privilege tax.⁷⁴ Under the caption, "Moses and His Brother Aaron," *The Tribune* gives the following report of the meeting on June 8th:

"The vote opposing tax had only two dissenting voices· the honorable Mayor's and the editor of *The Mercury* ." (N. B. The Mayor, Dr. J. D. Humphrey, is the Moses of the caption; the editor of *The Mercury* , Mr. Robert O'Neal, the Aaron. *The Mercury* was the Mayor's official organ.)

"The last speech of the evening was delivered by Dr. J. D. Humphrey, late of private citizenship, but now of the Huntsville Board of Mayor and Aldermen, a position of

73 *The Weekly Tribune*, May 26, 1896

74 *Ibid*, June 2, 1896

rank unequaled by any known to civilized authority on this side of the world.

"Upon taking the stand the Doctor cleared his throat, rolled up his right sleeve, moved his left foot back a few inches, backed his ear, and proceeded to say that being called upon to address this meeting was a complete surprise to him, an honor he did not expect, but one he appreciated. The Doctor for a moment forgot himself, proceeded to unroll a lot of cut and dried data, running as far back as 1876. Seeing the give-away he was about to make, he quickly shoved the roll back into his pocket, but in a few moments saw he could not get along without it, so he boldly jerked it out in a style that would have done credit to an old stumper."

As an attempt to conform to public opinion the Board voted a reduction of salaries on July 5th.⁷⁵ As a matter of economy they repealed a grant of Fifty Cents to the city clerk for issuing the privilege tax. As this repeal of fees for services was, they estimated, Two Hundred Dollars a year, they compensated him by raising his salary that much. As that ordinance was contrary to Section 75 of the City Charter, which says that all salaries shall be fixed thirty days prior to the election of city officers and shall not be raised or increased during that term or appointment,⁷⁶ the citizens indignantly rehashed the whole list of imposts. Contractors employing one or more journeymen must pay Twenty Five Dollars. Merchants owning a stock of goods valued at more than Three Thousand Dollars must also pay Twenty Five Dollars. The first tax was to have become effective May 1, 1896. The amendments could not be retroactive.⁷⁷ *The Tribune* advised people not to pay. The editor took his own advice and was fined Twenty Five Dollars in the Mayor's court.⁷⁸ He advised someone to make a test case of the Mayor's right to impose the tax and to have all of the businesses share the expense of the case. His advice went unheeded. People paid. Insurance rates went up on account of it⁷⁹ and some companies refused to keep agents in Huntsville.

The discussion was ended in November. The city had been trying to get a new Charter from the Legislature since February, 1895.⁸⁰ On November 24, 1896, Mr. Ben Hunt in the House and Mr.

75 *The Weekly Tribune*, June 6, 1896

76 *Ibid*, July 6, 1896

77 *Ibid*, June 23, 1896

78 *Ibid*, July 28, 1896

79 *Ibid*, July 14, 1896

80 *The Weekly Mercury*, February 6, 1895

81 *The Weekly Tribune*, December 22, 1896

Oscar Hundley in the Senate had it granted. It made the obnoxious privilege tax inoperative.⁸¹

The bonds for Huntsville's new sewer were confirmed at the same time. They were authorized for Ten Thousand Dollars at six per cent interest. There were five bids for them: New York, Ohio, Illinois, Wisconsin and Maryland, bidding. They were sold to Rudolph Klogbold and Company, Cincinnati, Ohio for Ten Thousand and Twenty Six Dollars (\$10,026.00).⁸² In the previous issue of the same paper, a shortage in the City Sewerage Inspection accounts was announced together with the resignation of Dr. J. D. Humphrey, paymaster. The compulsory audit of city books provided by the new charter must not have been assiduously followed. As there was no action taken against Dr. Humphrey he was evidently not implicated in the fraud.⁸³ The work with the sewer went on to completion, a more efficient service rendered even though meters were installed and the consumers had to pay for water.

The political situation that developed under the methods of the Northerners was even more interesting, if as disastrous as the economic. One of the first indications of the change was the frequent filings, editorially and in the reports of meetings, that were made at the Farmers Alliance. Mr. Lane, editor of the *Evening Tribune*, thought the Alliance a fine thing until Reuben Kolbe espoused its cause and had himself sworn into office as the Governor of Alabama after his defeat for that office by Governor Jones. Then the Alliance was being used by Northerners to disrupt the Democratic party in Alabama. Its meetings were secret and men like Mr. Turner resigned from it. There was evidently some crookedness in such an organization.

If that were true there were other sources of contamination and disruption within the party itself. There were the sound-money Democrats of whom no less a person than Colonel R. Barnwell Rhett was one. Milton Humes was another⁸⁴ Gold Standard man.

The Peoples' Party was coming in to weld the Alliance into a Third Party on an inflated currency platform. The Gold Standard people were traveling, of course, with Mr. Grover Cleveland; good company, but not quite straight Democracy. Then, Mr. William Jennings Bryan came along, and Mr. Oscar Hundley, Democratic State Senator from Madison County, telegraphed Mr. William McKinley that he, Oscar Hundley, would carry the State of Alabama for him.⁸⁵ The worse of it was the volunteer Republican campaigner had two years more on his term as a Democratic Senator. Politics

82 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, December 8, 1897

83 He was afterwards president of the Board of Education

84 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, May 23, 1894

85 *The Weekly Tribune*, July 26, 1896

86 *Ibid*, July 16, 1896

had degenerated with the times.

The Evening Tribune had been for sound money all along. It published an editorial on voting as the individual feels.⁸⁶ Old ways are changing and the voter must meet conditions as they are. On March 31, 1896, it had predicted that the Democratic primary which was to be held in twelve days would "probably rip the Democratic Party up the back." On August 8, 1896, it announced that Major W. H. Echols would not support the Chicago platform. On September 30, 1896: "Mr. Frank Coleman, editor of *The Argus*, severed his connection with that paper today." There was a story back of the resignation.

Judge Thomas Jones of the Recorder Court, Huntsville, says that the Republicans, led by Mr. W. S. Wells, thought 1896 as good an opportunity of breaking the Democratic Party in Huntsville as would ever come. Mr. Wells decided that the only way to form public opinion was through the press. He negotiated for the sale of *The Argus*. Mr. Frank Coleman sold. He was criticized for the sale, of course. Staunch Democrats felt that it was opening a door that they might not be able to close. It was a civic danger on account of the Republican attitude toward social equality of the Negro. Mr. Coleman sold. Mr. Jere Murphy, Republican, became editor. Times were changing.

At a Republican convention held in Huntsville in June, 1894, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

"Resolved, that in the opinion of this convention, it is not advisable for the Republicans to nominate a ticket. No other question can be involved in State elections in Alabama until the right of suffrage is secured. We recognize the fact that the Jeffersonian Democracy is now engaged in a struggle for the right of suffrage.⁸⁷ We advise all Republicans to vote for Kolbe for Governor, and to support the whole Jeffersonian⁸⁸ ticket, state and county, with a view to overthrowing the organized Democracy that has for years in the State by fraud denied the people the right to elect their own officers."⁸⁹

Now, they too had changed. With the organ at work, they hoped to swing Madison County into the Republican line and Mr. McKinley into the presidency. They had strong native Republicans in Huntsville: Judge D. D. Shelby, later appointed Federal Judge; Mr.

87 There was a demand for a new State Constitution from 1890 on. It was not written until 1901.

88 Jefferson County, Alabama, stronghold of Kolbe

89 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, July 4, 1894

James M. Hutchens; and Mr. Jere Murphy, but they were not strong enough to throw Democracy completely overboard in one election. The Democrats who deserted to them did so more on sound money principles than for love of Republicanism. Mr. McKinley was elected but not through the votes which were delivered to him through Mr. Hundley's speeches, Mr. W. S. Wells' talks, or the editorials and political data in *The Argus*.

The old century closed with the work of the new citizens in a prosperous condition. They had weathered the panic of 1893 and the hard times of lean crop years. Having made a permanent home for themselves they could look complacently at the future. In 1890 Huntsville's population by the government's census was 7,995; by the Fenney-Jones Directory of 1896 it was 11,400.⁹⁰ The Northerners had indeed built a new Huntsville. Socially the Chases, the Mosses, the Wellmans, and the Pratts were as much a part of the community as they were a part of the business world. Others, not yet accepted could wait. They had seen Huntsville change its shape; they would see her change her attitude toward them. They had found her attached to the old ways, fastened, as Mr. W. S. Wells put it, to the unchanging past, to the ideas of slave times.⁹¹ The process might be slow. In time it would come. So those who were not yet "received" went steadily in their own direction and allowed their great-grandchildren to enjoy Huntsville's social fruits.

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- 90 *The Argus*, January 23, 1896
The Huntsville Weekly Democrat of August 23, 1899 announced a new city directory by Mr. Richard Evans Wilkins but gave no figures.
- 91 *The Weekly Mercury*
N. B. Wells Stanley, vice-president of the Alabama Power Company, is Mr. W. S. Wells' grandson. 1931.

Chapter 2

Political Expression

Another type of political ecstasy indulged in Huntsville is illustrated by a torchlight procession, headed by the Cornet Band, which followed the city elections April 9, 1895. Forming in line of march at the First National Bank, it passed across the Square eastward; decorated with transparencies, torches, and flags, the carriages turned south at Franklin Street to Mr. Luke Matthews' residence. He was assisted into the carriage. The procession then turned east on William Street to Lincoln to the residence of Mr. Alfred Moore, down Calhoun to Randolph Street to pick up Dr. A. B. Jones. From this point it wound around to Mr. John McAllister's residence on East Holmes Street, and lastly to Mills Street for Mayor W. T. Hutchens. The gentlemen were then conveyed to the Court House where hundreds of citizens awaited them. Each of them made a speech thanking their constituents for their votes and pledging loyalty to the city in the work of their offices.¹

On the platform were Mr. M. D. L. Parks, chairman; Mr. Bost, taking notes; Mr. W. S. Wells; Mr. M. A. McCullough; Honorable O. R. Hundley and Mr. Joe Smith. Mr. McCullough was the first speaker. He confined his remarks to the necessity for ward schools in Huntsville. The public school was, he thought, too far for the children in south and west Huntsville to reach it in safety. There was danger of their being run over at street crossings by obstreperous horses. He hoped that the citizens would vote money for the erection of the necessary buildings for ward schools.

The question of a new city charter was also before the people. Mr. Hundley explained his position on it. Going back to the old charter of 1889 he read several telegrams and letters which he had received at the time from Mr. W. R. Rison and one each from thirteen other leading citizens. The question then at issue was that of placing the election of Mayor in the hands of the Aldermen. He considered that too great power for the Aldermen and he had the bill defeated in the legislature. He characterized Mr. Rison as "King Bee" in the movement to centralized power. As Mr. John McAllister was in the bank with Mr. Rison, it was, Mr. Hundley

1 *The Weekly Mercury*, April 1st and 10th 1895

thought, natural that he should have similar opinions and endanger the people's right to elect a city clerk. Mr. Hundley drew his heavy stature to its full height shouting, "I am for Alabama against every other State, and for Huntsville against the world, the devil, and all outside influences." Although melodramatic, it went over to the audience in a big way. Then some smart alec asked, "How did you stand on the railroad fight?" Mr. Hundley was a railroad lawyer, but he defended his position before the people by stating frankly that he thought that as the railroads were necessary to the legitimate development of the State, they had a legal right to have their interests protected. In the long run, he felt that the State would be benefitted by their prosperity. It was a question of discriminatory rates and had been a very live issue in Alabama ever since Mr. Kolbe, a railroad commissioner, was defeated for the office of governor by Governor Thomas G. Jones in 1892.

The crowd waited to hear how Mayor Hutchens would declare himself on the question of election of mayor. He said, "I stand for the election of mayor by the people, but as the clerk, assessor, and tax collectors are servants of the Board they should be elected by and be responsible to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen. Mr. Hundley says public officers should be governed by a majority of the property tax payers of the city on the present charter question. But he changed his mind when a petition with a majority of one-hundred and seventy property tax payers, favoring the new charter without the amendments, was presented to him in Montgomery.

"Mr. Hundley had no right, my friends, to change, after this proposition had been acted upon and accepted by a majority of the voters. The Democrat that does that is misusing his office, abusing the people's trust."

When we remember That Mr. Hutchens was a Republican that is rather a remarkable compliment to the Democratic party. He was repeatedly interrupted by Mr. Hundley's clients - but *The Mercury* says "His remarks had a noticable effect on the crowd."

The charter in question had been drawn up by Judge Richard W. Walker, adopted by the Mayor and Board of Aldermen, and declared the law for the government of the city.²

2 *The Weekly Mercury*, January 2, 1892

Chapter 3

Woman's Suffrage

No subject since Hayes' Administration caused greater diversity of opinion in Huntsville than did that of woman's suffrage. In a community in which women played an indisputable part in economics, society, and religion, it was natural that she should play a definite part in politics. Such women as Miss Mary Ann Cruse, the Misses Clay, Miss Eliza Brickell, Mrs. James Matthews, Mrs. James Mayhew, Mrs. Margaret Bolling, Miss Susan Hunt, Miss Mattie J. Davis, Mrs. Milton Humes and Miss Laura Bassett were recognized "intellects". That term implied brain power equal "to any man's." What any man's intellectual capacity was no one ever stopped to define. A prestige went with the classification, however. That of itself implied that man's ability was vastly superior to woman's.

Mrs. Hunt and Mrs. Humes could plan and execute civic affairs as well as any male chairman. The men even used the women in political crises such as Cleveland's campaign to direct public opinion through an organized political club directed by Mrs. Humes. They popularized such candidates as Oates by entertaining for them. They subserved the public mind in private conversations, discreetly confined to feminine pleasantries and subtle flattery of a "man's superior judgment." They must have forgotten the wrench which that fallacy had in the crashes of 1893. Huntsville was a Southern city, not always conservative. But now that the question of giving women the right to vote must be faced, many of her conservative citizens were avowedly antagonistic to the idea. They used parallel arguments to the ones which they had used against women riding bicycles. It would strip her of all femininity.¹ They later used the same arguments against her riding astride a horse, bobbing her hair and smoking.

Among its ardent supporters were Mrs. Alberta C. Taylor, Mrs. Milton Humes, Mrs. Felix Baldrige, Mrs. Rosalie Chapman, Mrs. Ben P. Hunt, Mrs. George, Miss Mary N. Moore, Mrs. Owen Wilson, Mrs. Anna Robertson, Miss Susie Robertson, and Mrs. Juliet Clanton. They discussed their ideas in parlors at first. By working steadily but quietly they finally launched the movement.

1 *The Weekly Mercury*, January 30, 1895

Mrs. Humes secured Miss Susan B. Anthony and Mrs. Chapman Catt to lecture in Huntsville on January 29, 1895. The town was in a turmoil. What could a woman do in politics? What would the babies do while their mothers were out campaigning? Who would plan the man's meals? It was a crime to think of taking a woman out of the home.

The women pointed to Dallas Mills where mothers worked at machines from six in the morning to six at night and asked if men thought of women leaving home, of children taking care of themselves when it was a question of dollars and cents to industrialists. They pointed to cotton mills where children were employed in lint-cursed air for ten to twelve hours a day, and asked if the care of children was not a part of every woman's business. They cited state laws showing the inequality of man and woman before the law and argued that such injustice could not exist if woman helped to make the laws. Mrs. Humes argued that taxing women was the old injustice of taxation without representation as no man represented a woman's point of view in legislative halls.

In 1892 Miss Clay was excluded from a public speaking at the Court House because one of the speakers, Mr. E. J. Taliaferro of Birmingham, objected to ladies being in an audience to which he was speaking. Perhaps Miss Clay did not mind missing Mr. Taliaferro's speech but as General Edmund W. Pettus, U. S. Senator, and Honorable A. C. Hargrove, president of the State Senate, were other speakers she felt that any citizen should be admitted.²

According to the opinion of the time, however, Miss Clay should not have been a reporter. Reporting was a man's job. She was making herself masculine by attempting that work. If she put herself in a man's place she should be treated as a man. "Exactly," she said, "I should be admitted to public meetings exactly as any man." The retort only embittered the male. A female should not practice that type of repartee. And so it went until Mrs. Chapman Catt and Miss Susan B. Anthony arrived.

Out of sheer curiosity a crowd overflowed the auditorium of the City Hall to hear them speak. There was sparse applause as Capt. Milton Humes, Mrs. Alberta Chapman Taylor, Mrs. Milton Humes, and Mrs. Ben P. Hunt escorted the speakers to the platform. The crowd was there to listen, but not to be convinced. They were not even willing to be convinced. If the speakers made one convert it would be a miracle.

Miss Anthony was presented first. She confined herself to the history of the progress of woman's suffrage in the forty years in which she had been its active promoter. She said that she knew she was speaking to a friendly audience. No county that had given as

2 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, July 27, 1892

efficient a vice-president as Mrs. P. Holmes Drake to Woman Suffrage could be unfriendly toward the movement. Reminding her audience that Mrs. Drake had been appointed to that office thirty years ago when antagonism toward any change in the political order was unpopular, she had, nevertheless, succeeded in bringing the issue squarely before Madison County and Alabama so that it had attracted such worthy supporters as Mrs. Anne Parsons, Mrs. Anna Robinson, Mrs. Alberta Chapman Taylor, Mrs. Milton Humes, Mrs. George, the Misses Clay and Mrs. Reuben Chapman. Men too had been persuaded that women would be a salutary influence in politics. Witness the representatives on the platform and those in the audience. (Many in the audience squirmed to be placed in such a collection but manfully held their peace.)

The unfriendly *Weekly Mercury* conceded: "She talks with ease and presents her facts with arguments in a plain, direct and coquetish manner."³

Probably that last adjective was an unintentional witness to Miss Anthony's femininity, a quality which she was supposed to have discarded when she espoused a political cause. The applause which she received attested to her gift as a speaker. People of Madison County could forgive almost any crime, even that of advocating woman's suffrage, if it were presented with eloquence. They were generous to any good speaker. Miss Anthony had proved herself qualified for that title. She could have the reward. She was not as fierce as she looked after all. Maybe some genteel women did go in for careers without besmirching their sex. It seemed possible now that Miss Anthony had spoken.

When Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt arose there was a distinct change in the crowd. They no longer peered with critical expressions at her. Miss Anthony had convinced them that a suffragette could actually be human. They listened with attention, with respect, with abandon, to the lady. The *Weekly Mercury's* comment on her is genuine: "Mrs. Chapman Catt is a woman of medium stature, of charming personality, of intelligent culture and eloquence who completely captured the large audience and held them charmed from the opening to the close of her remarks which lasted an hour and fifteen minutes. From her standpoint her position and argument are almost unanswerable."

High praise from a man! Notice Mr. O'Neal [of *The Weekly Mercury*] did not subscribe, however, to her standpoint. Her arguments were *almost* unanswerable; yet he did not attempt to refute them. It was a bare acknowledgment that he was almost persuaded to be a suffragist.

As she sat down the house rang with applause. Mrs. Rosalie

Chapman afterwards said, "I have never heard any speaker, not even William Jennings Bryan, with the flow of language that Mrs. Chapman Catt had. When she spoke it was like listening to silver waters purling over a rocky bed. It was incessant beauty; music in the making."

Captain Humes, then, invited enrollment in the Huntsville League for Women Suffrage. The register was on the stage so that those who enrolled could be seen by the crowd. *The Mercury* said, "A number of ladies and several gentlemen went forward and enrolled their names as members."

Ladies and *gentlemen* are significant classifications in this connection. That they were still called "ladies" and "gentlemen," though members of the Huntsville League of Women Suffrage showed extreme tolerance on Mr. O'Neal's part. It also showed his great respect for a woman who could speak "as well as a man."

After the business and congratulations were over Miss Anthony and Mrs. Catt were put into Captain Humes' carriage and driven to Abingdon Place where they were to be entertained at dinner. There was sparkling conversation in the carriage as it went out Meridian Pike. A half mile from the Court House, Tom Coleman pulled the horses to the left, carefully letting both left wheels of the carriage pass over the iron trap which sprung the iron gates open in front of the horses. As they entered the Tisho-Mingo gravel drive the wheels sprung a trap on the inside of the yard closing the gates behind them. Up the winding drive around the circle to the carriage block the horse moved in a fast trot. Tom descended from his high box and waited respectfully as Captain Humes "handed the ladies out."

The guests found themselves on a short moss-grown brick walk. Ahead of them were white stone steps flanked by two lithe bronze greyhounds. Passing up the steps they noticed a large Grecian marble urn standing before a French window. The heavy oaken doors were carved in massive patterns. The owner had provided a silver bell and a brass knocker so that a guest might always make his presence known. As the doors swung open Miss Anthony saw a life-sized statue of Venus at the Bath standing on a gray marble plinth between two doors in the rectangular, tiled reception hall.

The ladies were shown into a bedroom through the door on the right of Venus. The room was newly furnished in golden oak. Twin beds were separated by a chifferobe on which was a brass candle stick with a wax candle and brass snuffer. The wardrobe had a full length mirror in the door. There was another mirror in a floor frame and still another in the large bureau. A carved mantle reflected the flickering light of a coal fire. As Kate, the maid, removed the guests' wraps, Mrs. Humes laid her own aside.

Crossing the hall the ladies entered the front parlor where a

huge mirror reflected a cheery fire in the grate opposite it. In the bay window overlooking the front lawn stood Barthode's *Prayer*; Crawford's *Paris* looked at them from the corner between one of the French windows and the wall next to the folding doors. Through these doors they saw a twin mirror to the one in the room reflecting the fire in a grate under another white marble mantel heavily carved in grapes, and a concert baby grand piano. Over the mantle a portrait of Mrs. Ada Calhoun Lane by Winterhalter. The concert grand ebony piano stood out in bold relief against the white woodwork of the bay window. Guido Reni's *Cupid and Psyche* blocked the way to the French window on the left of the mirror. An octagonal table of miniatures, two marble topped tables, settees, lounges and comfortable old-fashioned chairs were reflected in the highly polished floors. Tiger and bear rugs slid under the guests' feet.

When all guests were assembled Tom Coleman flung open a door leading from the back parlor into the dining room and announced dinner. Plates were set for twenty-four guests. Yellow and white tulle was caught at the chandelier and ended in fluffy bows at the corners of the banquet table. The table itself was resplendent in silver, cutglass and flowers. There were cutglass goblets, cut glass wine glasses, cut glass finger bowls with a rose geranium floating in each, silver for seven courses and large damask napkins under each place card. It was a great setting for such a banquet. Over the marble mantel hung Guido Reni's *St. Michael and the Dragon*, painted by that artist. The *Crucifixion of St. Andrew* hung over the serving table; *Tasso Reading his Poems to the Grand Duke* occupied all of the wall between the door leading to the back parlor and that going into the butler's pantry. *The Dance at the Colloseum* hung over the golden oak sideboard. The wall opposite *St. Michael* was covered with oil copies of Titian's *Fruit Girl*, *Oxen Ploughing* done by Alberta Chapman from the original. All of the paintings were framed in heavy goldleaf frames.

It was a merry party. Tom served faultlessly, except for his sense of humor. He had been with Captain Humes so long that he felt like one of the family. Mrs. Humes laughingly explained to Mrs. Chapman Catt that Captain Humes dismissed and re-employed Tom regularly once a month.

"No longer than last year Captain Humes had telegraphed Tom to meet him at the two o'clock train. When Tom woke up at one it was nearly zero outside. He turned over and went back to sleep. The train came. Captain Humes looked for his carriage. It was not there. Next morning he was awakened by Tom breaking the kindling to make a fire in his grate. Rising to a sitting position in bed he blustered out, 'Tom, where were you last night? You

scoundrel! I looked everywhere for you. You weren't at the station. I had to pay the hackman Fifty Cents to bring me home!

'Well, don't you think you paid him too much, Cap'in?' was all Tom said."

A few minutes after she had finished this story, Tom almost spilled wine on the tablecloth trying to suppress his amusement over a story Mrs. Virginia Clay Clopton was telling her nearest neighbor.

After the coffee was drunk the ladies withdrew to the parlors while the gentlemen smoked and sampled some of the fine wines for which *Abingdon Place* was famous.

Music and conversation filled the rest of the evening.

The League was actively launched. Then the opposition began to ridicule the suffragists. *The Weekly Mercury* of February 6, 1895, published a satire on suffrage which illustrates the raillery with which it was treated.

Hypatia joined seven clubs. Her husband was disgusted but he could not make her unjoin, so he decided to do her work while she did his. One day the following dialogue ensued:

Chesterfield: I see that my darning club meets at three o'clock Saturday afternoon and I am down for a paper on "The True Art of Threading Needles." Monday, my Monday Club meets and I am to participate in the open debate on the question, "Shall Men Become Expert Milliners?" I am also requested to prepare a paper on chafing dish cookery for the next meeting of my Domestic Science Club.

Hypatia: Chesterfield, have the men lost what sense they had?

Chesterfield: Certainly not. They have just awakened to the fact that they must advance with the spirit of the age. Shall we sit quietly by and see the new woman?

Hypatia: Oh, Chesterfield, be sensible, I really want to ask your advice about my paper on the tariff which, I confess, I do not quite understand, and...

Chesterfield: I'm awfully sorry, Hypatia, I shall be so busy with my paper on chafing dish cookery that - Say, Hypatia, could one really learn to use one of those things without burning his fingers every time?

And so Hypatia wrote his papers and he wrote hers."

Of course, the suffragists did not like that slam on their knowledge of historical questions. They could openly refute the charge of lack of information. Any one of these ladies was as well informed as current newspapers and magazines would allow them to be and they argued most of the newspapers and periodicals were written and edited by men.

That was just the point retorted the antisuffragist, "Woman is only as intelligent as the men about her allow her to be. She is not an independent thinker. She has done nothing in the great fields of

knowledge. She has made no contribution to civilization."

"Nothing except in supplying and training the men who have made the contributions that you count," retorted Mrs. Alberta C. Taylor. "Her mind is as good when cultivated as any man's. Of course, there are many foolish women. But Lord! Aren't there thousands of foolish men to every wise one?" And her red eyes snapped as her throaty laugh mocked her antagonist.

As early as 1894 she had written to *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat* asking if the editor favored women's suffrage. They replied, "Yes, for the West. Not for the South." They gave as a reason for this sectional answer that the XV Amendment had caused a great deal of trouble in the South. They felt that if Negro women were enfranchised the troubles would be doubled.⁵

On March 28, 1894, Mrs. Taylor replied: "Negro women can do no more harm than Negro men. If anyone thinks that being classed with minors, idiots, and Chinamen makes one more respectable or womanly, one is welcome to the glory of the classification."⁶

The editors "regret that Mrs. Taylor did not use her financial and social influence to emancipate her Southern sisters while she lived among them."

By December 1896, three Clays had become suffragists. At that time a bill before the State Legislature proposed making women eligible for the office of county superintendent of schools. *The Mercury* was leading the fight against it; *The Democrat*, for it. Mr. Ben P. Hunt and Mr. Oscar Hundley were in the State Legislature and Senate at this time.

In the spirit of raillery, *The Democrat* approached Mr. Hunt for a statement as to his position on this issue. They report:

"Mr. Hunt says he favors women practising law in the abstract. We do not know what part of the State the abstract is, but are grateful for that evidence of favor for our sex.

"Jocquin Miller said he liked Carlyle, at least that part of him that he did not understand, and that is just how we feel in regard to Mr. Hunt in his legislative career. He favors women as county superintendents of education and will cast his vote to that effect in January."⁷

The Mercury said editorially, "We have enough political wars now without trying a double header of this fashion. We sincerely trust our Representatives will see to it that Madison County is excluded from the operation of this bill."⁸ Despite this hope the bill

5 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, February 28, 1894

6 *Ibid*, March 28, 1894

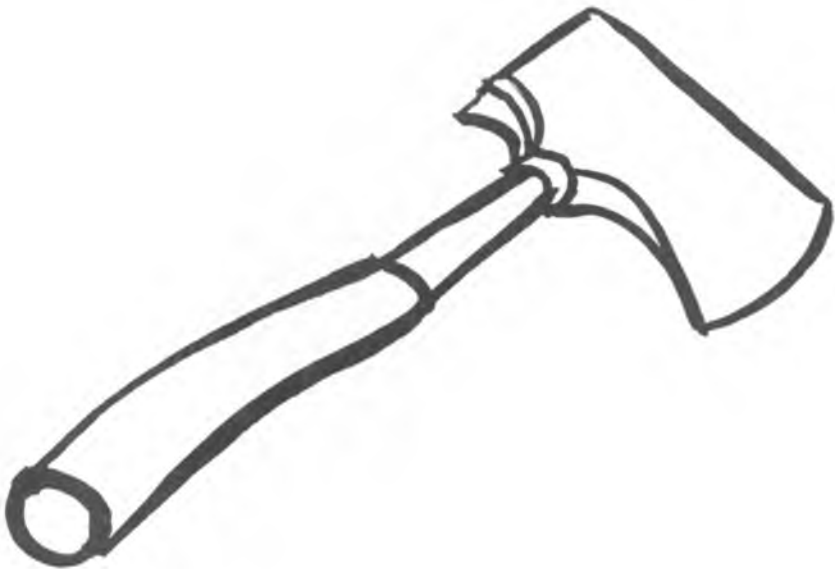
7 *Ibid*, December 24, 1896

8 *The Weekly Mercury*, January 26, 1897

passed by a vote of eighteen to eight.⁹ *The Mercury*, then, decided that if women were capable of being administrators of education they were capable of serving on juries. "They should not make a living - it is polluting."¹⁰

The Independent had a column devoted to Woman Suffrage Notes as early as 1890. It gave the record of women of all parts of the country who were giving their lives to the work of making the movement popular among women and men throughout the country.¹¹

Women's work in the city had always been efficient. They had served and continued to serve the public. Their good records helped to bring new members into the league so that by the end of the century they were a strong organization. Mrs. Alice Baldrige developed into one of the best women speakers in the State. She was one of the women chosen by the State organization to present a plea for national enfranchisement of women at Washington. She was a beautiful woman with a gifted mind which she kept ever active. She became president of the League after the close of this decade and continued to direct women's minds toward public service,¹² until she left Huntsville to practice law in New York City.



9 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, January 27, 1897

10 *The Weekly Mercury*, May 26, 1897

11 *The Huntsville Weekly Independent*, May 30, 1890

12 Mrs. Baldrige was one of the first women to serve on the board in Huntsville. Mrs. Taylor's daughter also served

Chapter 4

Newspapers

The Huntsville Weekly Democrat was established in 1829. In 1856 Mr. John Withers Clay became editor. When Alabama seceded from the Union its name was changed to *The Confederate*. At the close of the War it became again *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*. It continued under that title until 1919. Its composition was equivalent in a small way to *The Literary Digest* of today. It had summaries of current news, poems, continued stories, essays, directions for gardening with tables of the proper time to plant, the length of time each plant took to mature; home news on dressmaking, dyeing, cleaning, fashions, a column on etiquette, local news, curious facts, and editorials. It was the best paper for society news and general information. Its motto was "The People Must Be Heard And Their Rights Vindicated."

It was published on Wednesday of each week. After Mr. Clay's stroke Misses Jennie and Susanna published it. The type was hand-set. The frames were really too heavy for Miss Susanna, who was the printers' devil, but she managed to have them ready on time for the *Mercury Press*, where the paper was published after the *Democrat's* press wore out.

Everyone wanted the paper, but collections were slow. *The Democrat* always published Alabama Paper Laws. They seemed rather favorable to the publisher. They were:

1. Anyone who takes paper regularly from the Postoffice, whether directed to his name or another, or whether he had subscribed or not, is responsible for the payment.
2. If a person orders his newspaper discontinued, he must pay all arrears, or the publisher will continue to send it until payment is made and collect the whole amount, whether the paper is taken from the office or not.
3. The Courts have decided that refusing to take the paper or periodical from the Postoffice or removing, or leaving them uncalled for is prima facie evidence of international

fraud.

Those laws gave the publisher every opportunity to force his news on the public. Yet, *The Weekly Tribune* and *The Democrat* constantly complained about the difficulties of collecting subscriptions. Miss Jennie Clay had an exquisite sense of humor, and the following parody on *The Old Oaken Bucket*, though masked "Exchange," is very probably hers:

THE OLD SILVER DOLLAR

How dear to our hearts is the old silver dollar
When some kind subscriber presents it to view;
The liberty bust without necktie or collar,
And all the strange things that to us seem so new;
The wide spreading eagle, the arrows below it
The Stars and words with the strange things they tell;
The coin of our fathers we're glad that we know it,
For sometime or other 'twill come in right well,
The spread eagle dollar, the old silver dollar,
That mighty dollar, we all love so well.¹

When *The Mercury* claimed the largest circulation of any daily in North Alabama, excepting *The Birmingham Age-Herald*,² *The Democrat* says, "A small town's circulation is unknown. There may be a hundred readers to every copy. A subscriber reads his paper and passes it on to his neighbors, as if the paper needed only one subscription." That was true. *The Democrat*, nevertheless, had a large out-of-town circulation. Old Huntsvillians who moved away almost invariably subscribed to it. The county people preferred it. Persons going away for protracted visits ordered it.

It was the second oldest paper in the State.³ Mr. Clay never missed an opportunity to defend this title either. In 1890 when *The Mercury* claimed an unbroken existence since 1816, Mr. Clay said, "The Mercury printing material was purchased from Mr. Sloss - he informs us that he did not sell the name *Advocate* nor the books of that paper to Mr. O'Neal; and even if he did so, Mr. Sloss did not claim *The Advocate* the identical descendent of the *Madison Gazette* nor did Mr. W. B. Figures. Mr. Charles P. Lane also bought printing material from Major J. H. Sloss's *New Advocate*. *The Mercury* said the plant of that paper was used to

1 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, November 24, 1897

2 *The Weekly Mercury*, January 9, 1895

3 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, March 26, 1890. In April, 1895 *The Weekly Mercury* said it was established in 1885

establish *The New South*. So Mr. Lane has as much right to claim a lineal descendant of the old *Gazette* as *The Mercury* . "

Such was the importance of age in 1890. Perhaps Mr. O'Neal thought that a change of name made no difference in the case of *The Democrat* and, therefore, it should make no difference in the life of *The Mercury*. No Clay would assent to such a fallacy, however. *The Democrat's* preservation in honor was the core of their working thought. They proved their devotion to it by giving their talents to it in a sort of ritualistic sacrifice.

The Mercury was, as you have seen, aggressive. It was the vortex of many controversies during this period. Mr. R. E. O'Neal was a tall, thin gentleman with large gray-blue eyes, dark hair and mustache, who was interested in giving the public full information on current topics. His paper emphasized local, state, and national politics. He kept the people fully informed on the issues. His opponents were Mr. Charles P. Lane of *The Evening Tribune*⁴ and Mr. Frank Coleman of *The Argus*.

The Mercury was the official organ of the city during one of its severest political fights. Its editorials against *The Argus* brought on a duel between the editors. Mr. O'Neal notified Mr. Coleman that he would shoot on sight. Their friends kept them apart for a while, but finally they met on Eustis Street by the Southern Building and Loan Association. At 9:00 a. m., October 21, 1895, several shots were exchanged but no one was injured.⁵

Mr. O'Neal was an advocate of good state roads and public schools. He thought that county roads were bad because persons owning large tracts of land lived in town. They had good roads; those living in the country did not need them as they had always been used to bad ones. He opposed state appropriations for normal schools. They were for those who could afford to send their children off. Small towns needed larger state appropriations for their schools so they could be prepared to make good citizens. He opposed Women's Suffrage on the ground that it would require women to "elbow the masses, chew, and take a drink with the boys."⁶ If that be prophesy, he was accurate.

At the opening of the decade, Huntsville's semi weekly *Independent* was edited by Mr. E. B. Miller and Mr. Charles P. Lane. When Mr. Miller and his young wife died of pneumonia within a few hours of each other, the plant of *The Independent Publishing Company* was sold, to satisfy a Thirteen Hundred Dollar mortgage, for Six Hundred Dollars to Mr. Frank Coleman, brother

4 For a time Mr. Lane was editor of *The Huntsville Independent* and *The Weekly Mercury*

5 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, October 23, 1895

6 *The Weekly Mercury*, January 30, 1895

of Mr. Daniel Coleman. He was given charge April 12, 1892. He changed the paper's name to *The Argus*. Under his management it published more foreign news than any other Huntsville paper.

International and national politics occupied most of the pages of *The Argus* unless some controversy like the privilege tax or the charter fight was heating city minds. Then as we have seen, he attacked what he considered its instigator unguardedly and indiscriminately. In 1892 he said that tariff was the only issue between Democrats and Republicans.⁷ He was for sound money in the presidential campaign of 1896. In September of that year he sold the paper to Mr. W. S. Wells.⁸ It then became a Republican organ edited until November 6, 1896, by Mr. Jere Murphy.⁹ Mr. Coleman was under very severe criticism for selling when he did. His party said that he had sold out to the enemy at the very time when they should not have had an organ in northern Alabama. Mr. Jere Murphy was a lawyer by profession, an Episcopalian, an active politician, and a good business man. He was over six feet with a thin, long nose, green-blue eyes, and brown hair. The Republicans considered themselves lucky. In one of its issues as a Republican recruit it says, "Mayor Hutchens and Mr. W. S. Wells spoke to one hundred and twenty-five men at Gurley. True, some of them were Democrats. They sit in darkness and we bring them light."¹⁰ "The Republicans are gaining in North Alabama every day ... Oscar R. Hundley, D. D. Shelby, W. I. Wellman, W. S. Wells... The Republican Party is the progressive business party of this country and its policies must prevail. The reason the Democrats are so sore over Mr. Hundley's leaving them is they envy us a shining light."¹¹

After November 5, 1896, *The Argus* seems to have taken a holiday for the rest of the year. Of course, neither it nor the ones who had so recently joined the Republican ranks were popular with the Democratic papers. They were treated with contumacy. It was one of the first exercises of the right of a person to change his mind if reason justified him. If a child were born into a Republican family it was a misfortune but he was at least honest. To be born a Democrat and become a Republican was treachery. It was almost as disgraceful as being divorced in the nineties. The person was not acknowledged in his family. He was mentioned with apology and omitted from the family will. So, *The Argus* was an

7 *The Argus*, May 12, 1892. For a few issues (*The Democrat*, October 11, 1899) in 1899 it became *The Republican*, edited by C. F. Conway.

8 *The Weekly Tribune*, September 30, 1896

9 *Ibid*, October 7, 1896

10 *The Argus*, October 22, 1896

11 *Ibid*, October 8, 1896

outcast.

The men who had edited it were earnest. E. B. Miller was young and gifted. The community regretted his untimely end. Mr. Coleman was small, blonde, witty and cultured. He had an international vision. His columns were a reflection of his interests. He was fearless, vitrolic in attack, and uncompromising until in September, 1896. Then he sold out to the Republicans. That was a heinous offence, a thing not looked for in a gentleman. He had bitterly attacked Mr. O'Neal and the accident of his escape seemed to presage a charmed end. The Democrats thought that the witches had caught him but they did not annihilate him.

The Evening Tribune and *Weekly Tribune* were edited by Mr. Charles P. Lane. He was short and rotund, had large, dark brown eyes, high cheek bones, large Roman nose, olive skin and black hair. His editorials were usually humorous. He is said to have written them rapidly but spelled them atrociously. When his printer called his attention to a misspelled word he would say, "Well, I can't write and spell, too." He was a reformer by nature and practice. Whatever he found wrong with his neighbors he published immediately. His ridicule brought him political enemies galore. During Governor Oates' race for that office he sued Mr. Lane for libel. During the privilege tax fight he was fired as has been stated and brought to trial in the Mayor's Court. He was a bitter fighter but a genial friend.

Both he and Mr. O'Neal were devoted husbands and fathers of large families. They ridiculed each other but they seemed to take it in good spirit. One of Mr. Lane's antipathies was for Oscar Hundley. After Mr. Hundley's change of parties he was awarded a foreign appointment. Mr. Lane then said editorially, "For once we are for Oscar. We hear he has a foreign appointment. We're glad, and the foreigner it is the better we'll like it."

Huntsville owes much to the energy and fearlessness of her editors. They have been one of the greatest factors in her industrial development. The fact that they did change politics shows that they were open to the conviction of a good speaker. They liked excitement, but that is the psychological basis on which they made their greatest sales. They were good friends to Huntsville.

Ed: "The Democrat" referred to was actually *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, and "The Mercury" was *The Weekly Mercury*. They have been shortened to "Democrat" and "Mercury" in this text for simplicity's sake.



Church of the Nativity

Chapter 5

Personalities

Dr. John Monro Banister

Among the personalities of Huntsville, poet Dr. John Monro Banister held a distinguished post. His tall, thin, straight body had several inches added to it by a stove-pipe hat which he always wore on the streets. He was so straight that everyone used him as an example in training children to be erect. He often said that he got this carriage from having to carry books and baskets on his head when he was young and being made to hold a match between his shoulder blades. He prided himself on being a descendant of Pocahontas and Sir John Rolfe. His cheek bones suggested Indian ancestry but his white hair and blue eyes came from some other strain. His eyes were small, round and frank – quite the kind of eyes to inspire confidence and to guarantee keen judgment.*

He was born at "Battersea," the residence of his grandfather, John Banister, near Petersburg, Virginia, March 14, 1818. He was educated for the bar but on the death of a sister, to whom he was deeply attached, he turned to the Church. He was ordained at Old Christ Church, Alexandria, Virginia, July 13, 1846, by Bishop Meade. After serving four years at Alexandria he was called to Greensboro, Alabama. On February 1, 1848, he was married to Mary Louise Broadnax at her father's estate in Dinwiddie County, Virginia. It was a fortunate event for both of them. Her talent for music was given devotedly to the service of the Church, and the enjoyment of her home. They had a large family of nine children.

They moved from Greensboro to Huntsville in 1860. There were eighty-four communicants in the Church of the Nativity when Dr. Banister became rector. When he celebrated the anniversary of his half century in the ministry on July 13, 1896, there were two hundred and eighty-four. That represented constant service and a noble example on his part. The Episcopal Church was regarded by his townsmen as "cold" to the lower classes. It was called the "society Church." If any converts were made from other churches they were stamped as "climbers." They were supposed to be preparing a place in "society" for their children and their children's children. Dr. Banister's dignity stood between him and many people of the lower classes. Not that he was unfriendly to

* Dr. Banister was the author's godfather.

them. He was not. Their troubles brought him to them as quickly as did the troubles of the rich. He was reserved, but he was respected.

In the thirty-six years that he had served in Huntsville he had baptised five hundred and two persons and presented for confirmation five hundred and twenty-two. Two hundred and eighty-one moved away or died during that time.

The duties of his office required him to make parochial calls to each member of the congregation twice a year.

His salary was small, about Six Hundred Dollars a year. Part of that was paid in produce. He kept a large sorrel horse which he drove to a buggy. Hay, corn, and oats were accepted from farmers who had no money in payment of their Church assessment. Gifts of fruits and vegetables also supplemented the salary.

He was a devoted father. His children are a monument to him and Mrs. Banister. They entered the religious and civic life of the community as youths with the right ideals of responsibility to society, and have given freely of their talents.

The devotion of the people of Huntsville to Dr. Banister was shown in the way they alluded to him. He was always "dear Doctor Banister." No civic work could proceed without his advice and approval.

Miss Howard Weeden

A person all Huntsville honored was Miss Howard Weeden, a shy little old maid who looked too frail for this world and who was far too impractical to realize a fortune from the talents which were hers. There was nothing thrilling about her life. She was born in Huntsville, Alabama, of an aristocratic family which lost everything but a name and a home during the Civil War. Miss Howard had a lovely voice which she cultivated until she found she would have to be a slave to it if she were ever to make a living by it. The living she had to have, so she turned her attention to painting. After a few months' work in Julian's studio in New Orleans she taught herself.

Her greatest gift was interpreting the humor and pathos in the every day lives of the old-time darkey through the medium of her brush and pen. Her inspiration was the stories of *Uncle Remus*. After reading them for the hundredth time she began thinking of the service Joel Chandler Harris rendered the South in preserving in its quaint vernacular the folk tales of the old Negro. She thought with regret of the rapidly thinning ranks of that old stock. "Why," thought she, "has no one preserved them in literature?" From that time to the end of her life she sought and pictured the best

types she could find of the old generation of Negro.

Her methods of collecting them were simple. At first, her subjects were the old cooks, mammies, coachmen, and gardeners of the neighborhood. She knew all of them personally and they were proud to have her paint them. While she painted, she encouraged conversation about their early lives and collected incidents which she used later in poems. When these models were exhausted she engaged old Negroes who came to sell vegetables or country produce. From them she got love, superstitions, and unusual expressions of the plantations. Every Saturday found her on the Square where no white person went who was not absolutely compelled to go on that day. It was Negro day. All of the Negroes from the county were in town and they held open reception in undisturbed groups on the Square. Miss Howard loitered around the stores where these meetings were taking place, making notes of whole conversations and studying the difference in the old and young in speech, manners, and dress.

Sometimes, after selecting models, she found them unwilling to sit. Then she resorted to stratagem as with one patriarch who possessed a grizzled mule. When asked if he would sit for his portrait, the old Negro replied, "No'm. I'se gotten dis fur in life dou't no sich foolishness, an' I spects I ken trabel de res' uv de road widout it."

"You have a nice mule," said Miss Howard. "I would like to paint him. Can't you drive him around to the hitching post at the side gate of the Episcopal Church and let me sketch him?"

"Yes um. I'se no objections ter dat."

Under the shadow of the church, they discussed the good and badpoints of that mule and Miss Howard came off with a picture of the mule, the cart, the driver, and this:

AT EASE

"I tried to live in town but, oh!
De town was swif' and I was slow,
So back I come to de cotton rows
An' one old mule I'm sure I knows.

He don't spect no more of me
Thank God, den I expects of he,
An' I don't spect no more of he
Dan likewise he expects of me.

So I don't feel ashames no more
Of bein' black an' mean an' slow,
Because you see dis ole mule Jeff
Knows zactly how it is hisself!"

Miss Weeden had not thought of publishing her heads and poems until it was suggested by Mr. William O. Allison who came to Huntsville in the employ of the Dallas Manufacturing Company. Hearing of Miss Howard's paintings, he went to see them. She showed him her whole collection: oils, water colors, pastels, and illuminated poems. Of the latter she was very proud. One of them was a poem of Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes.¹ She had sent it to him as a birthday present August 13, 1894, and he admired her work. Miss Howard valued his criticism to the extent of deciding to make illumination a specialty.

As soon as Mr. Allison saw the Negro heads he said, "Are these insured?"

"Oh, no," said Miss Howard.

"You should not only insure them, you should copyright them," said Mr. Allison. "If you will permit me, I shall consult a publisher for you."

"Gladly," replied Miss Howard.

The result was the publication of four volumes: *Shadows on the Wall*, *Bandanna Ballads*, *Songs of the Old South*, and *Old Voices*. They contain Negro heads, a few odd sketches of objects familiar to the people of the South, and original poems. The heads are excellent likenesses of the models. The originals are done in water colors. Competent critics pronounce them as beautiful in technique as any water colors one sees in the great art galleries. Whatever the technique, they express joviality, cheerfulness, wistfulness, tenderness, and a resignation to life's harshness - all characteristic expressions of the old Negro. Miss Howard has preserved for posterity the every-day qualities, the every-day clothes of the old Negro. Her interpretative brush has gone back to the lowly individual's exterior and shown his soul.

Most of the poems complete the life touch by adding speech. The dialect is not always good, nor the meter correct, but the sentiment is as natural as life. The poems give the reminiscences of the old and the romance of the young with equal appreciation. Tears and laughter come with them and marvel at their philosophy. They are examples for the wisest. The work is such that we never dream for a moment that there is a white person about. Mr. Sydney Homer set several of these poems to music. *The Banjo Song* is genuine sentiment, and the accompaniment is a charming incitation of the darkey's instrument, but what could be more "nigger-like"*

1 Holmes' *Guardian Angels*. *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, August 8, 1894. [Ed: At the time this was written, terms such as "darkey" and "nigger" were not considered derogatory as they came to be at a much later period.]

than the braggadocio of the speaker in the monologue,

"Who, me? In love an' wid Lizette?
You better believe I ain't;
No sassy gal like dat could give
Dis nigger heart complaint.
If God don't love her no more den I
Den all I got to say
Is, dat her soul's in danger sho'
An' she had better pray!

It's her dat is in love wid me,
An' I jes' laughs an' tell her,
De fruit dat drops d'out being shook
Is sho' to be too meller!

But all de same you talks too much
To suit me 'bout Lizette;
Some gen'man's nigger gwine get hurt
About dat same gal yet!"

The poem, like all others, had its history. Lizette was a maid of Captain Milton Humes. Jim, a darkey on the place, and Dave, a town Negro, were in love with her. She was a coquette. Jim was rather uneasy, as Dave could bring her delicacies that Abingdon Place did not produce. But Jim was a good gambler. He was not going to let that "town nigger walk away wid his gal."

Eighteen of the poems are not in dialect. They show none of the humor which is usually present in the others. Whether Miss Howard intended this difference to be a contrast between the white and black races' viewpoint of life, it is impossible to assert, but there is rather a melancholy note in each of them which is not in the least accord with the author's sunny nature. We find in them, however, poetic inspiration, a simple beauty and a subtle charm, witness:

AN OLD GARDEN

I wonder if your memory holds
A garden old like mine -
Within its midst a summer house
As lovely as a shrine.

Around *mine* bloomed a world of flowers
That scented every breeze;
And all life's noises have not drowned
The murmur of its bees.

And where the roses thickest grew
And bloom the deepest red,
A group of lovely headstones marked
Some long forgotten Dead.

And there we children lingered on
And mused upon each grave,
And all the passion for the Past
A happy Present gave.

And now another Past has crept
About the old and spread -
Till nothing but a verse will bloom
In that old garden dead.²

Changing manners and innovations are shown in:

ME AND MAMMY

Me and Mammy know a child
About my age and size
Who, Mammy says, won't go to Heaven
'Cause she's so grown and wise.

She answers "Ycs" and "No" just so
When grown folks speak to her
And laughs at Mammy and at me
When I say "No'am" and "Sir."

And Mammy says the reason why
This child's in such a plight
Is 'cause she's had no Mammy dear,
To raise her sweet and right.

To stand between her and the world
With all its old sad noise
And give her baby heart a chance
To keep its baby joys.

Then Mammy draws me close to her
And says, "The Lord be praised,
Here's what I calls a decent child
'Cose hit's been Mammy raised!"³

2 *Old Voices*, Doubleday, Page and Company

3 *Ibid.* Published in September, 1904 but written in the 1890's

The "me" in this poem was Mary Turner Clanton, a beautiful, little dark haired, grey eyed lass; the "child" was Alberta Chapman Taylor, a brown eyed blonde who had been reared in Denver away from the influence of Southern manners; "Mammy" was Aunt Crece, Mary Turner's mammy.

Aunt Crece always wore a white bandanna, a white kerchief and a white apron over a tight-fitting calico dress. She was very particular about Mary Turner's associates. She was genuinely grieved over Alberta's "sassy ways." Alberta was really the first up-to-date child Aunt Crece had met. She hated to see so lovely a child spoiled by "bad" manners. Her attitude amused Miss Howard. She would take occasion to call Aunt Crece aside and condole with her over this "evil" influence and then egg Alberta on to worse exhibitions of "unmannerliness" to see Aunt Crece's expression and hear her reproachful exclamations. Her portrait appears twice in *Bandanna Ballads*.⁴

It was the power of enhancing the commonplace with beautiful thoughts that kept Miss Howard young. Her struggle against poverty could not kill her spirit as she found the keynote to happiness in doing everything she could to bring happiness to others. She began with her family. One of her greatest loves was that which she held for her sister, Miss Kate, who was a good deal older than Miss Howard.

They lived together in the old Weeden home on the corner of Gates and Green Streets. There they kept open house. It was a convenient place to drop in, and a delightful place to remain, as both Miss Kate and Miss Howard were excellent conversationalists so callers were frequent.

The parlor and dining room walls were literally covered with Miss Howard's paintings. Miss Kate liked to show the two hundred and eight species of flowers from Monte Sano that Miss Howard had painted one spring. If she lived today the *National Geographic* might have employed her. She was so retiring that when the Nashville centennial asked for her photograph to exhibit with her works in the Southern Building in 1898, she sent a picture of the house, a good specimen of Southern architecture but not good enough to be a substitute for that little wren of a woman, Miss Howard. It had to serve, however.

Shadows on the Wall was published by D. Appleton and Company, Boston. It was hardly off the press when the building burned, destroying the plates and some of the paintings. It was a financial loss of about One Thousand Dollars to Miss Howard - distressing, but unavoidable. She set to work immediately to reimburse herself.

4 As the speaker in *Beaten Biscuits*, and as "Mammy" in *Mother and Mammy*.

Bandanna Ballads was prepared for press in 1898 and 1899 but it was not published until November 29, 1899.⁵ Other materials which she prepared in those years were not published until 1904.

The originals of many of the old Negro heads were given as tokens of love by Miss Howard to her friends. Among those who received them were Miss Jane White (*The Old Boatman*); Lizette and the gardener of the *Devil's Garden* to Mrs. Milton Humes. Orders for heads were also filled for friends who wanted to send copies of the heads to out-of-town friends.⁶

Richard W. Walker

Early in 1891 an honor came to one of those silent souls whose knowledge speaks so loudly for them that it raises them above the common head and precipitates them into the limelight. There was a movement among lawyers of the state to increase the number of associate Justices on the Supreme Court. The Bar of Huntsville immediately put forward the name of Richard W. Walker, whose quiet work and scholarly attainments fitted him for the office. A petition was sent to Governor Jones and on February 11, 1891, the appointment came. Milton Humes' name had been suggested, too, and there was a rumour that Judge R. C. Brickell would also seek the appointment. His attitude toward the office made the choice of Mr. Walker a greater honor, for Judge Brickell had been on the Supreme bench. He was the most eminent judge in Alabama, having never had an opinion of his reversed by a higher court.

The message of the appointment reached Huntsville February 23rd. Immediately the Bar called a public meeting in the Circuit Court room to draw up a resolution on the honor that had come to Huntsville. Judge William Richardson acted as chairman of the meeting; Mr. R. E. Spragins, secretary; and on a motion from the floor, Messrs. D. D. Shelby, Daniel Coleman, John H. Sheffey, Jere Murphy, and W. E. Pike were appointed to draft resolutions. They were returned in a few minutes and Mr. Shelby reported them as follows:

Resolved: That the appointment of Richard W. Walker to the position of Associate Justice of the Supreme Court is exceedingly gratifying to the Bar of Huntsville and to the people of Madison County.

2. That we have long recognized the fitness of Mr.

5 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, November 29, 1899

6 *Ibid*, December 4, 1895

Walker for this high position.

3. We recognize in Mr. Walker the highest judicial talent, and believe him peculiarly fitted to fill the position to which he is appointed; and we congratulate the Governor that he has served the State well in placing Mr. Walker in a position where he will be both useful and distinguished.

The resolutions were unanimously adopted. Upon motion, a committee consisting of Judge H. C. Speake, General S. H. Moore, Dr. A. R. Erskine, Colonel R. B. Rhett, and Mr. E. D. Mastin, were appointed to go after Mr. Walker and bring him to the meeting.

He was brought. His giant body was capped with a massive head on which grew thin dark hair. He spoke deliberately and was visibly affected by the great honor that had come to him. He would fulfill the duties of the office with the greatest care. His intellect was trained for the work in hand even though he was only thirty-four. He was a man of simple habits. He never took a case unless he looked up every case like it of which there was a record. His memory was precise. He could cite volumes and page numbers as if it were an ordinary thing to do. When the day's work was over he went home to his wife. He was a prodigious reader. His wife frequently said that she could hardly pull him away from books long enough to give him his meals. Of course, he was not the type to like society. Mrs. Walker was very pretty and liked society, and so she pulled him out occasionally. Although they had no children they were a very happy couple.

Their home on McClung Street was not built until later. In 1891 they lived at his father's home: an interesting old brick house overhanging a sunken garden that was bordered with bricks and laid out in patterns like a patchwork quilt. There he had a fine library and charming surroundings. His mother, his aunt (Mrs. Peter M. Dox), and Mrs. Margaret Bolling and her son, Walker, lived there too. They were a devoted family - and so alive. They kept ahead of the times and engaged in social life so that their home was a mecca for the intellectually weary. They could not be jaded long in such an atmosphere.

From such a home he came ready to move in the highest circles of culture and to add to that society the best that he had found in his rambles with great men and simple, homely philosophies. *The Weekly Mercury*, which first suggested him for the associate Justiceship, said: "He is a man of pure character and high order of intelligence and manly purpose."⁷ It was a good summary of a man who loved simplicity and worked steadily to make life more

orderly and worthwhile for the masses.

His elevation had been justified. His opinions were regarded by lawyers of the State as just and discriminating.

The Clays

The Clays were spoken of collectively, as one would speak of a well known firm. They answered that classification in every respect. They were well known, and they cooperated as successful business partners do. Mr. J. Withers Clay was editor of *The Weekly Democrat*. He was assisted, and finally succeeded in that work, by Misses Susanna W. and Virginia C. Clay. They were called familiarly Sue and Jennie by their friends. Both were tall, slim figures. Miss Susanna had very dark brown eyes and black hair. Miss Jennie had greenish-blue eyes and light brown hair. Both had extremely high foreheads. Their talents were diverse and they used them freely in public service.

Mrs. Clay was a small brunette who possessed great executive ability. She had the capacity to turn every bit of knowledge to account without leaving home. She was a good musician, had a great store of literary knowledge, spoke French fluently, was versed in polite manners and Old World etiquette, was a competent and successful teacher, and the mother of six children.

Sharply at three o'clock carriages drew up to the stone block in front of the Clay residence on Maiden's Lane.⁸ Petite riders descended and went through the white picket gate up the moss-covered brick walk to the white stone steps of the colonial brick house. The doors were wide open. Each child passed down the receiving line to the dining room at the back of the hall, passed the circular mahogany table through a low door on the right into the back parlor. They seated themselves primly in chairs which were arranged against the walls of the two parlors.

When the last child had arrived, Miss Mary Clay entered the front parlor and every child stood as she entered. Blowing a whistle she said, "Partners for the grand march." Bold little boys rushed to their favorite girls; timid ones hung back stepping painfully on their own toes and twisting their fingers almost off in an effort to keep themselves from exiting precipitantly through the rear door. If they postponed their own choices too long Miss Mary came to their assistance. Taking one by the hand she led him encouragingly to some young wallflower. There he bowed stiffly,

8 Eustis Street is often referred to as "Maiden Lane" because of the many young ladies who used this street to walk to their nearby schools.

saying apologetically, "Miss Blanche, may I have the pleasure of this march with you?" Blanche suffered herself to be led into the waiting line. "Follow your leader," came sharply from Miss Clay.

The leaders bowed to each other as Miss Elodie Clay struck the opening chord of the grand march. If some boy failed to place his hand on the correct spot of his anatomy, the whistle was blown, the chord was struck again. Miss Mary looked intently at the offended. Failing the second time, he was ordered to observe the leader. The chord was struck. The leader made his best bow, the pupil imitating. The lesson was repeated several times, then the march began.

Passing the length and breadth of the room, sticking squarely to the corners pivoting until the outside partner was around, down the center of the room, alternate couples to right and left, down the center in fours, alternate fours to right and left, fours pivot on corners meet in center around in a wheel; outside couples join hands, circle center, wheel. Around the room in semi circle, wheels fall in. Divide in squares. Wheels in fours in each corner of the room. Follow leaders to center. Down center in couples. Great "X" in center of room. Follow leaders to middle of room. Down middle in couples. Around room back to seats. Each girl seated, boy bowing before her saying, "Thank you for the pleasure of this dance."

After a few minutes conversation the whistle was blown and Miss Mary said, "Partners for a polka." The same little boys and the same little wall flowers had to be matched again. The unobservant had to be shown how to bow again. Then the timid one was taken by each hand and Miss Mary demonstrated the steps to count. While she had the fledgling in tow, Miss Jennie or Susanna Clay was watching the steps of the dancers.

"Robert holds Mary Turner too closely. Where is his handkerchief? Doesn't he know that his perspiring hands will ruin her frock? A gentleman must never risk ruining a lady's costume. No handkerchief!? Take this napkin.

"Addison is bouncing Louise. No gentleman should do that. Make your steps smooth. David dances divinely. Copy him.

"Humes, listen to the music. You are not keeping time. Annie, you left out a beat. Get the rhythm."

The whistle. Each boy leads his lady to a chair, bows as she sits, saying, "Thank you for the pleasure of this dance."

The waltz, the mazurka, square dances, the minuet, and the Virginia reel, follow. Then the grand march and each couple saying to Mrs. Clay, Misses Susanna, Mary, Virginia and Elodie, "I have had such an enjoyable evening," as they pass out the door to their carriages.

The whole line of little girls in white dresses and broad-ribbon, huge bowed sashes, long curls tied with wide ribbons or braids

ornamented at the top of the head or end of braids with ribbon bows, feet clad in colored hose and colored slippers was gay and charming.

These classes were held every Tuesday and Saturday afternoon for children, and every Monday, Wednesday and Friday evenings from seven-thirty to nine-thirty o'clock for older people. They supplied pleasure and instruction in manners and social poise which served the students in many places in future life.

The Misses Clay were also responsible for many other forms of social amusement. Miss Elodie, the youngest of the sisters, was a gifted composer, pianist, soprano soloist, and dancer. She turned this energy toward directing "dramatics." She frequently drilled large casts for amateur performances at the Opera House or for private performances on someone's lawn.

An example of these entertainments was "Meeting of the Nations," a spectacular performance which Misses Mary and Elodie Clay gave January 1, 1890, at the Opera House. Each nation was represented by "natives" in costume who sang, danced, and played the most characteristic numbers of their country. Miss Mary directed the figures which Miss Elodie had invented while Miss Elodie trained the soloists, choruses, and musicians. Mothers took a great pride in providing exact and handsome costumes for each participant. Each nation was accompanied by its flags. The finale was a great ballroom scene in which each nation gave its national dance and all joined in singing *The Star Spangled Banner* around a beautiful *Columbia*.⁹

In June, 1891, Miss Mary L. Clay's classes gave *The Village Merry-makers* to a packed house.¹⁰ There was a Cupid's minuet and song done by wee tots in gauze wings, silver slippers and bows with quivers filled with silver arrows. This was followed by the Grand Micado's Jester and ten little Japs, and a Japanese solo by Nina Cooper, aged five.

The rosebud cotillion was put on by a group of small children in rosebud costumes. Ten little girls with tambourines danced the Esmeralda and sixteen couples then gave the German Harouters. Swedes in gay peasant's costumes with twinkling bells did a Swedish village dance. Sixteen girls in rose dresses with blue scarfs and silver spears and shields presented an Amazon drill. Mae Wise and Otey Echols, aged four, danced and sang to the delight of the audience. Miss Jane Humes played the overture and German dances; Miss Elodie Clay, other dances; and Mr. Herbert Langworthy furnished the music for the Amazon drill. They cleared One Hundred Twenty Five Dollars.

9 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, January 2, 1890

10 *The Weekly Mercury*, June 24, 1891

On January 2, 1892, Miss Mary L. Clay gave a favor German* to her Variety and German class. The favors were fancy blotters, shaving cases, blow pipes, sachets, gilded arrows, tiny parasols, and roses. As all of these favors were home-made they spoke for the industry and ingenuity of the Clays in practical designing; not that the aforementioned figures and dramatics were not practical to them also. The receivers of these favors were Belle Farris, Lila Warwick, Helen and Alice Borton, Lucy Turner, Annie Curry, Amelia Karthaus, Lula Baker, and Mrs. Borton; Messrs. Louis and Berry Campbell, Willie Conway, Tom P. Hay, Henry Certain, Sam Adler, Walter Darwin, Shelby Pleasants, Willis and Arthur Daniels, and Doctor Perkins."

Variety German, Virginia reel, and refreshments were enjoyed until 12:30 a.m. As that was thirty minutes past the regular quitting hour of any of the Clay's entertainments this must have been an enjoyed and gala occasion.

Miss Elodie Clay gave one of her parlor concerts in February, 1892, at which "Count Pompolino" appeared in songs, dances and recitations. As this marionette became quite a popular figure and earned many pennies for local churches by performing at later dates, it is as well for his vocalizers to be introduced here. They were Miss Virginia C. Clay and her brother, William Lewis Clay.

On August 10, 1894, Miss Mary L. Clay's classes gave a fancy dress ball on Monte Sano. On that occasion the guests of the Monte Sano Hotel were the audience in a beautiful scene. Notable features of this dance were "The Rye," danced by Kate McCalley, aged five years; "La Cachucha" danced by Louise Greet, Theresa Goldsmith, Ellelee Chapman, and Mary Turner Clanton, in Spanish costumes with tambourines and castanets. Little Mae Wise did the "Sailor's Hornpipe," Louise McAnnally and Mae Wise, the "Dutch Peasant's Dance" in Dutch costume; and eighteen couples of older dancers, the "Trio Waltz."

The Clays also made a specialty of hospitality on special occasions. On Halloween, 1894, guests were invited to their home at 7:30 p.m. They found apples swinging from the top of the arch between the parlors, tubs of water with floating apples for bobbing, baskets of corn awaiting fortune seekers in the corners of the rooms; three bowls, one containing earth, the next water, the third, empty, sitting conspicuously on a table in the front parlor. There were also cards, dice, and cups of tea for fortunes, while Miss Mary N. Moore, good Methodist though she was, divined one's future from one's palm.

Those whose fate was already decided sat and listened to the following program:

11 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, January 6, 1892

* A dance

<i>Cheerfulness</i>	Miss Jennie Sheffey and Mrs. Rosalie Chapman.
<i>Ben Bolt</i>	Captain Milton Humes.
<i>Rosy O'Moore</i>	Madge Lane
<i>Violin Solo</i>	Mrs. Einsloe
<i>Chopin: Trois Valse</i>	Felicia Hubbard
<i>The Maid of Dundee</i>	Louise Moore
<i>Sweet Marie</i>	Mrs. Rosalie Chapman.
<i>Charlie is My Darling</i>	Miss Elodie Clay
<i>Young Lochinvar</i>	Mrs. Virginia Clay-Clopton.

The inference was strong that they who had nothing to learn could at least listen. They could also partake of the goobers, apples, and chestnuts which were served for refreshments, and regale each other with pleasant ghost tales.

Sunday afternoon was a great day for calling or taking strolls to the cemetery. After Mr. J. Withers Clay's stroke of paralysis the young people made a rendezvous of his home on Sunday afternoon. On August 28, 1892, Jean Scruggs with her mandolin, George Darwin with his guitar, James Stevens with his banjo, and Willie Durr borrowing Miss Elodie's piano dared to give him a program which *The Democrat* assures us "would have shocked our grandmother's" idea of propriety for a Sunday entertainment as it included the *Tara-Boometara* airs from Wang interlaced with Rubenstein's *Melody in F*, Schubert's *Serenade*, and Mendelssohn's *Wedding March*,¹² but it did not shock Mr. Clay. His merry blue eyes twinkled as he stroked his beard and wondered what such young people would achieve if they continued to dare to do the unconventional. His approval was translated to the performers by his wife whose bright smile and laughing brown eyes showed their guests how she felt about their program. She advocated decorum but not prudery. Her tolerance affected not only her own children but her pupils and theirs.

Miss Mary gave a Mother Goose German which was attended by twenty couples on January 4, 1894. They were dressed in character costumes and had to "say their pieces" to the audience. Miss Elodie, as Mother Goose, greeted them. Jack and Jill came with their pail; two Bo Peeps with their crooks and sheep; a Maid in the Garden Hanging out Her Clothes with a blackbird perched on her head; a Maiden all Forlorn with the weight of sorrow and dejection repressing her mirth; May, all Tattered and Torn; Priest all Shorn; Fiddlers Three; Tom the Piper's Son with his Pig; Miss Muffet with her curds and whey and a big black spider; Daffy-down-dilly; Simple Simon; Little Man who had a Little Gun; Boy Blue;

Tommy Green; Jack Horner; Charlie is a dandy; Jack Spratt; Mary Quite Contrary; Golden Locks; Tommy Tucker; Gentleman of Law with his looking glass; Marjory Daw; Old Mother Hubbard; and Beggars are coming to town.

The German was danced to music from the Tarrell Band and favors taken from objects in the rhymes. "Refreshments were served with old melodies." The Old Virginia Reel ended with the grand march at twelve o'clock.¹³

Carl E. Cramer

Professor Carl E. Cramer was one of the most familiar and best loved figures in Huntsville during these years. On his bicycle or in an open buckboard, he passed from pupil to pupil. His handsome bearded face was always lit by twinkling brown eyes and a genial smile. He was agile, keenly alive. The only thing about him that worried his friends was the report that he was an atheist. He was too vigorous, too happy, too kindly to deny the existence of God. He was a teacher of piano, with emphasis on teacher. Finding nothing to suit him he evolved his own system of instruction entitled *How to Start a Beginner for the Piano and Tables of Daily Exercises*.

He based the first year exercises on scales and chords, dividing them by days, a scale a day, thus:

Monday, C Major	Friday, E Major
Tuesday, G Major	Saturday, B Major
Wednesday, D Major	SECOND WEEK:
Thursday, A Major	Monday, F Major, etc.

Each day chords in the scale were played on every note of the scale in first, third, and fifth position in both hands. As soon as the fingers were strong enough they were played in octaves. Then the major and minor scales were played in all the difficult intervals of each key, one octave a day. When they were mastered, chromatic scales were run two octaves or more in each key in like and contrary motions, Major and Minor 3rd and 6th.

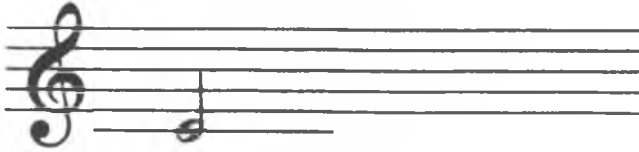
Some annotations from his Third Table of Daily Exercises are:

Exercise 2. Practice A, B, and C successively. When

13 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, January 10, 1894

C has been reached the octaves should be left off here, and the chromatic major and minor scales practiced in octaves instead. These exercises should be practiced also striking alternately.

L. hand first



Exercise 3. When practicing the fingering three-quarter, two-third in the middle of the clavice the right hand descending the 3rd and 4th fingers may also be passed over. Left hand ascending the same.

Exercise 7. For large hands only. The pupil should now be made familiar with the signatures. To find the keys with sharps start with C and take the 5th for the keynote of the next scale. Viz. The 5th of C (G) is the keynote for the scale with one sharp. The 5th of G (D) for two sharps, etc. For flats take the 4th. More minute explanations should be deferred until the pupil is practically familiar with the signatures of the major keys. Then the relative minor keys should be substituted for the tonic minor used hereafter.

Exercise 8. Accents should be used as soon as possible. No. 8. A, B, C, practiced with the full touch is a good preparation for No. 8 D, E, F, G.

Exercise 10. Chord of the 7th is composed of the 4th tonic, viz: 1st, 3rd, 5th and 7th. Let the pupil form some chords of the 7th in different degrees of the scale of C to get an idea of what it is. The Dominant Chord of the 7th is formed on the 5th of the scale. Form a Triad on the 5th of different scales, beginning with C, and add a minor 7th to it. A minor 7th is two half steps below the octave. With some pupils it is useful and desirable to give

a more particular explanation of the chords of the 7th on the different degrees of the scale, with an analysis of their intervals, and their positions in different scales in order to show them that while, for instance, the chord of the 7th on the 1st of the scale of C can also be formed on the 4th of the scale of G, the one on the 5th of C can only be formed in C major or minor, therefore, dominates the key of C, hence its name.

Exercise 18. The Diminished Chord of the 7th must be added when the pupil is somewhat familiar with that of the Dominant 7th. For the present it is sufficient to obtain it by augmenting the bass note of the chord of the Dominant 7th one-half step.

Exercise 23. The pedals have their technique as well as the clavice, and daily exercise is here also indispensable, for some time at least. The technical difficulties to overcome are an independent and noiseless movement of the foot. At present, the so-called loud pedal is used only. It is not to be struck nor to be pressed down as far as it will go. The foot has to be held in contact with it, and must press it down only far enough to free vibration of the strings. The mechanism of it must be shown and explained at the instrument. Its effect must be counteracted by the ear.

These carefully thought-out directions show the earnestness of this fine teacher. His patience with beginners made good technique. His willingness to explain the technique of his act made intelligent performers. He did not allow a pupil to look at his hands and then at the notes while reading music. The touch system he thought increased speed and confidence. Louisa Coxe, Felicia Hubbard, Marion Pleasants, Jennie Cramer, Louise Banister, and Mattie Lee Darwin proved how effective his methods were.

Whenever he discovered a talented child who had no piano to practice on, he would either have him come to his own home to practice or if that was impractical, he would induce some other music lover to lend him a piano for daily practice and lessons.

His home was at the foot of the mountain at the end of Franklin Street. His wife, fondly referred to as Miss Adele, was a personality herself. She had been his sister-in-law. When, a month

after his first wife's death, Professor Cramer asked her to marry him she did. She was caring for his children. She thought if she did not marry him, some other woman would. She sacrificed her wishes for the children's good. She was sure then that they would be cared for. She was an expert needleworker. Ladies from all parts of town came to her for embroideries, drawnwork, hem-stitching, crochet, and knitting. She made a specialty of stamp goods too.

She wore short hair, short skirts at a time when it was "unwomanly" to do so. Then she startled convention by riding a bicycle and wearing divided skirts. She wore either a boy's cap or a tight-fitting black hat, very much the shape of the hats which are worn by Salvation Army workers. She had a very prominent nose and chin, large gray-blue eyes, and a friendly smile. Later she discarded the divided skirt for a short skirt. Her keen sense of humor made her enjoy the amazement that her unconventional conduct caused. She ignored criticism. She noticed, with amusement, that it did not affect her trade. Carriages still drew up to her door. She still spread her work over table or sofa, and showed new patterns for stamped embroideries to prospective buyers. She was very friendly to Miss Lenora Bassett. Frequently her wheel could be seen leaning against the paling fence of the Bassett home on Franklin Street and Miss Lenora in her wheel chair and Miss Adele would be gossiping on the porch. She and Miss Lenore exchanged patterns for fancy work. For Miss Lenore, too, was an artist with her needles, cambric, crochet, and knitting. Miss Adele also visited Mrs. Ludwig who lived in an apartment over the First National Bank overlooking the Big Spring. They had language and love of needlework in common, and both understood the public.

Professor Cramer was lucky in having her, and the community was luckier in having both of them.

Chapter 6

Piedmont

Piedmont, the home of Mr. and Mrs. W. F. Garth, was gay with lights the night of February 24, 1897. Carriages wound up the long driveway to the block at the front steps, deposited their occupants and drove around the circle to the rock on the side.

Mr. and Mrs. Garth received the guests in the library. Punch, highly spiked, was served in the hall. Tables were set in the parlor and dining room. The guests wandered from room to room commenting on the beauty and charm of the hostess and the graciousness of the host. They were a couple to admire.

Mrs. Garth was a stately blonde, a Vassar graduate, a hostess whose every thought was for the comfort of her guests. No one in Huntsville had a better command of English or a keener sense of humor. Many persons, however, looked only at her dignified mien and noting the high standard which she held for all work, and behavior, considered her haughty. She required rigid observance of etiquette from her children and from those who served her. She required perfection in cleanliness in all who worked in the house, in the yard or in her garden. Sometimes she had great difficulty in training her servants to her standards.

On one occasion, for instance, she was entertaining guests at dinner when her maid, Rosetta, had been out of the cotton field only a few days. Everything went smoothly until the salad was served. Mrs. Garth then said, "Rosetta, you have forgotten the salad oil. Go and get it." Rosetta was gone about fifteen minutes when the door to the butler's pantry flew open and there she stood with an old rusty coal oil can on her silver waiter. Before Mrs. Garth recovered from her astonishment, Rosetta said, "Miss Lena, you'll hav' ter 'scuse me fer bein' so long, but I had to search all ober de cellar fer dis here thing." Mrs. Garth met such situations with resignation. She taught all who worked for her in the most patient spirit. She said she learned from them. She had an affectionate nature. Her adherence to duty was a noble trait and she devoted her life to her invalid father, her children, her husband, and her mother.

Mr. Garth was a man who loved his friends and hated his enemies. No doubt ever remained as to which category one fell into with him but both friends and enemies considered him the soul of honor. Men frequently said of him, "His word is his bond." He

kept it even to his own hurt. He would have died for his friends or for a principle. One day a friend said, "Mr. Garth, I believe you would help a friend even if you knew he was wrong." "Yes, I would," he said. "I would help him and then tell him what I thought of him."

He had one of the largest trotting-horse farms in the South. His entries frequently won large purses but he neither bet on them nor on any other horse. Mr. Paul McNichol of East Liverpool, Ohio, once told this writer that he met Mr. Garth at Louisville for the first time. There he was pointed out as being a horseman who never bet. The race was sufficient in itself to him.

He was very emphatic in his speech. He told a story on himself which showed he was a good sport. When Horace, his younger son was a "two year older",¹ as he put it, he heard him using profane language. Calling Rosetta to him (she had become a nurse then) he said, "Rosetta, I want you to warn the men in the kitchen about using profane language around Horace. He is using it." "He don' hear it in der kitchen, Mr. Wins,"² Rosetta replied, looking straight at him.

He was a graduate of Sewanee and a son of Colonel W. W. Garth and Maria Fearn³Garth. Loyalty was his by both education and birth. He formed and maintained his stables as a gentleman. As a little boy he lost one eye with a pop gun; the other was gray framed in dark lashes. He wore a mustache and chewed tobacco, and smoked a pipe and cigars. He was always against prohibition in any form. He opposed the dispensary but acknowledged that Huntsville was better under it. He said that the United States never fought a just war until 1918. He opposed Woman's Suffrage and automobiles (for himself). He was an excellent conversationalist and public speaker. He had always been an active Democrat and had been honored by the Party as a delegate to conventions, county organizer, State speaker, State Senator and committeeman on the National Committee. He was a genial host, a loyal friend and an implacable enemy.

George Cooper tells a story about an experience he had with him one night. Alice, Mr. Garth's older daughter, had a visitor, Mary Farrish, whom George liked. There was to be a dance at the Twickenham Hotel so George and a friend of his from out of town asked Alice and Mary to go to the dance with them. They accepted. George and Mr. Talliche, the friend, went out for the girls in separate carriages. Everything went well until Mr. Garth accompanied the young people to the steps. When he saw the two vehicles he said, "Do you intend to go in separate carriages?" "Of course," said Mr. Talliache. "Good," said Mr. Garth. "You

1 Mr. Garth always remembered his children's ages by the age of his famous stallion, "Alabama."

2 "Wins," a contraction of "Winston," and pronounced "Wince."

3 Pronounced "Fee-arn."

gentlemen get in the back carriage and the girls in the front one." George meekly obeyed. When they were out of the front gate Mr. Talliche said, "Now we can change."

"Change if you want to," said George, "but little George sits just where he was put. Mr. Garth doesn't stand any foolishness."



"Piedmont," the Garth home.



Portico of the Chapman home, "Gladstone Place"

Chapter 7

Monte Sano Dairy

The Monte Sano Dairy supplied milk for a large trade in Huntsville. Located on Gladstone Place just two and a half miles from the Court House, it was within easy access of its patrons. The herd was composed of registered Jerseys, some imported directly from the Jersey Islands. In 1890 it was owned by Messrs. William E. Matthews and Milton Humes. The former lived at Gladstone Place and managed the herd.

Every precaution was taken to make the dairy and barn sanitary. The dairy was a limestone house of two rooms and an upstairs sleeping quarters for Mr. Meadows, the Swiss dairyman.

The dairy was situated at the foot of a fifteen foot cliff. The spring was on top of the cliff. The spring house was built of limestone. The water flowed from under a shelving ledge into a fine white sandy hollow and was piped directly into the cooling vats in the back room of the dairy. These vats were on the north and west sides of the room and were deep enough to submerge a five-gallon milk can.

The cows were milked in the barn across the lane at the hours of four o'clock in the morning and three o'clock in the afternoon. The floor of the barn was cemented and each cow had a stall. There were carriers to take the milk immediately to the front room of the dairy where it was strained and canned to be submerged in the vats to cool. Then it was bottled and capped and delivered to customers twice a day.

The cows were washed before and after milking. As soon as they were ready to go to pasture Mr. Meadows would go to the gate and begin crooning, "Coom, Coom! Coom on! Coom, Coom! Coom on!" Grandmother, as he fondly called Tower Princess, the first of the herd to be imported from the Jersey Island, was lead-cow. As she fell in behind him the herd pushed into a compact mass out of the gate and thence down the winding lane to the pasture.

On June 2, 1891, General Samuel H. Moore brought a government expert, a Mr. Goodall of Kansas, on to test Lily Flag, Little Goldie, and Analysis for butterfat. An unofficial private test had shown that in seven days Lily Flag produced twenty three pounds eleven ounces of butter; Little Goldie, twenty pounds three ounces;

Analysis, twenty pounds six and a half ounces.¹ The official test began on June 2, 1891. By May 28, 1892, Lily Flag had exceeded the record of the World's Beater, Beason's Belle, who had been the world champion butter producer up to that date.

On May 29th Lily Flag had produced one thousand twenty-nine pounds thirteen and one-fourth ounces of butter. Beason's Belle's full year yield was one thousand twenty-eight pounds fifteen and five-eighth ounces.

By this achievement, Lily Flag made herself the talk of the town. On June 2, 1892, Mr. Meadows sleeked her up, decorated her horns with flags (iris) and ribbons and took her below the barn to receive callers. One hundred and five persons registered,² were served to a glass of her milk, greeted her, and went off thrilled with her beauty. She really was a cow worth kissing. In October she had been valued at Ten Thousand Dollars.³ That made her equal in value to many a farm in the South in 1891.

Her immediate worth was easily turned to account. One of the best cooks in Huntsville was Mrs. William E. Matthews. She conceived the idea of having a Lily Flag supper for the benefit of the Presbyterian Church. Accordingly, on June 15, 1892, the *Democrat* announced that those who wanted rare butter, delicious sweet milk or cream, butter milk, cottage cheese, ice cream of any flavor, sherbert, boiled custard, Delmonico Pudding, blanc mange, Charlotte russe, should call at the Lily Flag supper and buy these products made exclusively from her milk. Cakes and other by-products would also be available. On June 22, 1892, the same paper said that the dining room was crowded. Few people could believe that one cow could supply the needs of the town.

It was then necessary for General Moore to recognize his protegee. He did it in an "elegant" (the Clay's word, not mine) way. Fifteen hundred guests were invited to meet Lily Flag at the General's home on Adams Avenue.

A platform fifty feet square was erected in the garden as a dancing pavilion. Lit with gas and Chinese lanterns, the dance floor was polished so slick the dancers had a hard time keeping their feet. It was a merry place. It was gay with the flowers of Huntsville society from nine o'clock in the evening 'till three in the morning. An Italian band from Nashville "discoursed dancing melodies, dreamy waltzes, gay polkas, and fascinating Santiagos"⁴ while girls with flowers peeping through their curls smiled over the tops of fans to flattering beaux. Between dances the couples

1 *The Weekly Mercury*, April 8, 1891

2 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, June 8, 1892

3 *The Weekly Mercury*, October 7, 1891

4 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, July 27, 1892

wandered through the gardens, visited the punch bowl, even went to the parlors where Lily Flag was standing on a silver platform under a flower-decked mantel. The great square parlors never looked lovelier. Mrs. Robert E. Coxe, Mrs. D. D. Shelby, Misses Jane Beirne, Sunie White, and Mattie Barnard had seen to that.

Lily Flag was as much at home as if she had been raised in the parlor instead of in the barn. It is surprising how well a cow can act. She was a thoroughbred indeed! And, then, she was worth Ten Thousand Dollars. No cow in Huntsville had ever been worth that before. So there she was in the parlor - not even dazzled by her elegance.

Then the citizens of Huntsville gave a banquet and dance for her at the Monte Sano Hotel on Monte Sano. Zenie Pruett, General Moore's cook, was caterer on this occasion. There were place-cards of Lily Flag and speeches and toasts to her. Stegall's wagonette made special rates for the round trip so that the whole of Huntsville could honor this Jersey if they desired. They did her full honor.

When the World's Fair opened she was shipped with Little Goldie to Chicago. General Moore would not allow her to be milked for twenty-four hours. It ruined one side of her udder. Even then the Hood Dairy paid Ten Thousand Dollars for her.

Mr. Meadows always believed that Little Goldie was a better cow. He did not think she was fairly tested.

The dairy changed hands in 1894. The standard of the old regime was maintained, however, and it served Huntsville throughout the decade.

Mr. William E. Matthews was a genial, tall square-shouldered gentleman with twinkling blue eyes which betrayed his weakness for joking. His keen sense of humor was shared impartially with rich and poor and made him a popular host and guest, master, and co-worker. He was an ideal husband and father. Having married his wife when she was only sixteen, he kept the romance of that love alive through great financial adversities and moderate prosperity. "Carrie" was his idol. She was his inspiration and helpmeet.

He knew farming and dairying thoroughly. Financial reverses deprived him of his own twelve hundred acre farm. Mortgages ate up all he made. In 1889 he moved to Gladstone Place where he established the Monte Sano Dairy. In 1894 he moved to town. Again he met with reverses. He was of such calibre, however, that they only proved his worth. Though he was put to desperate straights he never lost courage. He took what work he could find, wherever he found it and smiled through it all.



The smokehouse at "Gladstone Place"

Chapter 8

An Encampment

When the Spanish American War began, the Huntsville Chamber of Commerce sent Captain Milton Humes and Mr. Tracy Pratt to Washington to secure an encampment for Huntsville. The climate was praised so highly by the inhabitants that it was authoritatively stated, on what basis it's not shown, that Huntsville was the second most healthy place in the United States.¹ The first was assigned to West Point, New York.

Before offering it as an encampment site, they had secured options on all places which were most desirable for that purpose. Government inspectors investigated it and waited so long to report that the citizens thought they had lost the location. But they had not. It was chosen and designated Camp Wheeler.

On Trinity Sunday, 1898, its streets and yards were swarming with soldiers, starved and weary from a delayed trip from Tampa, Florida on short rations. They asked for food, for water, and for permission to lie on the grass and rest. Every larder in Huntsville was opened to them. Mrs. Rosalie Chapman stopped her milk wagons, served the milk to them, cooked everything in her pantry for them, serving the privates in the kitchen and on the long back porch, while their officers were served in the dining room. Two of the officers afterwards told her that they ate every beaten biscuit on a plate which happened to be placed near them. The next morning when they came back for breakfast the plate was refilled and sitting in the same position. They were positive then that she had seen them.

The regiments were scattered all around the city. The Fifth Ohio, the Fifth Cavalry regulars, were at Brahan Springs and the Sixty Ninth, New York, was near them. The Tenth Cavalry and Second Cavalry were in West Huntsville; the Second Georgia on the William Moore Place; the Fifth Maryland, Company D, Engineering Corps, and the First Florida were on the Steele Place. The Eighth Cavalry regulars, the Third Pennsylvania, the Seventh Cavalry regulars, and the Sixteenth Infantry regulars were on the Chapman places.*

Water was piped to each of these sites and floors built for the

1 In 1891 the Health Report gave the death rate for that year as 132 deaths from all causes; for the United States, 18 deaths per thousand. * "The Barracks" and "Gladstone Place."

tents. Canteens lined the streets in town as well as in the camps. The Provost Guard consisted of twenty-eight tents pitched on the Calhoun lot near the Square. General Snyder's headquarters were in Calhoun Grove. During his visit General Shafter's headquarters were in the Calhoun Grove; General Coppinger and staff had the Steele house. The Big Spring furnished water for its usual consumers plus these sojourners without apparent diminution.

The soldiers' presence was a signal for accelerated social activities. A reading room was established, for the enlisted men, in the Schandie Building on Jefferson Street.² It was maintained by a group of ladies who gave concerts and other public entertainments to meet the expenses.

The Twickenham Club³ gave weekly Germans to which officers and their wives and daughters were invited. Frequent coaching parties went to the Tennessee River or the Flint for moonlight suppers. The Monte Sano Hotel was opened for balls and barbecues. Regimental bands were lent for music for musicales, concerts, dances, Church music, and street parades. Every evening carriages filled with ladies made the rounds of the camps to cheer the soldiers. Many of them carried baskets filled with dainties for the homesick men. Soldiers passing on the streets were invited into houses for meals. Some were delegated as guards to private homes.⁴ As such duties were not arduous, the soldiers liked to have them prolonged. Occasionally a chance meeting would secure such a detail.

Charlie Nininger was an enlisted man with the Fifth Maryland. That company was stationed on the Steele Place on Maysville Road. Charlie was detailed to be the guard at Gladstone Place, the home of one of his mother's friends. One afternoon when he was sitting on the front porch of this lady's residence reading, one of her children said, "Charlie, what's that coming up the road?"

Charlie looked. "Oh, that's only General Coppinger giving his staff a ride." The child watched the horsemen until they were hidden by a high clay bank at the foot of the hill just below the gate which opened into Gladstone Place lane. Charlie went on reading, his feet on the porch railing and his cartridge belt thrown over the back of a very high rocking chair.

"Oh, Charlie, look! They are coming up here!" cried the child. Jumping to his feet, Charlie made a desperate grab for his cartridge belt. He caught it upside down. Every cartridge fell to the floor.

"Buckle it on and I'll stick them in," said the child. Charlie

2 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, September 21, 1898

3 *Ibid*, October 5, 1898

4 *Ibid*, August 17, 1898

obeyed. The staff came galloping on. A cartridge at a time fell into place. In desperation Charlie grabbed his gun and hastened to the gate to stand at attention as the staff entered.

When the hostess came out, General Coppinger said with a sly smile, "I'm afraid you keep this guard too busy. I noticed that he has emptied his belt of half the shells. I would never have guessed that he would have had to use them on as many marauders, as he seemingly has, in this place."

One day two drunken soldiers were going waveringly down East Randolph Street. As they neared the Figures' place one of them noticed the inscription on the carriage block: "Figures, 1850." He said, "Well any fool would have known that them were figures."

Laxton and Kelly had an Eight Dollar order of potatoes sent to Company D Engineering Corps headquarters by a soldier who presented a Seventy Six Dollar check; the clerk handed him the change. When the potatoes were delivered to Company D Engineering Corps kitchen the cook refused them. They had not been ordered. Neither could the endorser's name be found on the Company's rolls.⁵

On another occasion the cook of the Eighth Cavalry was discriminating. Aunt Margaret, an old Negress on *Gladstone Place*, was an expert turkey raiser. She nursed them like babies. She fed the little ones cornbread and red pepper and kept them in a coop until the dew was off the grass. The Wednesday just before Thanksgiving, 1898, she had eighteen young gobblers sitting on the roost. The next morning she had none. One of the officers of the Eighth Cavalry found them on Company E's mess table. The cook did not know where they came from; they were on the kitchen table dressed when he began breakfast.

Such a surplus of men in town brought many flirtations which afterwards often proved serious. The *Weekly Democrat* made the following comment on one of them:

"Two sad-eyed sweet singers of Company E from Fermandina, a few days ago, went to the home of a lovely young lady, to whom they had been introduced, and asked if they would be allowed the privilege of grazing on her beautiful green lawn, with a tether of about fifty feet of rope attached to them. Of course, the pretty girl gave the desired permission, and hereafter, the neighbors will be interested in watching the two young soldiers of Company E refreshing themselves a la Nebuchadnezzar, on the cool, sweet grass beneath the umbrage of the broad spreading branches of grand ancestral oaks, while a fascinating blonde ⁶

5 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, November 23, 1898

6 Miss Lucy Jones

keeps them within bound with a fifty foot rope!"⁷

So it seemed that some gentlemen preferred blondes even in the Gay Nineties when all women were Dresden bric-a-brac. But the blonde in the above case was a picture. She had an unusually attractive set of sisters too. They made the "ancestral oaks" a rendezvous for many a tennis set, lawn party, and social afternoon, and were noted as witty conversationalists. One of the tethered soldiers walked away with the "pretty blonde" and began a happy life.

The soldiers showed unique taste in selecting a variety of mascots. The First Florida chose Louis Goodman Mastin. Several months before he had caused a great deal of merriment by riding up to the Huntsville Hotel on a "twenty-four inch pony" as Mr. Charles Lane put it, and calling Mr. Billy Robinson (height, six feet four) to hold his pony while he went into Anderson's Drug Store to get a glass of soda water. The pony was tiny and he looked like a fairy prince riding him. Louis' curls were tight and golden, his eyes large and brown. He sat his horse with an air which was all his own, as straight as the proverbial ramrod. The soldiers liked it. They called it "swanky" and adopted him as mascot. They treated him to a real sword, tailored soldier's suit with bars on the shoulders, and a golden spur. He rode in the place of honor on parade, lined with officers, and held his dignity with an aged calm which was surprising.

In great contrast with this elegance was the mascot selected by the Sixty Ninth, New York. One day an old white haired Negro drove up to the regiment's kitchen to get the slop. The soldiers surrounded him by the hundreds. Never before had they seen such an outfit. The cart in which he was sitting was hand-made and rickety. His clothes were ragged. His felt hat had most of the brim chewed off and holes through the crown. He was driving two calves, one a yearling and the other about nine months old. He and his cart were adopted immediately. Every time the regiment paraded Uncle Matt was at its head. When they left on January 28, 1899, they took Uncle Matt and his outfit to parade with them down Fifth Avenue [in New York]. The Big Four gave them free transportation.

The Fifth Cavalry's mascot was a goat which had to be watched closely as it had a predilection for horses' tails. On occasion he was decorated with the regimental colors, and shown to the public. He was a trained acrobat. Demonstrations were reserved, however, for stolen moments when he made a special visit to the unhappy soldiers' tent, or to their clothes-line.

7 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, September 14, 1898

Occasionally the soldiers did irreparable damage. When drunk they were put under military arrest by the Provost Guard. One of these times came in November, 1898. A group of soldiers, having visited many of the saloons about the Square, were disorderly on the streets. They were arrested and confined in a basement room in the Court House. Unfortunately, their place of confinement was insecure. They pushed in a door leading into one of the file rooms where papers and other valuable articles were stored. In their drunkenness they thought it would be exciting to set these papers on fire. They soon had the thought executed. Many valuable papers finished their career before the flames were seen from the street and an alarm given. It was a terrible loss to the county as well as to many individuals.

The reputation for health was imposed upon unconsciously, perhaps. Many of the soldiers who came from Cuba and Florida had a disease which the nurses said was akin to, if not, yellow fever. Huntsville is too high for it to spread, however, according to the old theory of contagion.

The only record of the number of patients treated is from the Oak Lawn⁸ Hospital, and it is only a partial record. Between June and September 28, 1898, they received sixteen hundred patients.⁹ There were twenty-one deaths, twelve from fever. There were two hundred and three typhoid cases. All of these were treated in forty-seven tents. That, of course, can account for some of the deaths.

When General Joseph Wheeler visited the camp the citizens of Huntsville presented him with a fine black saddle-horse. Captain Milton Humes was the speaker. Major W. T. Murphy, William Holding, W. R. Rison, S. H. Moore, Luke Matthews, R. E. Pettus, R. E. Murphy, H. Weil, Judge Richardson, and Colonel Rhett were on the platform.

Troop G of the Second Cavalry escorted General Wheeler to the Court House. They had been with him at Santiago. The Tenth, Second, Sixth, and Seventh Cavalry passed in review December 6, 1898. The line of march was over two miles long. It was the last big event of the encampment. They had all moved by March 8, 1899. It was the end of a pleasant time for Huntsville.

8 The beautiful antebellum home, Oaklawn, on Meridian Pike was used as a hospital at that time

9 *The Weekly Tribune*, November 14, 1898



Fire fighting equipment. typical of the 1890's

Chapter 9

Fires of Huntsville

Fires were very destructive during this decade. Rodgers' Stable by the Big Spring branch burned in 1890. It was a terrible fire. Horses were roasted. After getting some of them out they ran madly back into the flames. Wells' Stable burned later,¹ but was rebuilt on Jefferson Street below St. Mary's Church.

In April, 1891 about nine o'clock at night, Mr. Joe Bradley's home on Randolph Street burned to the ground. As it was one of the handsome old houses in Huntsville it was a real loss to the town. Set in a formal garden with beds laid out in designs, bordered with English boxwood and ornamented with marble statuary, its white columned porch stood boldly out. Its furnishings were in keeping with the setting. Family portraits, old furniture and silver were consumed by the gluttonous flames. Mr. Bradley was a bachelor. He loved his home and had gone to the expense of maintaining it in hope, gossip said, of some day bringing to it the handsome, charming Sunie White as a bride. But that time never came. He had lived on in elegance, however, with the old dream. It was a bit of romance which returned with every glance at the old house. Humanity likes to be reminded of such faithfulness and is sorry to have that reminder obliterated. It seemed to be a double death.

The home of Major James O'Shaughnessy on Monte Sano burned in March, 1890. The flames attracted many men from Huntsville who drove as rapidly as possible up the mountain to assist the caretaker, Mr. Mat Schrimsher, in fighting the fire and in removing furniture. The flames were so hot that the fire-hose was burned in two. Buckets were then resorted to but they were ineffective.

The volunteers, however, saved about Nine Hundred Dollars worth of furniture. It, too, was a handsome place. The total loss was about Twenty Five Thousand Dollars.

The following description of a fire at Mr. George Scruggs' store on the Square illustrates how the Fire Department worked in 1891:

"The Fire Department drove rapidly around Herstein and Lowenthals' corner and passed by and stopped at the western corner in front of J. Weil and Bros., where immediate connection was made with the plug.

1 *The Weekly Mercury*, April 29, 1891

2 *The Weekly Independent*, March 22, 1890

As soon as the reel-cart could run off hose, Engineer Wooldridge blew his whistle signaling that he had steam a plenty and was ready to turn on the water. Members of the brigade got in their rubber coats and helmets, made nozzle connection, and were ready for action in a very short time."³

The fire had caught from the stove in the back of the store and was only discovered by accident. As soon as the City Hall bell rang the fire alarm, citizens from every part of town hurried to the Square to assist the firemen in emptying the store. It was soon extinguished.

The Milligan Block was badly damaged by fire in 1899. That was one of the fires, however, which did good. Mrs. Milligan tore down the old buildings and built the present buildings there.⁴

The burning of the Huntsville Female College has been described in Chapter 16 on schools.⁵ The Court House fire of 1898 [see Page 71] harmed only the files. The building was of stone.

By 1899 the city employed three full-time firemen and twelve volunteers. The engine room in the City Hall, located at the west corner of Clinton and Washington Streets, was enlarged to accommodate dormitories for the firemen and Chief Ozra Stegall.⁶

3 *The Weekly Mercury*, November 4, 1891

4 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, December 20, 1899

5 *The Weekly Tribune*, January 9, 1895

6 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, September 13, 1899

Chapter 10

Civic Organizations

The Village Improvement Society

The town's growth demanded many changes in old conditions. It also demanded organization to bring them about. Such an organization came into being at the Huntsville Hotel on January 8, 1898. The prime movers in its inception were Dr. P. L. Brouillette, Mr. W. R. Rison, Mrs. Alberta C. Taylor, and Mr. James P. Matthews. The latter was elected chairman. Mrs. Taylor was the principal speaker. She described the work of a similar body in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and pointed out the changes that would have to be made to make Huntsville an ideal town. As an artist, she could speak with specific knowledge of the improvements necessary to bring man-made plans in harmony with Huntsville's natural beauty.

Cleanliness was, she considered, the first necessity of health and of beauty. For the convenience of citizens all of the sidewalks in Huntsville should be rebuilt by an engineer, obstructions removed, and ordinances passed to keep animals off them. Many streets needed more shade trees. Flowers could be planted on vacant lots. The Big Spring lot should be laid off by a landscape gardener and opened as a park.

Her suggestions were passed as resolutions. The organization was christened "The Village Improvement Society."¹

The Misses Clay² had a great deal of fun at the expense of the men of this body. In an article about the work of the organization they said, "To insure the success of this society one of the gentlemen moved that 'the ladies should be officers. I say let the women hold the offices, and the men will support them.'"

1 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, January 12, 1898

2 Virginia and Susanna Clay replaced their father, John Withers Clay, as editors of *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat* from 1896-1911.

"Whereupon a weary woman breadwinner murmured, 'Well, thank Heaven, that being the case, let the women be officers.'"

"Women were elected, and the W.W.B.W. is now anxiously awaiting the first installment from the gallant supporters."³

Mrs. Alberta C. Taylor began her work as president with the vim that characterized her enthusiasm for all civic work. Her vice-president, Mr. Ben P. Hunt, through editorials and special articles in *The Mercury* kept the work of the organization clearly before the public. He was also a lawyer. As such he kept the work within the legal rights of a citizen. He was assisted in this field by Mr. John H. Wallace and other members of the organization. Both Mr. Hunt and Mr. Wallace were in the public eye and could get a large audience whenever they advertised that they were to speak. Mr. Wallace's vocabulary was enormous. He took delight in amazing his audience by an ostentatious use of unusual words. He was extremely chivalrous. Whenever he offered his services to a lady he lifted his hat, swung it in an arc that almost touched the ground, bent his slim, six foot body at the waist bringing his auburn head almost to his knees, saying, "May I help you?"

One story goes that on his way to the Court House to speak one night he came upon a lady carrying a ponderous tome under her arm. He stopped in his gallant way to ask if he might carry it for her. She handed it over. Noticing that it was Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, he said, "Where are you taking this?"

"To the Court House," she replied. "I am going to hear Mr. Wallace speak. They say that he uses more words than are in the dictionary and I am going to prove it."⁴ He was a useful director of the Village Improvement Society.

One of the first changes they tried to make was a problem which the newspapers had been attacking since 1890. The Court House fence was used as a hitching post by all the people of the county. As an unsanitary condition resulted, the local Medical Society and thoughtful citizens had petitioned the Mayor and Aldermen for its removal.⁵ Their petition was blocked by the merchants whose stores were on the Square. They complained that the doctors and these citizens would destroy their trade if the fence was removed. The Improvement Society had a town meeting at which the doctors of the city explained how the practice of hitching horses to the fence menaced the health of the town. The Mayor and Aldermen were again petitioned to remove the fence. They put the question to a vote of the citizens.

The *Democrat* says that those who object would also object "to

3 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, January 19, 1898

4 Mr. David Grayson's story of Mr. Wallace

5 *The Independent*, February 5, 1892

the removing of dilapidated vehicles that for years have cumbered the streets just below the First Methodist Episcopal Church, the barbed wire fences on residence streets, and the festive hogs and cows that have made their mark on the land of everybody in the neighborhoods where they are allowed to roam at large for years."

Seemingly, the majority were in sympathy with the Square merchants. The removal was defeated. The Board then passed an ordinance placing a fine of Five Dollars for hitching at the fence. One old countryman with a sense of humor put his wagon next to the fence and hitched his mule to the wagon. The police could not do a thing.

The ordinance met the disapproval of Mr. Tancred Betts, the County Solicitor. He petitioned the Circuit Judge to place an injunction against the ordinance on the plea that the ordinance was depriving the public of the use of their property. The judge ruled that as the Court House and yard belonged to the County, the County should have the use of half of the street around the property. The signs had to be removed and fines returned. But the fight went on.⁶

"It looks like a waste of breath and veracity to boast of Huntsville's health when the Public Livery Stable and pools of stagnant water covered with green scum stand on the resident streets for days after a rain. Horses being hitched around the Court House fence leave breeding places for flies and make the Square an unsightly place."⁷

The City Fathers would have to clean house or face the accusations of the Village Improvement Society. In September, 1898, they reported that "garbage dumped on the Spring Branch make that road disagreeable." In October they reported cases of typhoid fever.

Among the soldiers stationed at Huntsville in 1898 was an engineer, Colonel W. H. Chittenden, who became interested in the source of the Big Spring. There was the limestone bluff, a small opening, a natural fountain and over twenty four million gallons of water a day. Where did it come from? Out of the bluff! The answer was unconvincing to Colonel Chittenden. Getting permission from the Mayor, he got an orderly and a canoe. By lying prone in the boat they were pushed through the opening into the bluff by a workman at the Spring. After rowing two and a half miles they came to a divide in the stream. A waterfall at that point prevented them from following the source. They returned to the opening and were pulled out by the faithful workman.⁸ Colonel Chittenden's investigation proved, however, that hitching horses at the Court

6 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, July 20, 1898

7 *Ibid*, August 17, 1898

8 Colonel Chittenden's account of the trip

House fence was a menace to the health of everyone who drank the Big Spring water. Just under the Square he discovered a crevice through which seepage could get into the Spring. The Village Improvement Society again urged the removal of the fence without result. The Square was paved as a precaution.

Colonel Chittenden was given the work of remodeling the spring basin so that more water could be saved. Blasting the natural dam at the pumphouse and removing it, he widened the basin and walled it and the branch to Spring Street. A small waterfall was left at the entrance to the street and three stone bridges were built across it. A new pumphouse was constructed on the extreme northwest of the park. Water was pumped to a new reservoir on the hill. This reservoir replaced the old cistern which Dr. Fearn had built on the Faust place.

Then the Village Improvement Society worked on landscaping the park. Picnics were encouraged. Visitors from the Huntsville Hotel frequently descended to weather-worn steps between Murray and Smith's and the White Building to rest at the spring. In 1899 the fountain which rose from a rock in the basin froze. It was a wonderful sight for Huntsville. God decked the trees with snow and the limestone cliff with ice. Little children saw how dazzling King Winter could be and grown people became children in their enjoyment of it. But the snow did not wash away the Court House hitching post fence. The century ended with *The Democrat* still writing articles against it.

United Charities

The advent of cotton mills brought new problems to the philanthropic-minded people of Huntsville. As the problems increased it became evident that there was much duplication of services for a few families and neglect of many needy persons by private donors and church charities. A plan to pool donations of all agencies was evolved and an organization called The United Charities formed.

One of its first works was to send a committee to request the Mayor and Aldermen to establish a city hospital under the direction of the United Charities.⁹ One Mrs. Lownes and her committee met a committee from the Board at the McGhee Hotel on June 5, 1895. The committee agreed to supply a house and maintain a trained nurse. A house on Mills Street was secured and the City Hospital was opened on June 12, 1895.¹⁰ Alderman Smith moved

9 *The Weekly Mercury*, June 4, 1895

10 *Ibid*, June 19, 1895

that the City donate Six Dollars (\$6.00) a month for the rent of that house and his motion was carried. That settled the rent. The United Charities furnished the hospital by soliciting donations. At the opening they invited the public to inspect the house and requested them to bring one piece of china as a donation to the institution. Later the rooms were maintained by church societies as a memorial to the dead. There were wards for white and for colored patients, private rooms and an operating room. Its gradual growth became one of the fine community works of the city.

United Charities was incorporated August 12, 1895 at a meeting at the Jewish Synagogue. Its membership was reported as one-hundred and sixty. Article 2 of its constitution¹ gave as its aim to "help the sick, the needy of Huntsville and vicinity, and to investigate all applicants for relief to the end that the poor may be enabled to help themselves."

Investigating committees were sent by carriage to Dallas Village or to West Huntsville whenever cases were reported. Those most active in this work were Mrs. Oscar Goldsmith, Mrs. Owen Wilson, Mrs. M. B. Neece, Mrs. Bertran Weil, Mrs. Ernest Karthaus, Mrs. Milton Humes, Miss Mattie J. Davis, Miss Kate McCalley, Miss Carrie McCalley, Mrs. L. Brouillette, Miss Sarah Lowe, Mrs. Margaret Bolling, Mrs. Richard Walker, Miss Emma Wells, Miss Katie Steele, Mrs. Erskine Mastin, and Mrs. Rosalie Chapman.

On March 16, 1896, a mass meeting was called by the United Charities at the Opera House in the interest of a general charity movement. Mr. W. R. Rison was chairman of this meeting. In the interest of the organization, speeches were made by Mr. W. S. Wells, Captain Milton Humes, and a Mr. Crawford.

They told of the distress in many mill families and among the Negroes and poor whites within the city limits. Times were hard. Working people had not recovered from the distress caused by the panic of 1893. Only a permanent fund could provide enough food and clothes for the numbers that needed help. The speakers asked for contributions for this purpose. Four Hundred and Fifty Dollars were raised at this meeting.

A few days later the urgency of the need was shown in the following letter:

"On March 12th, Dr. Johnston wrote to Miss Wells to go out to West Huntsville to see the families of Thomas J. Hall and Russell Thomas. In response, the undersigned went to visit the above families and found as follows:

"At the house of the Hall family they found the mother dying in a working dress, eight sick children lying about her in the same room, not a change of clothing nor a particle of food in the house. This was on Thursday and she died on Saturday at 4 p. m. The body lay in the same room with the eight sick children from this time till 11 a. m. Monday. There were about three feet between the two beds and another bed in the room.

"The eight children were all sick with measles and bronchitis and no one to care for them but the father, who had been nursing the entire family for two weeks, with the occasional help of such kind neighbors as could be spared from their own sick, and seemed almost exhausted.

"On Saturday the second visit was made and food and bedding which were furnished by the United Charities were given them. Clothing which was made by the Presbyterian Aid Society, the merchants donating the cloth, was given them on a third visit, when we found them improved.

"Regarding the family of Russell Thomas, the one room in which the father, mother, and seven children lay was so dark that objects were scarcely discernible. Every member of the family was sick and almost destitute of bedding and food, except a tick filled with wild sedge grass. This was the only bed in the room. An old colored woman was caring for them out of charity. The United Charities furnished them food and bedding and a change of clothes, and seven comforts were later furnished by citizens of the city. A second visit made five days later, the father and mother were up, five children were better, one child lay dead in a coffin in a corner of the room, and on the grass bed was the baby five months old, said to be dying.

"A woman was hired to do the washing and more food and clothes were furnished as the entire family were in a deplorable condition.

"Above are but samples of many cases that can be furnished by the officers of the United Charities. If such cases are not enough to excite the sympathies of even officials, there must be hearts of stone in high places.

"In justice to Coons and Pratt, we will say, they had furnished food and medicine in above cases, and were willing to help still more, and this article is in no way intended to reflect on anybody. We state but

the facts as known by ourselves and Dr. Johnston.

(Signed)

Mrs. Albert Owen Wilson
Emma I. Wells "

The city officials had objected to Charity's investigation of cases. In the meeting at the Opera House, Mr. Crawford naively remarked that he was "a stranger here but that there must be something radically wrong with officials to keep them every one away from such a meeting." The officials thought that publicity on unsanitary housing in mill villages was poor advertisement for Huntsville.¹² The members of the United Charities felt that it was the only way to improve and remove such conditions. Luckily, Mrs. Owen Wilson, Miss Wells, the Misses McCalley, Mrs. Caroline Karthaus, Mrs. Oscar Goldsmith, and the other acting members of the charities, were fearless women.

They could speak effectively of conditions as they found them. They were influential and could effect a remedy. The families of the poor were large, their resources small, and these women felt that as the city had called them into crowded quarters to make a reputation for it that its officials were duty bound to make them as comfortable as possible. Fortunately for the poor, these women were untiring in their efforts for them. Their accomplishments were past belief.

Huntsville Circulating Library

Another civic movement in which both sexes were interested was the public library. "Vita sine literis mors est" was the motto of the Huntsville Circulating Library. Its first habitation was a corner of Murray and Smith's store. When it was moved from there to the Y.M.C.A. rooms on the corner of Eustis Street next door to E. Dentler's upstairs, Mrs. V. A. Betts, librarian, wrote the following letter to the firm.¹³

"We cannot leave the genial firm that always smiled us a kindly welcome without offering them our grateful acknowledgment for their unexceptionable deportment during our stay of three months in their home. To their assistance and encouragement we really owe

12 Messrs. Coons and Pratt owned the West Huntsville Mill

13 *The Weekly Mercury*, August 26, 1891

our beginning.

"We would also offer thanks to Mr. Kolb, the eye of the establishment, for more than one act of kindness, and to Mr. Daniel, the accomplished engraver, our remembrance of such delicate courtesies as only a refined man knows how to show a woman.

"Nor would we pass out of these pleasant doors without recognition of the services of their excellent porter, Marion Moore, whose thoughtfulness spared us many weary step.

"Adieu to a pleasant past.

Very respectfully,
(Signed) V. A. Betts,
Librarian"

We can really feel the atmosphere of that corner library in Murray and Smith's. Imagine it. Surrounded by Haviland china, cutglass, rare Delph, Venetian glass, old mirrors, cases of silver, and shelves of books for sale. Mr. Murray was a large, broad-faced, large-mouthed man who was interested in fine things. Having been superintendent of schools in Huntsville,¹⁴ he was interested in keeping culture alive. His taste for beautiful things was seen in articles he selected for his store. The library was lucky to have such an abiding place.

The candidates for the position of librarian in 1895 were Mrs. M. V. Douglass, Miss Etta Matthews, Miss Meneese Pattison, and Miss Virginia Clay. Miss Matthews was appointed. Mr. Conrad O'Shaughnessy was elected secretary and treasurer.¹⁵ The librarian was in the library from three o'clock to five o'clock twice a week to check loans, collect dues, and to order new books and repair old ones. As the books were on open shelves they were selected by the borrower.

Every now and then the members gave benefits for its maintenance. There was also a charge of One Dollar a year for membership and fines for books which were overdue. The first lot of books were procured by private subscriptions collected by Miss Matthews, Mrs. L. S. Noble, one Mrs. Connor, and Mr. Conrad O'Shaughnessy. An addition of the books from the Young Men's Christian Association was a good increase in the number of books available for public use. Other books were added by receipts from public entertainment.

Such an evening's amusement was arranged by Mrs. L. S. Noble and Mrs. S. Morgan at the Huntsville Hotel on April 23,

14 Mr. M. R. Murray was County Superintendent of Schools, 1890-1896

15 *The Weekly Mercury*, April 24, 1895

1895.¹⁶ Dancing was always a popular amusement. Mrs. Noble employed a good band and obtained permission to use the hotel dining room. She succeeded in drawing a large crowd who danced until dawn was breaking - a scandalous thing to do, very much against the health and morals of the community. But it was done nevertheless.

That year the library was moved from the Young Men's Christian Association rooms to the Gordon Building on Franklin Street. Here it occupied rooms over the law offices of Humes, Sheffey, and Speake.¹⁷ It was open to the public on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. By 1897 its circulation had increased so that it was necessary to open it every afternoon in order to take care of the public. Hours were changed at this time to two-thirty to four-thirty o'clock.¹⁸

At the election of the association in 1897 Miss Emma Wells was chosen president. She was an active person, pleasing in manner and earnest in public service. Mrs. Felix Baldrige, the beautiful wife of Dr. Felix Baldrige, was elected vice-president. She was a college woman, an inveterate reader, aggressive, and determined to make the library a certainty. She was one of its chief workers. Miss Etta Matthews retained her post and Mrs. Henry Dillard was elected in Mr. O'Shaughnessy's place. The directors were also a strong group: Misses Katie Mastin, Belle Farris, Lula Miller, Lizzie Vogel, Dr. P. L. Brouillette, and Mr. Jere Murphy.¹⁹ They began a series of entertainments.

Twice that year they selected living pictures as a means of drawing a crowd to supply money for new books and needed equipment. It was at a time when Mr. Charles Dana Gibson was a recognized artist - recognized, that is, by the public. His ink drawings were sold by the foot. His heads were prized possessions. He turned them out by the hundreds it seemed just to show that he could. His work was chosen for tableaux at the Huntsville Hotel. There were two presentations at Twenty Five Cents at entrance. Tea, chocolate, and pictures were also sold. Patrons were asked to donate books, too. Mrs. Felix Baldrige and Mrs. Walter I. Wellman served the chocolate. Both were beautiful women; one a brunette, the other a blonde. Mrs. D. I. White, also a handsome woman, served tea.²⁰ They were assisted by Misses May Steele, Felicia Hubbard, Grace Russel, Olive Nuckolls, Mamie Fletcher, Byrd Ludlow, Kate Mastin, Betty Matthews, and Mabel Hinchcliffe.

16 *The Weekly Mercury*, April 24, 1895

17 *Ibid*, March 13, 1895

18 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, February 10, 1897

19 *Ibid*, January 20, 1897

20 *Ibid*, February 20, 1897

Dr. J. E. Darwin and Mr. W. I. Wellman auctioned reprints of Edwin A. Abbey, A. B. Frost, Charles Dana Gibson, Wells H. Lowe, Howard Pike, W. T. Smedley, and Alice Barbour Stevens. The net receipts of this entertainment were Forty Dollars.²¹

The following December they raised the price of admission to Thirty Five Cents. Instead of serving refreshments they had music:

Brendamane:	The Wedding Banquet
	Invoking the Music
De Friendt:	A Royal Recreation
Rongiers:	Midnight Stitches
Cabana:	Jephtha's Daughter
Sufert:	Lute Players
	The Magic Mirror
Preol:	Five Foolish Virgins
Cuten:	The Birthday Greeting
Woodville:	Ghost Story.

During the intervals between pictures Misses Felicia Hubbard and Jennie Cramer played piano solos, Amelia Karthaus and Alice Brown recited, and Mr. Frank Newman, Misses Grace Russell, Nona Scruggs, Marie Land and Miss Jennings sang. Mr. Raymond Monroe played the cornet and Theressa Varin sang and recited.

Whether the variety in this program was due to a waning popularity of Gibson's pictures or to a desire to try the popularity of the unknown we cannot tell. Mrs. Felix Baldrige was in charge.

At another entertainment at the Huntsville Hotel each guest represented the title of a book. One gentleman appeared dressed in a suit that was put on hind-part-before. He represented *Looking Backwards*. Another had "CO" in white on the lapel of his coat. He was *The White Company*. One of the ladies was asked what she was. Going to the piano she struck "B" and trilled it. Another lady wore a mill over a bunch of floss. One of the men wore on his coat "SAM", a picture of a mule, the letter "C", and a picture of some lemons. The contestants thought that that was too much, too far-fetched. Mr. Clay was able to withstand criticism, however. In fact, he enjoyed their perplexity and said that his surname added to the lemons might give them a clue.

Miss Etta Matthews made a capable and agreeable librarian. She was a handsome blonde with lovely blue eyes and golden hair. Her quiet manner and deep musical voice won many friends without effort. She was an asset to the work. By the close of the century the library had many regular members and a nice book collection.

21 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, February 27, 1897

Chapter 11

The Opera House

The Opera House, located on the corner of Jefferson and Clinton Streets gave to its patrons value received during the first half of the decade. The entrance was a barren room with a ticket office on the left and two flights of broad steps opposite the front door. Tickets were collected at the top of the flight on the auditorium level. The pit extended to this door. A balcony, supported by wooden pillars, covered the tiers of raised seats around three sides of the wall. The balcony was divided into three parts: one for poor whites, one for Negroes, and one for harlots. The stage had an apron, footlights, drops, and a curtain which was described in *The Democrat*: "Caryatides supports and Immortal Bard of Avon surmounts an advertisement sheet of Saloons, Laundries, Gents' Furnishings, Goods, Groceries, etc., as absurd as it is distasteful."¹

The Democrat also gives a partial resume of *The Gondolier Opera* by Gilbert and Sullivan which was given at the Opera House in February, 1890. The scene is laid in St. Mark's Square in the city of Venice. Two brothers, both gondoliers, are in love with two pretty singers. The opera opens on the morning of their wedding day. As the festivities are in progress, a Spanish ex-duke and his daughter, Carlotta, enter with their ally, Don Alhambra, searching for the hereditary king of Borotara who was wedded to Carlotta in infancy. One of the gondoliers is the man. As it seems impossible to identify him, the ex-duke kidnaps both of them, hiding them at Borotara. They are crowned as Siamese Twin monarchs. But the disappointed brides follow them and marry them. It was produced by Mr. D. Ogle Carter of New York and created quite a sensation in Huntsville.

A new curtain was hung the same year. It wiped away all irrelevant thoughts, carrying *The Democrat* into expressions of gladness. From this elation the paper gives us an impressionistic sketch of it. It portrayed a "Cool, aesthetic lake, tropical plants, the wide open road with the quaint old-fashioned lovers with their ancient garments and pleasant faces, recalling scenes from the classics.

1 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, January 15, 1890

"Thanks to Mr. Whelan for his recognition of the intellectual tastes of his theatre-going friends."²

After *The Black Crook* opened at the Opera House, November 17, 1894 *The Democrat* says: "The ministers of the city were unanimous in their denunciation of *Black Crook* as being degrading and vitiating to the morals and tastes of young and old but the audience pronounced it unobjectionable and a brilliant affair."³

The Streets of New York was heralded as being unrivaled in mechanical effects.⁴ Minstrels always attracted a large house. Gorman's played March 16, 1892.⁵ Beach and Bowers brought thirty artists and charged Twenty Five, Fifty and Seventy Five Cents for seats.⁶

Charley's Aunt perhaps created more genuine laughs than any show which was staged there during those years. It was given for the benefit of the Huntsville Infirmary, July 28, 1896.⁷ Seats were sold at Dement's Drug Store at Twenty Five Cents and Thirty Five Cents. That shows how poor Huntsville audiences were. As that show is still on the boards and now in the movies, it must have given Huntsvillians greater pleasure than any comedy that had been there.

Examples of types of concerts which were given then are Blind Tom's Concert (given Saturday, July 25 and Sunday, July 26, 1891) and Remenyi's held on March 24, 1897. Blind Tom was a musical genius. Tom was born a slave on a Georgia plantation. As soon as he demonstrated his ability in music he was put on the concert stage. His audiences were always sympathetic and enthusiastic in their appreciation of him.

Remenyi came under the auspices of the Presbyterian Sunday School. After his concert he was invited to breakfast at Abingdon Place. He replied, "I eat no breakfast. The ladies sleep late but I will come with pleasure." Once in the house he recognized every painting and every piece of statuary at a glance, but turning from them to the living woman he said to Miss Felicia Hubbard (Mrs. Humes' niece), "I like you. You are very handsome. I like the olive tint. It is Pocahontas?" Being answered in the affirmative his admiration was unbounded, his sympathies being with the Red Man.

Observing Miss Hubbard's grand piano, he said, "Play me something." She blushing responded with Chopin's *Impromptu*.

2 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, January 29, 1890

3 *Ibid*, November 21, 1894

4 *The Independent*, March 11, 1892

5 *Ibid*

6 *The Weekly Mercury*, November 27, 1895

7 *The Weekly Tribune*, August 4, 1896

He sat close to the piano closing his eyes, as he did in playing his violin, intently listening, but soon startled all by saying, "Forte! Forte!" Then touching each key an octave higher, eyes still shut, he gave instruction by voice and gesture. "Forte! Piano! Hush, eh?" until the strain ended in a whisper.

The hostess opened a bottle of choicest vintage which he inhaled but did not drink.⁸

On April 3, 1896, the Mozart Symphony Club, featuring Miss Louise Gumaer, violinist and soprano, arrived.⁹ An amateur performance of *Mikado* was produced by Professor Black on November 10 and 11, 1897. It was played to an overflow crowd.

From *Powhatan*, another amateur operagiven by Mr. Baker, Ninety Three Dollars and Twenty Seven Cents were realized for the United Charities.

Of the more serious plays Keane's *Louis XI* and Walker White-side's interpretation of *Hamlet* were presented.¹⁰ The Huntsville audiences appreciated good acting and were free in their applause. There were many other good performances during this time but they were about the same types.

8 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, April 7, 1897

9 *Ibid*, April 28, 1897

10 *Huntsville Weekly Independent*, October 30, 1890



Churches of Huntsville

Chapter 12

The Church

The Church was the center of much social life in the Huntsville of the nineties. If the children needed entertainment the Church supplied a Christmas tree, a picnic, a boat or train excursion; anything to get all the children and as many of the adults who could spare the money and time to go. If the Church needed funds the ladies banded themselves together and by hard thinking and manual effort supplied the required amount. It was the Church literally, for although the sects were arrogant on doctrinal questions when it came to pleasure or money every denomination helped every other one make a success of the undertaking.

Denominations were marked off almost by social standing. Of course, there were exceptions but usually the masses belonged to the Baptist or Methodist Churches. They decried dancing, card playing, theatre-going, and worldly amusements. The Presbyterians were described as "straight-laced." They were not supposed to dance or play cards but many of the younger members did both with the consent and aid of their parents. Episcopalians and Roman Catholics were regarded as "lax" by other denominations. They did not forbid "worldly" pleasures - that is, dancing, theater-going, and card playing. They encouraged organ recitals and "high falooten" anthems in the church. Their priests attended parties and baseball games. Imagine being called to a dying person from a whist table or a theater! The Christian Church forbade all instruments for use in Church.

Frequent revival services were¹ held to guard the young folks from the "snares" placed around them by Episcopalians and Roman Catholics, and the ungodly folk who encouraged public and private dancing, cards, theaters and baseball. They were also intended to recall to the paths of virtue "backsliders," who were those that had put their hands to the church and withdrawn them for unholy things such as swindling, swearing, stealing, drunkenness, or debauchery. The revivals did a great deal of good. They were one

1 *The Weekly Mercury*, October 2, 1895

of the chief agents in ridding Huntsville of open saloons. They did some harm in putting evil thoughts into innocent pleasure and by stirring prejudice against other denominations.

They were conducted daily for from one week to a month at a time. One that was held at Dallas Avenue Baptist Church lasted from September 18th to October 1st, 1895. The preacher was the Reverend A. E. Burns. Services were held twice daily and were delivered for emotional appeal. Stories of the dire misfortune attending sin and the woes suffered by parents of wayward sons kept the congregation in a hysterical state. When the proper psychological state was attained an emotional hymn was sung and sinners were invited to come up to the mourners' bench. There the faithful would interview them, urging them to confess their sins, to repent, to promise never to commit them again. As they confessed, the faithful would pray for them.

Then those who had confessed Christ were frequently invited to stand up if they were not ashamed of Him and to come forward and shake hands with the preacher if they were willing to serve Him.

At the end of the revival there was a baptismal service to admit any who wanted to become Christians.

If the service took place in a Methodist Church there was always an "experience" meeting. Those who had been converted during other revivals would stand up in church and tell why they were induced to become members. If they had been notorious sinners they would describe their wickedness and their emotions at repentance. A friend would then testify as to their lives since being converted.

The aim of many Methodists was to become sanctified, to attain a state of sinlessness. They believed that once sanctified there could be no backsliding.

Huntsville was a fertile field for revivals as there was a saloon in every hotel: Mr. Chris McDonald's, Mr. Varin's, Mr. Struve's, Mr. Yarbrough's, the infamous Dewdrop Saloon, and Bryant's Saloon at which many shootings occurred during this period. Habitual drunkards, gamblers, brothels, and dope fiends were natural consequences of saloons.

Then there were minor counts: underfed children, idiots, deformed children, and invalid wives. Revivalists were sincere reformers. They met the sin squarely and never minimized responsibility for its results. They frightened many sinners into the straight path of righteousness by describing hell with all its tortures. There was a pit of burning fire for the impure, a never ceasing stream of boiling liquid for inebriates, seared flesh for adulterers, and hot coals for liars' tongues, and devils with white-hot tridents to prod and brand murderers.

There was a story of the man, John Smith, who yielded to the first temptation. He was at a dance. A friend invited him into a bar. The room was glittering with mirrors and gas lights. Pretty

girls awaited the drinkers in little alcoves. John's mother had taught him that drunkenness was a sin. The friend said, "One drink won't hurt. Be a sport."

John smelt the liquor. He did not want to spoil the party so he drank. Then he spent a half hour with one of the pretty girls on his knees and he drank again. He did not mean to get drunk. He was just showing that he was a sport. He would prove that he was not tied to his mother's apron strings. He drank again.

By that time he saw at least three times as many mirrors and lamps and pretty girls as were in the bar but he was happy. Then he saw his friend kiss the girl who had been sitting on his knee. He slapped him for the insult. The friend knocked John down. John staggered to his feet, found his pistol in his hip pocket and fired. The friend and the girl both fell. John laughed. It was great sport. He would try that little racket again. So he aimed at the bartender who had leaped over the bar toward him. He fell.

Then John walked home.

Two hours later his mother and father were aroused by knocks at their door. The police demanded their son John.

"John?" cried the mother. "Why, John is a good boy. He has never given me one moment's uneasiness in his life. You must mean someone else."

"No," said the police. "We mean your son. He is a murderer."

"A murderer!" screamed the mother. The next moment she was lying on the floor in a swoon. The police found John in bed with all his clothes on. After a great deal of shaking they aroused him. He looked at them half unconscious.

"Come along," said the police. They dragged him to jail between them.

At the trial he could not recall any incident of the fatal evening after the second drink. But he was hung just the same.

Rev. W. H. Williams gave a series of lectures at the City Hall on "Keeley Graduates" and "Your Boy and His Company."² Rev. L. C. Branscomb held a two weeks revival in the Southern Depot vicinity to try to attract men who were on their way to the Dewdrop Saloon and the red-light district.

The Women's Christian Temperance Union held their State Convention at the First Baptist Church, Huntsville on November 26th and 27th, 1895. Their "war cry" was *For God and Home and Native Land*. There were forty delegates present. They were both earnest and alive to the need of their mission and the ripeness of the harvest. In a paper on narcotics, Mrs. Phillips suggested that the Union should collect statistics on the effects of intoxicants and publish them on the back of next year's program. Mrs. Marietta Sibert, in a paper entitled "Unfermented Sacramental Wines," pro-

posed that members of the Union induce their church to adopt it. Sixteen delegates reported that unfermented wine was already used in the churches they attended.

Children were urged to make a vow never to touch intoxicants or any form of tobacco. As soon as they did they were enrolled as a member of the Womens' Christian Temperance Union.

There were also parades in which the ladies dressed in white, carried posters through the streets and placed them at saloon doors. Children were also admitted to these parades.

Mrs. Carrie Nation was in Huntsville during one of the demonstrations and slung her hatchet at the mirrors of the Dewdrop Saloon. She created such a sensation that all of the non-union ladies who could get near the depot drove down in carriages, hacks, surreys, and buggies to study her straight-lined, long mannish coat-suit and still more mannish hat and shoes. Her garb was not her strong point certainly. She carried (probably for effect merely) a hatchet and shouted "Down with the saloon! To hell with them before they take your sons there."

The fine ladies sat back in their cushioned seats and shuddered. It was almost as if they had seen a fire-filled manhole open and their sons pulled into its writhing flames.

Mrs. Nation approached one carriage and shouted to its occupant, "You ought to go home and tear off those plumes and gewgaws and make corns on your knees praying for your lost soul. You are lost, sister, lost! Pray God for repentance."

After that outburst some of the carriages which could be turned drove off. The fair ladies had no desire to be a stop for that hatchet.

The campaign against open saloons was begun by a petition signed by one thousand seventy-four citizens to the city council to prohibit saloons opening on Sunday. All of the ministers in town prohibited saloons opening on Sunday and they cooperated in this attempt. Dr. J. M. Banister, Rev. L. C. Branscomb, Rev. Oscar Heywood, and Rev. J. W. Caldwell addressed the Board on the subject. Mayor Hutchens replied that a recent decision of the Supreme Court requiring the city to prove the sale of liquor made the enforcement of such an ordinance impossible. Bars were attached to every hotel. Hotels were permitted to serve guests liquors. Saloons such as McDonald's also had restaurants. They, too, had the right to serve liquors with meals. How were the police to know when a saloon was serving a meal as a blind to a drink? How could they keep customers from patronizing saloon restaurants?

The committee finally persuaded the Council to raise the fine of such sale from Ten Dollars to Fifty Dollars.³ In 1898 all of the saloons were closed by the passage of the Moody Dispensary Bill which was a great victory for temperance forces.

3 *The Weekly Mercury*, December 4, 1895

Chapter 13

Observance of Festivals

Christmas was always a great fete in Huntsville. Every family had a special celebration for the day. Down at the Garths there was a Christmas tree for the children and the children's friends with a party following. After the presents were distributed there were such games as Puss-in-the-corner; Hide and Seek; Drop the Handkerchief; Oats, Wheat, Beans and Barley Gorr; Frog in the Middle Pond; London Bridge is Falling Down; and Clap In, Clap Out. Then the folding doors to the dining room were thrown open and there was the table decorated with lighted candles and holly under a huge bunch of mistletoe with a whole six quarts of ice cream standing upright in a circular mold on a silver salver. Silver cake baskets were filled with white and black fruit cake in "snowballs,"¹ and sponge cake for the smaller children was served on Dresden china cake plates.

In every home where there were children, stockings were hung by the mantel place for each child to receive gifts from Santa. That worthy saint came in those days from the North Pole, driving magic reindeer through the air. He sat in his sleigh encompassed by gifts. He lit on each house, went down the chimney to fill each stocking, and the child who was skeptical about these facts got no presents. Good children were rewarded with many gifts. Bad ones received switches stuck in a stocking full of ashes. An orange, some nuts, an apple, a cornucopia of candy filled the top of each good child's stocking. Horns, balls, and small gifts were in the top and toe. Larger gifts were placed on the floor around the hearth.

Clement Moore's *The Night Before Christmas* was said in thousands of homes before Christmas and read from beautifully illustrated books on Christmas morning.

Excitement was so great that it was hard for children to go to bed after the stockings were hung. Many of the older ones tried to stay awake to catch Santa even though that prank ended his visits

1 Snowballs were individual cakes made in bell-shaped iron cups. Fruit cake was the only kind shaped like this.

to them. Sleepless and crying children were warned that Santa stayed away from children who were awake or crying. Anxious fathers had to bank the fires for it was not uncommon for children to rise to see their toys at two o'clock in the morning. Lamps were turned up so that no gift would be overlooked. The children tried to catch the servants' Christmas gift. Gifts, oranges, candies and whiskey were always distributed to them. All members of a household enjoyed firecrackers, Roman candles and other illuminations early Christmas morning and Christmas night. Some families had special ways of celebrating as in the following instance.

Through the intense darkness of a December night the stars were silently twinkling hosts of brilliant little watchers above the dense irregular shadows of trees. Truly, in Huntsville:

"The Heavens declare the glory of God,
And the firmament showeth His handiwork."

They witness the beauties of this world and challenge the imagination as to what will be revealed as the soul crosses the unfathomable night of death.

Three little children looked on with peculiar interest. They were out for the first time under the stars at three o'clock in the morning. The day was Christmas, 1893; their destination, the Negro cabins on the hill behind the big house; their ambition, "to catch the Christmas gift" of every little darkey on the place. As they stumbled along in the darkness, Uncle Simon, an old colored man who accompanied them, protested to Aunt Margaret, their Mammy:

"Margit, why 'n cho lemme light de lantern? Furst thin ye know, somebody's gwinter break dey teeth out."

"Gone an' break 'em out den. Ye talk like ye ain't neber walk in de dark befo'."

"Yas, I'se walked in the dark before," he acknowledged, "but I don't see no use walkin' in it when ye don't hafter. We're got a purfectly good lantern, an' all we got ter do ter mist is strike a match."

"But we ain't gwin ter strike it," said Mammy calmly. "Ain't we out ter ketch dey Chris'mas gifts?"

"Encourse," he admitted.

"Well, how ye reckon we gwine ter ketch 'em ef dey see us comin'?"

"Ye don't 'spec' 'em ter be up lookin' fur us, does ye?"

"Not 'zactly settin' up — jest kinder easy waked when an on-natchurl light flashes 'cross de wall."

"What will they say, Mammy, when all of us catch them?" asked little Ellelee.

"Wait an' see, honey."

Uncle Simon took the interruption as a means of dropping an unpleasant discussion. The three children clung closer to Mammy as they entered the shadows of the cedars. The stars seemed to brighten with the gloom. There were many rocks and trees from which wildcats or foxes might spring. Mammy told the children to watch the stars, that the Christmas angels might be hovering over them. As they passed a large cedar on the spring branch a huge hoot owl fluttered so near that he almost touched one of the children's head. It was "spooky". From there on the path was more open. At last Andy's cabin was dimly visible. Their approach was detected and challenged by Andy's dog. At this instant Uncle Simon forgot the precaution of stealth. He set down the basket which he was carrying and heaved a large rock at the dog. His aim was bad. His missile hit the house.

Almost instantly the cabin door opened and a figure illuminated by the firelight within stood in the door. "Who dat hittin' my house?" demanded Andy.

"Christmas gift!" was the reply.

"Bless me life, ef it ain't my little misses," laughed Andy. "Kotch old Andy's Chri'mas gif' did ye! An' de Lawd do ter ye as ye do ter me!"

A dozen nappy, little heads were stuck through the frame of the door and again the children yelled, "Christmas gift!"

As they ascended the four ladder-like steps into the room the little pickaninnies stood aside in mute respect. Despite the cabin's black exterior it contained a fire of many tongues. It lighted the room perfectly. The white children went toward it with palms extended. Mammy and Uncle Simon set their baskets on the floor and warmed their feet by alternately sticking them into the fire and drawing them back. The pickaninnies huddled around their visitors.

"What did Santy brin' you?" asked Sarah Jane.

"Oh, heaps of things," replied the younger girl. "A doll house furnished in the style of Louis Quinze."

"What's that?" asked Sarah Jane.

"Louis Quinze was a French king," said Ellelee. "Aunt Ellelee got this furniture when she was a little girl. Her father, Grandfather Chapman, took her to France with him."

"Uh-uh!" grunted Sarah Jane.

"She gave it to Felicia when Felicia was a little girl and Felicia let Santa Claus have it for us."

"Fine!" said Hannah who had edged close to Sarah Jane and had now sunken to a squatting position and was hugging her knees.

"Chillern," said Mammy, "ef yer 'spec's ter ketch any yudder Chris'mas gif's ye better gittin' ter work."

Ellelee went to Mammy's basket and drew out a bundle.

"For Sarah Jane," she said.

"Thank ye," said Sarah Jane, bowing and running to a corner

to open it before the little girl and boy could give her an orange and cornucopia of candy from Uncle Simon's basket.

Hannah came next; then Tom, Jim, Mandy, Luke, Peter, Abednego, Liza, Molly, John and Sue, in the order of their ages. Andy and Adelaide were to go to the house for their gifts but they were given oranges and candy from the baskets.

As soon as the gifts were distributed Uncle Simon and Mammy picked up their baskets and the children followed them to the next cabin. It was almost daylight by the time they made the rounds and reached home again.

Flopping down on a kitchen chair, Uncle Simon remarked, "Praise Gawd, we ain't 'stribute presents as much as we has Chris'-mas trees!"

"This is lots more fun than Christmas trees," said Ellelee.

"Naw tain't, little missus," he said, "Gettin' up 'fo 'day an' breakin' yer toes off on rocks jist ter see little niggers grin ober dey presen' ain't no fun 'tall. 'Sides, yer gits so hongry seein' yudder fellows eat. An' yer gits home an' Milly ain't studying breakfas'." A moment's silence, then, "Pears like I'se done mos' work enouf fur an eggnog."

Ellelee's merry laugh almost drowned Mammy's, "Why didn't yer say so furst? 'Tain't no need er spendin' der night crossin' de room."

Such was the interest between whites and blacks in the early nineties in Huntsville. Mammy would have risked her life for any of those children or their friends. She was a type common to this old community, faithful to simple trust, capable in kitchen and other housework, philosophic towards the temptations and crosses of humanity, cheerful and determined, ready to serve wherever her service was needed. Uncle Simon, too, was a type. He fussed while enjoying unusual occasions thoroughly. He pretended to be bored simply to attract the proper rewards for service. He was a trusted coachman and one who never betrayed that trust.

Invitations had gone out for a candy stew at the Clay's home for December 29, 1896. Every child in Miss Mary's school could hardly wait for Santa Claus to be gone, that the stew might begin. At last the date arrived. Each child was received at the front door and ushered immediately to the kitchen. The kitchen, like so many of the oldest kitchens around Huntsville, was in an out-building with no shed between it and the house. As they entered it they found Miss Elodie over a great copper kettle full of boiling molasses. She was testing it by dipping a long-handled lead spoon into it and letting it drop back into the kettle. After a while she dropped a little into a white china cup with a wide gold band around the top. Rolling it around in the water several times she finally took it out in a soft ball and began pulling it. It was done. Taking the kettle

off the fire she poured the boiling molasses onto the marble topped biscuit block over shelled black walnuts.

The children wanted to pull it at once but they were warned that it was too hot. Soon Miss Mary buttered her fingers and told each of the children to butter his. Taking a spoon she raked a lump of cooled candy from the edges and began pulling it. It was very sticky, hot, and hard to manage at first. As soon as she had it so that it would keep in a rope, Miss Elodie took another spoonful and poured it onto it as Miss Mary pulled. The children watched the process with watering mouths. When a large rope of it was cooled, Miss Mary divided it with several children saying, "Mind that you don't drop it!" After watching them a few minutes she added, "Mary, you handle yours too much. Touch it only with the tips of your fingers. "Robert, butter your fingers. You will have to strip your skin if it gets on much more of your hands. Pull faster, Jennie. Veredot, don't get it all over the front of your pinafore."

Some of the children decided to pool their shares and pull it together. It rapidly became a great golden rope, smooth and shiny as satin. After a while Miss Mary said, "Now, Children, we can go to the back porch where the candy will cool faster. Watch that it does not get too brittle before you cut it."

While they pulled they had a good time bantering each other. The older ones frequently stopped theirs to help disentangle some tiny fingers or to console some careless one who had let his rope break in the middle and had lost half of it on the brick floor. At one time there was a piercing shriek. Reuben had gotten his candy mixed with Alice's hair. Would it have to be lost? Of course, Reuben meant the candy; and Alice, the hair.

Then Miss Mary asked, "Charles, how did you get that dirt on your candy?"

"It jess' come'd there," said Charles sheepishly eyeing his hands and candy alternately.

"You can't eat that," said Miss Mary. "Throw it out, and tell Miss Elodie to give you another lump. Wash your hands in the pan there," she added, pointing to a tin pan beside a brass-bound red cedar bucket on a shelf on the edge of the porch.

Charles surreptitiously bit off a mouthful of candy before pitching his lump into the yard.

He was mouth-bound when Miss Mary said, "Charles, would you like part of this rope which I have started?" Redder and redder, Charles stood first on one foot then on the other and said nothing. After waiting a reasonable time for his reply, Miss Mary said, "Did you hear, Charles?"

Charles nodded but said nothing. He could not even swallow for fear of being caught. What was he to do? Miss Mary helped him decide. "Spit that dirty candy out of your mouth, sir, before it makes you sick." Charles would like to have obeyed but could

not. He was stuck fast. By this time the whole party was wise to his little game. They invited him to dissolve his mouthful in water which they thoughtfully offered to him by the dipperful. He was more embarrassed by every attention and finally ran into the kitchen to be comforted by Miss Elodie.

The others soon had long ropes of golden satin twists which they laid on a marble-topped table to be cut with a large pair of shears into little "pillows" or broken by cracking it against the table. Each amount was packed in a little homemade box to be carried off as a memento of the occasion.

When everyone was through Mrs. Clay served a dish of ambrosia to each child. Then they sang Christmas carols around the fireplace in the front parlor. As dark fell they gravely thanked each of the Clays for a happy afternoon and went home.

The Methodist Church celebrated Christmas, 1892 with an unusual device. A one-room cottage, erected in a clump of cedar trees in the front of the church, was covered with snow, the eaves and chimney dangling with icicles. Each tree in the background glittered with bright ornaments. Miss Nona Robinson, at the organ, played an accompaniment to the trombone and violin-cello. As they played a march the Sunday school children came from the crypt through the front door to the pews reserved for them at the front of the church. When they were seated the choir sang an anthem. Then Mr. Simpson prayed. While the children were singing a carol Santa Claus popped out of the cottage chimney and hastily distributed gifts from his bag to the children. He also delivered a silver service from the congregation to Mr. Simpson.

Mr. McDonald, Mrs. Jackson Rand, and Miss Lucy Lowe were responsible for this program.²

The Cumberland Presbyterian Church, at Christmas, 1894, contained a snow covered forest. After the prayer and carols, Santa Claus emerged from the forest with his hat in his hand. Passing from pew to pew he received in it money and gifts to distribute to the poor who had assembled in the front of the Church. After collecting the gifts he presented them with packages of fruit and wishes for a Merry Christmas to the poor. He then left as he had come.

This was Mr. Phillip Hand's idea. Mr. Frank Esslinger was Santa Claus.³

All Saints was an Episcopal chapel on a lot just north of Calhoun Grove. There were a number of ladies and gentlemen interested in the work there. Unfortunately, the chapel was too far from Lawrence Village to get either the congregation or protection which

2 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, December 29, 1892

3 *The Weekly Mercury*, January 2, 1895

it deserved. Its windows were targets for boys' rocks. Its swinging lamps and Bible were stolen monthly. What the curious did with the Bibles no one could imagine. They were regularly replaced by gifts from some member of the Church of the Nativity and services went on.

In 1892, Mrs. C. W. Longworthy, Misses Mary Larned Newman, and Eliza Warwick were in charge of the Church tree. They conducted the festival very much the same as the Nativity festival was conducted. Of course, the money for presents and clothing was donated by the older Church. There was an overflow attendance.⁴

The Church of the Nativity's Christmas festival was a regular event. Preparations were begun the first Sunday in Advent. General practicings were held in the Church every Sunday afternoon beginning at three o'clock and ending after six o'clock. Class practicings were held at the teacher's homes one afternoon during the week. The carols for these festivals were written and composed by Mr. George S. Gordon, Mrs. Louise Banister, and Miss Elodie Clay, or the music of some opera or other pretty air was adapted to words written by Miss Mary Ann Cruse or one of the Clays. Usually Miss Elodie Clay, Mrs. Sue Todd, Mrs. Richard Walker or Miss Grace Russell directed the carols.

A committee of ladies selected and arranged the gifts, oranges, and candies. Mrs. Pyncheon, Mrs. M. F. Terry, Miss Mattie Newman and Miss Jennie Sheffey were the regular members of this committee at the time.⁵

Money was supplied by the parents of each child in the Sunday School. The tree was given either by Mr. Winston F. Garth, Mr. Horace Drake, Mr. Ben Matthews, Mr. William Davis, or Mrs. Reuben Chapman. Dolls were daintily dressed by members of the Woman's Guild. Lace-trimmed under clothes, hand-tucked and embroidered dresses, sashes and hair ribbons made them beautiful.

When the children came in on Christmas Eve they were thrilled by the glittering red, green, and silver ornaments dangling from the topmost twig and lowest branch of the spreading cedar which filled the chancel. Presents were heaped in piles on the chancel steps. The Holy Innocents were running around the Church trying to carry off the ornaments or hugging one another. Each older child went to his appointed pew. When all were assembled the organ sounded and the children arose to entone the short Evening Prayer which Dr. Banister read. After *Come All Ye Faithful* the Holy Innocents were arranged in a semi-circle at the foot of the Chancel. The school stood to sing a carol while the Holy Innocents received

4 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, November 29, 1892

5 *Ibid*, November 23, 1892

dolls, wagons, or wooly lambs, oranges and cornucopias.

Lambs of the Flock, Little Gleaners, Lillies of the Valley, Stars of Bethlehem, Pearl Gatherers, Daughters of the Church, Branches of the Vine, Bishop's Boys, Children of the Good Shepherd, Crown Jewels, Pillars of the Temple, Budds of Promise, Daisy Chain, Soldiers of the Cross, and Choristers followed. Those who could, sang their own carol. The school and choir sang for the younger classes.

On these occasions the Church was filled to capacity. Few of the other denominations had a regular Christmas festival. Many old people came to renew their memories of childhood. Even the slaves' benches on the side aisle were crowded.

The Easter Festival was just as great a celebration at the Church of the Nativity as Christmas. Some children enjoyed it more than Christmas. During Lent the Church School was stirred with the spirit of class rivalry. Each child worked all Lent to make money for his Easter offering.

The festival was the time when each church school class made its collective offering to the Church. On this occasion each class carried a banner, a symbol; they also carried the offering to the chancel. The child having the best class record in scholarship and attendance carried the symbol; the one having the next best record in these carried the banner; and the one having earned the largest amount of money carried the offering.

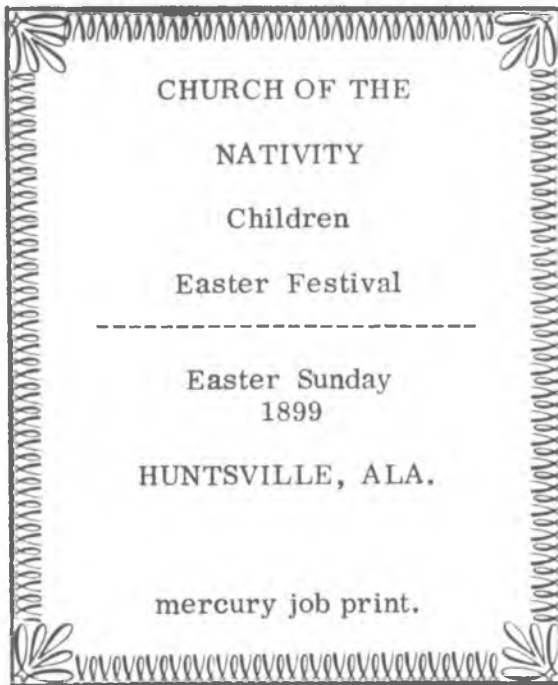
The banners were satin, bearing a hand-painted legend of the class. The symbols were beautiful. Holy Innocents carried a Bambino; Lambs of the Flock, a lamb holding a banner bearing the symbol of faith, a cross within a circle; Little Gleaners presented a golden sickle; Stars of Bethlehem, a bunch of those flowers; Pearl Gatherers, a shell of pearls; Daughters of the Church, a miniature replica of the Church of the Nativity with stained glass windows lighted by a candle from within.

The service opened with chanted responses, prayers, and the creed as did the Christmas festival. Each little child knelt with eyes raised to the altar over which was a picture of Christ holding a sphere in rich reds and blue stained glass.

The super altar was massed in spring blossoms, emblems of the resurrection. The white satin altar cloth shimmered under the light of the flickering gas.

The seven branched candlesticks were like gilded trees on either side of the super altar. St. Peter looked down severely from one side of Christ; St. James from the other.

Unfortunately, there are none of the carol books of the Nineties in the church files but those of 1889 are there. As they will give an idea of the type of carols used in those festivals they are included.



I

Opening Chorus

Christ is risen! Alleluia!
Risen our victorious Head!
Sing His praises! Alleluia!
Christ is risen from the dead!
Gratefully our hearts adore Him,
Rising up in grief and tears.
(Repeat first four lines for chorus.)

Christ is risen! All the sadness
Of our Lenten fast is O'er,
Through the open gates of gladness
He returns to life once more.
Death and Hell before Him bending,
He doth rise the victor now,
Angels on His steps attending,
Glory round His wounded brow. (Chorus)

Christ is risen! Henceforth never
Death or Hell shall us enthrall,

Be we Christ's in Him forever,
We have triumphed over all
All the doubting and dejection
Of our trembling hearts have ceased;
'Tis His day of resurrection,
Let us rise and keep the feast.

II

Confession - Absolution - Lord's Prayer.

III

Apostles' Creed

IV

Holy Innocents Chorus

Bright Easter skies! Fair Easter skies!
Our Lord has risen, we too shall rise,
Nor walls of stone hewn firm and cold;
Nor Roman soldiers brave and bold;
Nor Satan's marshalled host could keep –
The pierced hands in deadly sleep;
Just as the Easter day beams down,
Our Buried Lord has gone,
Bright Easter skies! Fair Easter skies!
Our Lord has risen, we, too shall rise.

Sweet Easter flowers! White Easter flowers!
From Heaven descend life giving showers,
Each plant that bloomed at Easter's birth
Shall blow again o'er ransomed earth,
Pluck lilies rare and roses sweet,
And strew the path of Jesus' feet
Throw fragrant palms before our King
And wreath the crown we bring.
(Repeat first verse).

O Christian child! O Christian men!
Our victor Lord shall come again
Lift we our love to His right hand
With warmest hopes to Easter skies
Stretch we our arms and fix our eyes
Till in the clouds His sign we see,
And all shout Jubilee. (Repeat first verse).

V

Lambs of the Flock - Little Gleaners Chorus

Awake and sing the song
 The glorious Easter strain,
 Wake every heart and every tongue,
 To praise the Saviour's name.
 Sing of his dying love,
 Sing of his rising power;
 Sing how he intercedes above
 For those who sins he bore.
 Awake and sing!

Sing on your Heavenly way,
 Ye ransomed sinners, sing;
 Sing on, rejoicing every day,
 In Christ th' Eternal King.
 Soon shall ye hear Him say,
 "Ye blessed children come!"
 Soon will he call you hence away
 And take his wanderers home.
 Awake and sing!

VI

Lilies of the Valley - Stars of Bethlehem
 Pearl Gatherers Carol.

Shout the blessed Easter song,
 Let the chorus swell;
 Christ hath conquered evermore
 Death, the Grave, and Hell!
 Every tear be wiped away,
 Hush'd each rising sob,
 Let each aching heart now rest
 From its painful throb.
 Every soul be filled with joy.
 Praise trill every voice,
 For the glorious Easter bright
 Bids the world rejoice!

All ye ransomed ones of God
 On the other side,
 Who have triumphed over Death,
 Join the Easter-tide.
 With the angels 'round His throne,

Cherubim and Seraphim,
With the multitudes of Earth
In the Easter hymn!
These shall Paradise and Heaven
With their countless throng,
Swell with grand, majestic choir,
Earth's grand Easter song!

VII

Daughters of the Church

Chorus:

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
Now all the bells are ringing
To welcome Easter Day.
And we with joy are singing
Our carols sweet and gay;
For Jesus hath arisen
From Joseph's rocky cave,
Hath burst His three days' prison,
And triumphed O'er the grave,
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
O hasten we to meet Him!
With our companions dear,
With love and awe to greet Him
As he is drawing near;
Of old His friends were bidden
To haste to Gallilee;
Still in His Church all glorious
Our risen Lord will be
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
Still Jesus! We adore Thee.
With faith which may not fail
Still as we kneel before Thee
We hear Thee say, "All hail!"
Thou Who art now descending
To raise us up to Thee,
An Easter tide unending
Grant us in Heaven to see!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

VIII

Branches of the Vine Bishop's Boys' Carol.

Sing out with joy and gladness,
With heart and soul and voice
In songs of praise and Easter lays
Let the whole world rejoice
Sing 'till the strain be wafted
To earth's remotest end,
Sing 'till the choir of angels
Their songs with ours shall blend,
Louder than Christmas anthem
As it rang O'er earth and sky,
Shall be our lay, this Easter day,
To Christ the Lord Most High.
No longer at the manger.
Our homage glad we bring,
To Christ the Babe, this Easter
We hail Him Conqueror, King!
Then sing to Christ the Victor,
Victor of death and hell;
To Christ the King, glad praises bring
To Him the chorus swell.
Sing 'till the rocks and mountains
Shall join our Easter strain.
Sing 'till the Earth and Heavens
Give back Our Lord. Amen.

IX

Children of the Good Shepherd

Chorus:

He is risen! He is risen!
Tell it with a joyous voice
He has burst His three days prison
Let the whole wide earth rejoice
Death is vanquished, man is free,
Christ has won the victory.

He is risen! He is risen!
Glory to the King of Kings!
Tell it to the sinners weeping,
Over deeds in darkness done,
Weary fast and vigil keeping

Brightly breaks their Easter sun,
Christ has borne our sins away,
Christ has conquered Hell today.
(Chorus)

He is risen! He is risen!
He hath op'ed the eternal gate
We are loosed from sin's dark prisons,
Risen to a holier state,
Where a brightening Easter beam
On our longing eyes shall stream
(Chorus).

X

Crown Jewels
Pillars of the Temple Carol

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
The crown is on the victor's brow
Finished is the battle now
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Chorus:
Hence with sadness
Sing with gladness
Hallelujah!

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Glad in glory He arose
Bright with triumph o'er his foes.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah! (Chorus).

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
For He hath closed Hell's yawning door,
Heaven is open evermore.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah! (Chorus).

IX

Buds of Promise
Daisy Chain Carol

Christ is risen! Easter light
Scatters shades of death and night,
Streams into an empty tomb,
Floods its solemn deathlike gloom,

Christ is risen! Easter joy
Holy pure without alloy,
Springs up in our gladden'd hearts,
Light, and hope, and peace imparts.
For the blessing Easter brings,
Glory to the King of Kings!

Christ is risen! Far on high,
Echoed back from earth to sky,
Thunders out the Easter chant,
Deep, exulting, jubilant.
Christ is risen! Loud and long
Let the rolling tide of song
Ebb and flow like ocean swell
To the Lord of earth and hell,
For the blessing Easter brings
Glory to the King of Kings.

Christ is risen! All our fears,
All our terrors, griefs and tears
Wrung by Death's relentless hand
Sink to rest at His command.
Christ is risen! Calm and deep
Death is now a peaceful sleep,
And the grave a quiet bed
For the holy sainted dead.
For the blessings Easter brings
Glory to the King of Kings!

XII

Choristers Carol

Winds in your mystic flight descend,
Warm with the breath of Spring
Above the budding blossoms bend,
Your welcome whispering,
With gladsome tidings from above
 of glories newly born,
Awake our hearts to life and love
This radiant Easter morn.

Chorus:

Birds! In leafy branches,
Send your chorus through the sky,
"Glory in the highest. Glory be to God
 on High!"

Breezes blow, and blossoms whisper
thro' your lips of bloom,
"Christus resurrexit!
Christ has risen from the tomb."

Blow, violets, in mossy dells,
Bloom, bridal roses, pale!
In gladness ring your fairy bells
Sweet lilies of the vale!
From garden bright and sylvan haunt,
Bring forth your bright array
To wreath the cross, and heap the font
This glorious Easter! (Chorus).

XII

Address

XIV

Anthems by the Choir

XV

Benediction

Easter service at the Church of the Nativity, April 1st, 1891, was enhanced by the music of the choir which was composed of Miss Mary Lou Brown, contralto; Mr. Frank Newman, tenor; and Mr. George Motz, bass. The choristers were trained by Mrs. J. M. Banister, led by Mr. John Hay. The music was by Mr. Leo P. Wheat, Mr. E. W. Crozier, and Mr. George S. Gordon. The Sunday School festival was trained by Mrs. Sue Todd, Miss Julia Humes and Miss Barnard, assisting.⁶

Mr. George Gordon composed a great many hymns for the Church of the Nativity which are still in manuscript. *Hark! Hark! My Soul!* is one. The melody of this composition is much more effective than that of any airs that are now sung to those words. He wrote a triumphant air to *The Strife is O'er, the Battle Done*,⁷ and a plaintive, yet quieting air, to *Softly Now the Light of Day*.⁸

6 *The Weekly Mercury*, April 8, 1891;

7 Sung in Easter Service, 1897; *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, April 21, 1897. There were thirty-two choristers at that service.;

8 Sung Easter evening, 1897; *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, April 21, 1897

His anthems and chants are still favorites with the choristers at the Nativity. He played the organ as well as he composed. His personality had the power to impress itself indelibly upon his associates. He seemed to be visibly present whenever they spoke of him. Then, too, his impress was always favorable. Everyone who knew him spoke of him as if he were one of the most agreeable, capable, accomodating person imaginable. An unusually thoughtful act brought such comments as "George Gordon couldn't have done better." He was classed as "a handsome man," "an old-fashioned gentleman," "a cultured gentleman." His tastes and talents seem to have kept him in a high strata from which he could send suggestions to better his community.

Independence Day

July 4, 1899, the Mayor and Aldermen gave an old-fashioned celebration with many new ideas introduced. Bands from Chattanooga and Nashville assisted Pratt's Military Band; Mr. John H. Wallace delivered the address of welcome from the Court House steps; Mr. William H. Bankhead read the Declaration of Independence. Then Nashville, Chattanooga, and Huntsville fire companies made a spectacular run up Washington Street around the Court House to the First National Bank where they displayed their abilities in the technique of spraying water on a building. When the excitement of this demonstration was over a parade of thirty-six floats, thirty carriages, twenty-five ponies, thirty Indians and a hundred members of the Junior Order of American Mechanics came around the Square. Each float represented some product, or a fanciful idea, of the firm which it represented. They were constructed on wagon beds and drawn by two or four horses. They were on the order of Mardi gras floats. The ladies of the town had been busy for weeks making paper flowers to decorate them and the carriages which were in the parade. Each selected a certain kind of flower and turned it out in wholesale lots.

The prettiest float was a white swan drawn by four white horses harnessed in white. It was trimmed in cotton-balls and flowers, and contained thirteen young girls wearing white cotton dresses, each holding a silver oar bearing the name of one of the cotton states. It received first prize.

The Monte Sano Dairy float was a Swiss dairy scene with a live Jersey cow on it. Rose Meadows was also on the float, dressed in a Swiss dairy-maid costume, and was approaching the cow with a stool and pail in her hand. It took the second prize.⁹

⁹ *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, July 12, 1899

The carriages were decorated solidly in flowers. The parasols of the ladies riding in victorias were also covered with them. The high swung phaeton, driven by Miss Mabel Humphrey, was quite a contrast to the ordinary vehicle. Willie Strange's large wheel bicycle created great mirth. He was greeted as the "high boy." He competed well, however, in speed with the modern type of bicycle. He accentuated his aged costume by a shallow crown derby and three-quarter length trousers.

Immediately after the parade the crowd went to the Calhoun Grove where a barbecue was served by the merchants and city officials. Then the people entered into sports and speeches with an old-time relish which was genuine. The day was an indication of the spirit of the people.



Chapter 14

Recreation

Amusement was capable of coming in any form to pleasure-loving Huntsvillians but they liked some of its methods better than others. They liked boat excursions¹ although the nearest navigable stream was ten miles away. Whenever the mood for a boat excursion came, the way of satisfying it was easy to settle. They could hire hacks, wagonettes, and surries from Stegall, Rogers, or Wells, or they could charter a train from the Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis Railway. They could induce a Church to sponsor the trip, hire the boat at Whitesburg and get a crowd to attend.

Boat excursions from Hobbs' Island to Decatur or from Hobbs' Island to Guntersville were sponsored by the Churches.²

The Cumberland Presbyterian Church advertised such an outing on May 23, 1895.³ Coaches were chartered from the Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis Railroad from Huntsville to Hobbs' Island. They left the station at nine o'clock. A steamboat was awaiting the passengers at Hobbs' Island. After everyone boarded it steamed out into the beautiful Tennessee River and headed for Decatur.

Not even the Hudson could rival the Tennessee in variety or beauty of scenery. In places it was like the Rhine; low, broad, flat banks broken only by willows sweeping the river current. Painted cliffs towered in grandeur above it. Cypress, oak, willow, elm, hickory, and maple formed groves at some of its turns.

Again it flowed between cultivated fields. Its waters were rarely clear. Warm red clay banks descended thirty or forty feet to meet the waters and it cut its course between mountains.

At Decatur it was a mile wide. It looked like a great lake with promontories and plateaus extending far into it on the north.

The excursionists had all of this beauty, music and ice cream sherbert for Seventy Five Cents from Huntsville to Huntsville.

A moonlight boat trip to Guntersville was given by the Presby-

1 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, June 6, 1894

2 *Ibid*,

3 *The Weekly Mercury*, May 1, 1895

terian Church on July 21, 1899. All of the society group were participants. The water, moonlight, music - romance. *Juanita*, *Seeing Nellie Home*, *There'll Be a Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight*, *Two Little Girls in Blue*, *Sweet Marie*, *Anie Laurie* and *Sweet Rosy O'Grady* were a few of the airs with which love glances were couched while chaperones sang and pretended not to see.

The chaperone was a class distinct. No group of young people was permitted to leave home without a number of approved chaperones. On such an excursion as this, they were scattered about the boat to prevent any "spooning," or "fast" conduct. But they mingled freely in the games, songs, or other modes of entertainment and watched shadows like hawks watch their prey. It was a great game to elude the watchful eye. Much could be said in song that could not cause offense as songs were popular. The more love they expressed the more suitable they were. Melancholy was a fashionable state, too. *Long Years Ago in Old Madrid*, *Pauline*, *Afterwards*, and *After the Ball* were as tonic to this mood and were sung with suitable lingering tones as if regret were the only experience worth enduring.

Another form of social entertainment to which a great deal of hard work was attached was Church suppers. In Huntsville these suppers were made as attractive as possible. The menu was good, of course. But the menu was the least feature of it. Each supper was an event.

As soon as a vacant store was secured, a committee of ladies was appointed to decorate it. They hung curtains, brought cut flowers and potted plants, fine damask and silver, Haviland, cut-glass and Dresden, to make the tables as inviting as possible.

The decade opened with a Church supper in the Halsey Building opposite the Huntsville Hotel and was under the auspices of Mrs. Margaret Bolling for the Church of the Nativity. Lace curtains festooned the plate glass windows partially veiling banks of rare and exotic flowers in the sill. Smyrna rugs, sofas and easy chairs here and there were lent by ladies.

Messrs. Cooper and Langworthy supplied the piano. On Friday there was a program of vocal and instrumental music and recitations. A unique feature of entertainment was a phonograph lent by Mr. E. H. Paramore, secretary of the Southern Building and Loan Association. The phonograph contributed "a great deal of amusement to the crowd." Cornet, clarinet, and piccolo solos and operatic airs were wonderfully reproduced by the 7th Regiment Bands. Local performers were Mr. W. L. Clay, Master David I. White, and a quartette by Mr. and Misses Clay. Mr. Hall, general manager of the Mutual Insurance Company, gave several comic recitations.

The prettiest girls in town were invited to be waitresses. The

food was prepared by the ladies themselves and each had her own specialty. For instance, in the Episcopal Church Mrs. W. F. Garth and Mrs. Margaret Bolling were expected to donate orange sherbert. They sent it in their private freezers, six quarts. Mrs. D. I. White, Mrs. Milton Humes and Mrs. Pyncheon, cakes; Mrs. Reuben Chapman, mayonnaise, chicken salad, and chocolate ice-cream. Miss Katie Steele baked fowls and stuffed ham. Beaten biscuits were donated by a number of housewives; charlotte russe by the Misses Campbell; Miss Mattie J. Davis always fried oysters; Mrs. Owen Wilson, Mrs. Tancred Betts and Miss Katie Steele were expected to do all of the carving.

Each of the Churches had an annual bazaar in the fall. Those bazaars were a glorified Church supper. Besides the things already named, there were booths for fancy work, fancy articles, books, dolls, aprons, pillows, and candies. The Episcopal Women's Guild sometimes cleared Six Hundred Dollars on a three day bazaar.

The Presbyterian "King's Daughters" had a Saturday Market in different grocery stores.⁴ They prepared salads, cakes, cheese, beaten biscuits and light bread, baked stuffed hams and pickles for Sunday suppers. No better light bread could be had than that baked by Mrs. John Matthews or Mrs. William E. Matthews. They also took orders for rolls. Mrs. Erskine Mastin donated beaten biscuits. This market was a self-sustaining enterprise and lasted for years beyond 1900. It served the purpose of a delicatessen shop and was patronized by all denominations.

Those who attended the Art Loan which opened at Mrs. W. W. Garth's on May 14, 1890⁵ had a real treat. The Fearn, Beirnes, Walkers, Mastins, Facklers, Moores, Pattons, Withers, Popes, Chapmans, Figures, Rhett, Barnards, Searcys, Cruses, Whites, Reads, Bradleys, Bassetts, Robertsons, and Penns turned their treasures and curios over to the ladies for exhibit. There were curious and interesting history connected with many of them. Mrs. Garth's house sat in a large yard with a semi-circular brick walk going from the front stone steps to the wrought-iron gates on Franklin Street. The downstairs windows were French and were protected by blinds.

As the guests entered they went into the dining room on the left side of the hall where china, silver, glassware, and portraits were shown. The families mentioned in the above paragraph had family portraits there. One of the John Bolling's was by Sully. In the collection there were specimens of Sevres, Dresden, French blue-and-white china, a punch bowl with a five gallon capacity with

4 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, March 17, 1897

6 *Ibid*, April 3, 1890

the legend, "This Punch Bowl belonged to Col. Charles Pope of Delaware who commanded the famous 'Blue hens chickens' in the Revolutionary war. It now belongs to his great-grandson, Charles J. Mastin." Bowls of that girth were still usable in Huntsville in 1890. It would have been filled at least twice at a large party. There sitting near it was a plate and bowl two hundred and sixty years old, a fruit dish one hundred and sixty years old belonging to Mrs. J. A. Kankam, a warming plate one hundred and fifty-five years old, Parian marble over a century old, a decanter one hundred and fifty years old belonging to Mrs. John Bolling, a china teapot two hundred years old belonging to Mrs. J. A. Kankam; she also had a pitcher one hundred years old and a china plate one hundred and fifty years old. There was an old silver spoon which had "been buried at Newark, New Jersey during the Revolution to save it from the Red Coats, and in Huntsville during the Civil War to save it from the Blue Coats."⁶

An epergne over two hundred years old told a tale of Maryland's hospitality. A silver bowl, brought from Ireland many years ago, was used at the baptism of the first communicant of the Church of the Nativity.

In cases were displayed fans in satin, lace and plumes with silver, pearl, ivory and jeweled sticks with which "some dame or damsel of ye olden times hid their blushes."⁷

A silver snuff box, of Mr. John S. Lanham's, was also on display. It had been presented to him by the members of the Bradford Bread Society of Aberdeen, Scotland in 1828 for introducing white bread to them and making it cheap enough for them to buy.

Among the books Mrs. Sue Todd had fragments of Livy over four hundred years old and of a Mass over five hundred years old. Mrs. Fuller had a book which had been published in 1600 and one magazine published in 1700. There were two Prayer Books. One belonged to Mrs. Sue Todd, dated 1750, and the other belonged to Mrs. W. W. Garth, dated 1759.

A translation of *Boccaccio* by John Lydgate, Monk of Bury, England, was displayed and owned by Mrs. W. L. Clay. An original draft of the Constitution of the State of Alabama, prepared by C. C. Clay, Sr., dated 1819, belonged to Mrs. J. Withers Clay. Also included was the original copy of the Journal of the Convention of Alabama Territory, 1819, and *London* by Peter Cole, 1666, the property of Miss Laura Bassett.⁸ Colonel R. B. Rhett lent an extra of *The Charleston Mercury* dated 1860. (The month and day

6 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*

7 *Ibid*

8 From the Catalogue of the Huntsville Art Loan Exhibition, May 14, 1890, pages 6 and 7. Loaned to me by Mrs. Tracy Steele.

not given). There were a number of other newspapers from different states covering the years 1860 – 1865.

The exhibit illustrated again how the older citizens of Huntsville were a cultured people, a people venerating old tradition and objects which preserved them. The statuary and portraits are omitted. They were worthy of note but as some of them are treated elsewhere they may be omitted here.

These people had been collectors for generations, not only in Huntsville (they hadn't been there a century yet), but in the places from which they came. They were informed in the classics, in literature, and they took pleasure in enlarging their information. It is a different type from the one which was on the eve of conquering the old loves and ideals in 1890.

An event to which the whole county looked forward with eager anticipation was the Madison County Fair. It was held in October at the Fair Grounds at Huntsville. Products and livestock were exhibited by individual growers. There were booths for displays in needlework, preserves, breads, cakes, and painting in the Women's Building. Individuals and churches had lunch booths between side shows and venders on the streets behind the grandstand. Promptly at three o'clock every afternoon there were horse races. Nothing in the history of the Tennessee Valley thrilled the inhabitants of the county any more than a horse race. Flags, bets, bands, and balloons conmingled to produce a perfect thrill. The races were opened to entries from every state. Purses were awarded the winner in each class and those who entered had enthusiastic advertisement and loyal backers at the races. Special attractions were planned for each year as a fresh incentive for a maximum crowd.

The officers of the Fair Association in 1890 were Mr. W. F. Garth, President; Mr. W. R. VanValkenburg, Vice-president; Mr. J. H. Ewing, Superintendent; and Mr. J. R. Stegall, Assistant Superintendent.⁹ They were fully qualified for the work. Mr. Garth owned the finest stables in Alabama. His American Standardbred horses raced and won at tracks on the Southern circuit. Mr. VanValkenburg was a capable manager a merchant who was in touch with most of the farmers in the county. He could attract worthwhile exhibits and secure the best side-shows.

On October 7, 8, and 9, 1891, the Fair Association had a grand balloon ascension and parachute leap while the crowd was waiting for the races. Each day they had five races with unusually large crowds attending. Montrose and Grapeshot were the entries in the 2:40 class. As they were led into the ring their grooms unbuckled

9 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, January 29, 1890

their blankets and their drivers climbed into the sulky. The gong sounded. They lined up. Again the gong and away they went neck and neck. On the curve Grapeshot took the lead by a neck. Away he sped with Montrose racing steadily, not seemingly perturbed by the distance. By the end of the first heat they were neck and neck again. This time Montrose got the lead on the curve and began hugging the fence to no purpose. Grapeshot sped past. Montrose gained by lengths and was a nose ahead on the line. Grapeshot distanced him again on the first curve but by the time they were opposite the grandstand on the far side of the field they were even again. On the home stretch Montrose recovered. The grandstand rose as he crossed the line for the third time. Nearer and nearer, almost locking wheels they dashed forward for the fourth heat. Speeding as fast as the eye could follow they rounded three quarters of the tract almost abreast. On the last quarter Montrose shot forward and with a mighty lunge past the line a nozzle ahead of Grapeshot. Time: 2:30. As soon as he could be turned, Montrose was brought before the grandstand to enjoy the applause.

In the three year old trotters' class the best three out of five won Two Hundred and Thirty Five Dollars. Again there were but two entries, Eastwood and Eleanor Mallory. Eleanor lost three straight heats to Eastwood. His time was 2:37-1/2.

The next class was a three minute trot. There were six to start. Minnie S., Red Cedar, Nettie M., Judge B., Postmaster, and Protection. They had difficulty in getting off. Some had to leave space for the nervous Nettie M. Then Judge B. failed to touch the wire in time. After all, Red Cedar was distanced in the first heat. It automatically shut him out of the race. While Minnie S. and Nellie M. were intently contending for first place Judge B. wedged Nellie from her position on the inside curve and on the homestretch led her by a nose. His time was 2:30.

In the Free For All the purse was One Hundred Fifty Dollars, for which Rockbottom, Ida S., and Maud M. did their best trotting. Rockbottom won in three straight heats – time: 2:22.

Out of five entries in the running race only one was left at the end of the first mile, Twilight of Huntsville!^o

During these years when money was so scarce, the premiums given by the associations induced many farmers to make an extra effort to grow produce fit to exhibit. All of the premiums were in cash. At that rate the Free For All would pay the winner as much as five bales of cotton. Of course, the horse and driver had to be fed for three years before he won anything. But plough-horses and mules had to be fed, too, so the odds seemed to be with the races. All of the premiums amounted to Five Thousand Dollars. Most of

the winnings would be spent immediately in Huntsville. The Fair was good business from any angle. Mr. VanValkenburg's advertisement for the Fair said that "The flower show each day alone is worth the price of admission."

The people seemed to think so too. There were horses to phaetons, surreys, spring-wagons, covered wagons, buckboards, and closed carriages hitched to the long hitching racks around the high board fence. There were mules and horses with saddles on too. The poorer folk brought their lunches; the rich ate at the lunch counters or went home for lunch. Some of the wealthiest women entered cakes, breads, and preserves for prizes. The negresses also entered theirs. They competed for the same prizes and the negresses frequently won.

Quilts and embroidery were a handsome exhibit at these fairs. Some of the quilts were heirlooms, priceless and beautiful. Crazy quilts, afghans, and hand-knitted counterpanes were almost always entered.

Farm products were displayed on the ground floor of the Women's Building. Each farmer had a space which he decorated with his products. Some of them were artistically arranged, others were thrown in helter-skelter.

Livestock was kept in a separate barn. The crowds mulled around exchanging ideas and having a gala time in the dust and heat.

The grounds were sold and the location moved to West Huntsville in 1895.¹² Mr. Van Valkenburg bought it.

The Madison County Farmers Association used the Fair as an incentive to further improvement in the strain of cattle and in seed crops. They had demonstrations in poisons for pests, tick dips, talks on cover crops and crop rotation given during the exhibits. Of course, improved farming machinery was always displayed too. They were most beneficial.

Perhaps no entertainment of 1898 gave greater pleasure to the children and their mothers than did a Doll and Photograph show that was held for the benefit of the Church of the Nativity. Mrs. J. Withers Clay was the sponsor and it was held at her home on Maiden's Lane on February 12, 1898. Each entry paid Twenty Cents. Emily Hillman Allison won the prize for the largest collection of dolls. She had eighteen beautiful, old, ugly, and appealing babies; Minnie Greenfield boasted the prettiest; and Louise Libby, the funniest. Hers was unique. It was made of peanuts. It fell over as it stood, seemed to rise as it lay down, and could not look anyone straight in the eyes. The oldest doll was a playfellow of

11 *The Weekly Mercury*, September 30, 1891

12 *Ibid*, September 10, 1895

Mrs. George P. Turner. It was a rag doll, soft and squashy. In 1850 she came from Petersburg, Virginia, to live in Huntsville. She had thriven. In 1888 she and her companion, another rag lady, had captured two prizes in a show. They were also in the Art Loan given by Mrs. W. W. Garth. They were willed to Miss Jane Keller of Louisville, Kentucky.

The contest for photographs was not what one would expect. From the advertisement one would think that amateur photographers now had a chance to exhibit their skill. Not so. The audience was shown photographs of different famous places or things. Each person wrote on a slip of paper what he thought the picture was. At the end the slips were collected and checked. The person getting all of the names correctly were Mrs. W. F. Garth, Mrs. Daniel Coleman, Mrs. Oscar Hundley and Veredot Coleman. "Photographs of the World" were given to the winners.

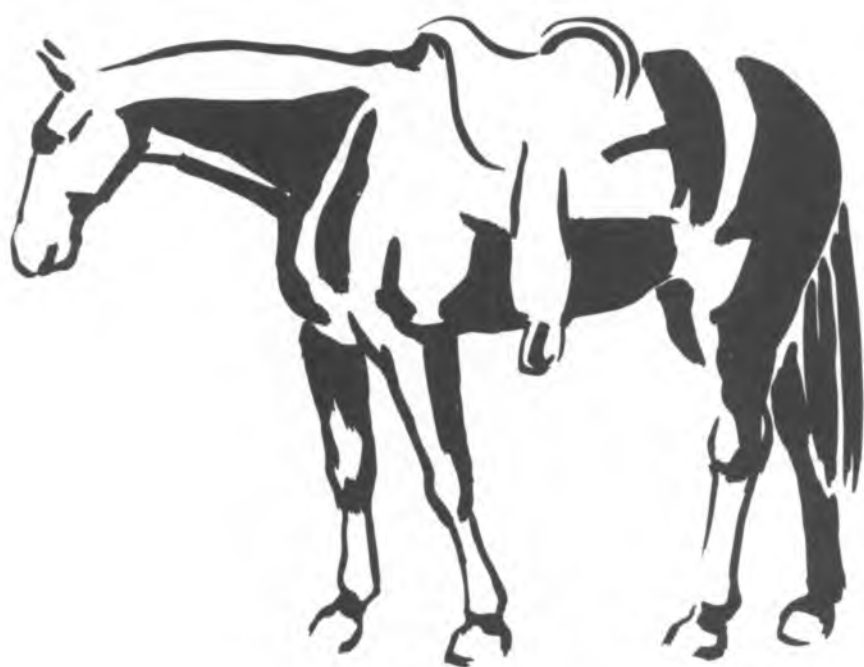
Little children, blindfolded, tried to pin the cue on the Chinaman's head while onlookers laughed. It was a merry gathering. Of course, there were songs at the end. No gathering at the Clays was ever complete without some chorus work. Mrs. Chapman sang *No, Sir!* and Frank Karthaus, *Little Annie Rooney*. Then they dispersed.

Concerts were a popular form of entertainment in Huntsville during the Nineties. Everyone who could afford lessons and an instrument developed some form of parlor technique. Quite a few persons having really great talent, and the means to enrich it, after studying at home went to conservatories in Cincinnati, New York, Boston and Paris.

At a concert at Mrs. W. W. Garth's residence on Franklin Street, February 26, 1892, Miss Mattie Barnard, Messrs. Frank Newman, Lawrence B. Sheffey, Jerry Campbell, and Miss Annie Lynskey were the singers who received newspaper notice. Of these, Miss Lynskey rendered *Afterwards* with rapturous applause. She responded "coquettishly" with *The Lovers' Quarrel*. Recalled, she sang every verse of the popular song, *I'll Whistle and Wait for Katie*. She was encored again but did not respond.

The children, also, had part in this programme. Of these, Otey Figures Echols and Bessie and Rita Dunlap achieved instant recognition. Otey, aged five, sang *The Spider and the Fly*. He was a quaint little figure with nut-brown curls and large, round, brown eyes and wore a black velvet Fauntleroy suit. Having the self-possession of an octogenarian, he faced his audience calmly and received their applause with gravity. The title of the Dunlaps' duet is not recorded but the astonishing part was the accompanist: Rita, aged six, played the piano as well as her wee hands would let her. Many people looked upon her as Chopin's first audience must have looked upon him with amazement and wonder as to how far

such a talent could carry the child. Rita could play in the exact key any "piece" she heard. She was an institution to her whole neighborhood. Whenever life grew dull for the grown folks, they would put aside their work and go over to the Dunlaps' to hear Rita play. Both she and Bessie had sweet voices. They used them to good advantage on this occasion and were encored again and again.



Chapter 15

Clubs

Huntsville Rifles

Huntsville Rifles was an organization of young men who drilled regularly once a week and acted as a civic body on occasion. When Patti sang at the Opera House, the Huntsville Rifles, "...the city's gallant military company turned out in full force to escort Madame Patti Rosa from the depot to the Huntsville Hotel. They were headed by the Huntsville Cornet Band, which discoursed sweet strains during the march. The company paid Patti the compliment of electing her colonel on this occasion."¹ The paper does not mention it but no doubt many complementary tickets followed this honor.

On May Day, 1891, they were in charge of the decoration of soldiers' graves.² Flowers were donated from every garden in town. A bevy of beautiful girls were ready to arrange them on the graves as the soldiers handed the flowers to them. Thousands of people attended. There were prayers by the ministers of the town, speeches by prominent men and songs by members of all the Church choirs assisted by the cornet band and the audience. Each grave had a Confederate or Union flag on it. Each Confederate soldier also had a cross. There is a section of Maple Hill Cemetery for the graves of soldiers who have no relatives living in Huntsville. Hundreds of others are buried in their family plots.

Occasionally the Rifles went in for purely social affairs. On May 10, 1890 for instance, they had a supper on the Court House lawn. Trees were festooned with Japanese lanterns and the tables served by society belles. The band was there to make seductive music so that even a soldier's mind might turn to soft and pretty thoughts.

Drills were weekly business. At intervals new members and old had competitive drills and target contests. One of their amusements was hiking. The mountains around Huntsville are rugged with jutting limestone rocks. Cross-country trips were enjoyed by those who did not mind stones. After a ten or fifteen mile march the guards would pitch tent and begin the routine of camp life. This practice stood them in good stead when they were called to patrol

1 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, February 26, 1890

2 *Ibid*, April 29, 1891

the coal fields around Birmingham in 1894. The miners were striking. The miners of that district had a reputation for violence upon provocation. The Huntsville papers gave daily bulletins of the Huntsville Rifles' movements, but they reported no casualties. John Humes Sheffey was their captain at that time. Forty men were in the guard that went to Birmingham.³

In 1898 they found serious business. When war was declared against Spain they went to Camp Clark in Mobile, Alabama.⁴ Mr. Robert L. May was Captain at that time; Mr. Humes C. Laughlin, First Lieutenant; Mr. Searcy Dement, Second Lieutenant; Mr. Tom M. Hooper, First Sargeant; Mr. George O'Reilly, Second Sargeant; and the following were Lieutenants: James Jenkins, John Woodworth, Jr., J. McLain, A. Landman, C. Cramer, H. Burrow, William Bryant, C. Ford, W. Barron, J. Clark, S. Floyd, Oscar Jennings, V. Gaines, Gen. Hawk, F. Bassett, B. Radford, Marion McCary, G. Vogel and Theodore Winston. They were Company "F" of the Third Alabama Regiment of National Guards. Mrs. Allen Washington was sponsor.

Captain John H. Sheffey and Lieutenant Allen J. Greene were delegated to recruit a Negro regiment in Huntsville. They seem to have had difficulty in getting the recruits to "stay put". No sooner did they send them off to Anniston than they were reported missing.⁵ Military life was too cramped. While they were recruiting one hundred Negroes, there were five hundred white men recruited. *The Democrat* of August 3, 1898, reported that fifteen Negroes had been sent to Mobile under Lieutenant Willie Wells. They got no further. Captain Sheffey and Lieutenant Allen Greene were stationed at Anniston until the end of the war. Then they returned home, one to the practice of law and the other of medicine.

The Huntsville Gun Club

The Huntsville Gun Club was an active organization throughout the decade. One of the big social events of 1891 was a barbecue and special shoot that this club gave on Monte Sano in August. The Monte Sano Railway ran special trains leaving the depot at nine and three. Hundreds of people took advantage of the opportunity to spend a cool August day on Monte Sano. All of the stables were emptied of vehicles and drivers for the day. Private carriage owners filled

3 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, June 20, 1894

4 *Ibid*, May 25, 1898

5 *Ibid*, August, 1898

their carriages with friends. Many riders rode across the country to be on hand for the event.

Promptly at nine-thirty the contestants took their stands before the traps. Usually only clay pigeons were shot. Today five-hundred live pigeons and a thousand swallows were to pit their speed against a gunman's skill. Mr. Todd Harrison, Winston F. Garth, Joe Van Valkenburg, John H. Sheffey, Shelby Pleasants, Thomas L. Hay, Shelby Fletcher, Robert L. Hay, Frank Mastin, George Darwin and Milton Humes were among those prepared to break former records. Each marksman was given one hundred shot in succession. Each was determined to bring down a bird as fast as he could discharge a shell and bring the rifle to position again.

The signal sounded. The trap was sprung. Off flew the first bird. Tense excitement silenced the audience. They watched the winged target almost hoping that he would be swifter than the shell. He was not. Faster and faster the shots rang out. With each shot a bird fell until it seemed as if the first marksman would set a record of one hundred out of a hundred. On the sixtieth shot he missed. The crowd gasped. Sixty-two, missed; seventieth, missed until he was ten short of a perfect score. Round after round they shot, the crowd watching in silence or cheering mightily.⁶

Barbecue was served at twelve o'clock. Long trenches of red hot coals glowed beneath whole sheep, pigs and calves that were stretched on gridirons over them. Colored cooks turned and basted them with butter, bacon juice, red pepper, salt and garlic. At other points great flames licked the black sides of iron washpots which were now filled with boiling stew or soup. Five-gallon coffee pots sent out a steam of enticing aroma. Tubs of pickles, Irish potato salad, slaw, and relish tempted the hungry. Watermelons and ice cream freezers, and cakes and candies stood ready to be served.

The jolly crowds sat in groups on cushions taken from vehicles, on stumps and rocks. After eating, many of them walked to Cold Springs, or to Ella's Rock. Tallyhoes and buggies carried many young people and their chaperones on the long sandy road to Mr. James O'Shaughnessy's lily pond, over to the point at the Rison home or down to Lover's Leap. Gay and happy crowds walked to Natural Well where they tried their skill at dropping rocks down its "bottomless" depths. Rumour stated that things dropped into it came out at the Tennessee River. As usual "the lady" gave misinformation. Marked articles dropped into it came out severally, at the Huntsville Big Spring, at the Tennessee River, and at Byrd Spring. But it was interesting to hear the sound of the big rocks fall to nothingness. Children wanted to descend immediately. They

were told to keep away from the edge. To divert them, they were promised a trip through Fat Man's Misery, a crevice on the western side of the mountain with natural steps between its limestone walls, or an exploring trip through the cave at Cold Spring.

Most of them lingered until the katydids and whip-poor-wills began their vespers to the deepening shadows. Over the wide valley the fading light cast fairy veil through which the lights from the gas street lights of Huntsville shone one by one, stillness, the uncertain light of twilight through the trees, then in the west the evening star. The day was done.

As the wagonettes, tallyhoes, surreys, and buggies dropped off the mountain into Devil's Glenn, night prowlers scurried from bush and fern bank across the white macadamized pike. Rabbits and red fox, owls and bats, racoons and opossums accelerated their natural pace to avoid these noisy travelers. The carriage lanterns cast wierd shadows in streaks and wavering paths across the cedars. Fireflies lighted their uncertain courses through the gloom around the double S's through the dense flat above the toll gate, down by Maple Hill Cemetery into town.

Again on September 30, 1891 the Gun Club shot live birds. As the same number of pigeons and swallows are recorded it must have been the standard number with them.⁷

The club's record members at the end of the century were Messrs. John H. Wallace and Frank Puryear. At that time scores were totaled at the end of each year. Winners were pitted against each other at a meet at the close of the season. The regular meet on Friday afternoons drew large crowds. Betting ran high. Mr. O'Hara was another crack shot who was very popular with the fans. Week after week in 1899, Mr. Wallace and Mr. Puryear shot ninety-nine out of a hundred clay pigeons. At the tournament Mr. Puryear won by one bird. His award was a trophy and a Springfield rifle.

The Spring City Cycling Club

"Mr. H. D. Breeding took a trip to Gurley yesterday on his bicycle - thirty-two miles, no fatigue. These machines are becoming quite popular with the young men of our city and all who are able to buy are securing them."

Thus the *Weekly Mercury* of November 4, 1891, comments on a new fad which swept Huntsville like a tornado. Soon, old, young, male and female were on wheels. By January 6, 1892, these machines were advertised for Eighty Five Dollars with chains and

7 *The Weekly Mercury*, September 30, 1891

Ninety Five Dollars without chains. Both solid and cushioned tires were also displayed by McAnnaly, Nolen and Jones, Matthews and Van Valkenburg. The *Columbia*, *Hartford*, *Overland* and *Tribune* claimed to be the best bicycles on the market. They were offered for men, women, children, single and tandem. They brought out such delicate questions as what kind of a skirt was a lady to wear while riding? The ladies settled it in a variety of ways. Some advocated short skirts with boots. Some boldly appeared in bloomers, almost harem-like, full ankle length. Others wore divided skirts. Both of these styles were very unladylike, immodest, and the subject of sermons and gossip. Convention required full, gored skirts and a white shirtwaist with stiff collar and stiff cuffs. The collar was "finished" into a tie either in a large broad bow or in a four-in-hand; the cuffs were fastened with metal or real cuff links.

Pedestrians found sidewalks unsafe as long as these speedy cyclists were abroad. An appeal was made for protection to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen, and a law was granted prohibiting the use of sidewalks for cyclists.⁸

The Spring City Cycling Club was formed to provide concerted plans and amusement for bicyclists. At a call meeting on May 18, 1892, the club decided to have a tournament.⁹ All cyclists were promised a free pass to the races as an inducement to appear in the parade. Each wheel was decorated in the club colors - orange and blue. They met at the club at ten o'clock in the morning of May 25, 1892. They were preceded by the Huntsville Cornet Band who rode in a wagon decorated in bunting. Their line of march went around the Square, down south Madison to Williams Street, east to Franklin, north on Franklin to Washington to the intersection with Holmes, east on Holmes to Calhoun, south on Calhoun to Randolph, west on Randolph to Jefferson, north to Holmes, thence west to the Fair Grounds.

Crowds watched them from the sidewalks, porches, and windows of the houses on the route. Confetti, streamers and flags were thrown and waved at them. Carriages filled with people followed them to the Fair Grounds. There they bantered each other in the streets between the lunch booth. Pink lemonade, popcorn, barbecue, peanuts, apples, and substantial dinners tempted the appetites of the wanderers.

In the grandstand, society belles waved rosettes of the club colors, children blew whistles of little birds or begged for bright balloons which were bobbing from strings attached to the wrists of balloon men who continually cried, "Take a balloon to the baby." Pink popcorn balls and goobers were sold by venders who passed

8 *The Weekly Mercury*, March 20, 1895

9 *The Argus*, May 19, 1892

through the tiers, throwing balls and bags and catching change.

Promptly at three thirty the gong sounded and Messrs. Chase, O'Shaughnessy, Newman, Matthews, and Kundsén took positions for the first race. Better hung eagerly over the fences and boxes and were piled in nearby trees to watch their favorites. The flag fell and away they sped. By the time they rounded the first curve it was easily seen that they were evenly matched. At the half-mile Mr. Chase was a little ahead. He was overtaken and passed Mr. Matthews. Messrs. O'Shaughnessy, Newman, and Kundsén renewing their strength then sped ahead. The grandstand cheered as they neared the wire, Mr. Kundsén succeeded in getting his front wheel a half-inch ahead of Mr. Newman's. Mr. O'Shaughnessy came in third. Waving flags, shouts and whistles greeted the victors.

Boys on twenty-six inch wheels and under, then raced one-half mile. The third race was a five mile handicap with nearly every member of the club entering. The grand prize in this race was captured by Willie Wells, the second by Charlie Crute, the third by Ed Lownes. Then there was a race of boys under fifteen with wheels over twenty-six inches. The four mile dash was entered by Messrs. Chase, Kundsén, Newman, Stevens, and Matthews, and won by the last three in the order named.

The sixth was a half-mile heat with awards to the best two out of three. Messrs. Chase, Dennison, Newman and Matthews ran with Dennison and Newman winning.

After the cyclists had exhausted their wheels, owners of race horses gave one quarter-mile race to show that the wheel had not displaced them. Messrs. Billy Parker, Tom Mason, Tom Gardner, Rees and Hunt were the jockies. The first three came in in the order named.

The last number was a consolation race opened only to those not having taken part in previous races, a foot race of fifty yards entered only by Messrs. Trimble and Lloyd to prove that artificial means of locomotion had not discouraged Shank's Mare.¹⁰ It received higher bets and greater interest than its predecessors. It was won by Mr. Trimble.¹¹

The Twickenham Club

Every town needs a social center. Huntsville found hers in the Twickenham Club. The name was taken from Huntsville's original

10 *The Argus*, May 26, 1892

11 *Ibid*

name. It was organized at the Huntsville Hotel, December 17, 1894, with the following results: Judge D. D. Shelby was elected president. None was better qualified to maintain the dignity of the office. He was a man of great social and professional ability. He was a handsome, dapper little man, with very white hair and white mustache. Knowing law he was an ideal presiding officer. Popular with both sexes, he was able to make others enthusiastic about the club. He was an aristocrat by birth and desire. The tone of the club was apt to be high as long as he was at its head.

His assistants were Mr. E. H. Andrews, vice-president; Mr. W. O. Kundsén, secretary; Mr. A. L. Rison, treasurer; and Gen. S. H. Moore, Mr. H. W. Russell, Mr. N. K. White, Mr. T. W. Pratt, Captain Milton Humes, and Mr. J. S. Mayhew, directors. They soon had all of the society men in town in it.

They rented the third and fourth floors in the Struve Building for the club rooms. The building had a turret on the corner. This turret formed a bay window on each floor and was an ideal location for loafers. They could sit in that window and keep tab on everyone who crossed the Square. No doubt there was an outlook every time there was a game of craps or poker in these rooms - and from all that is told of them there were frequent breeches of the law in that regard. Of course, there was a bar and much social drinking.

Any member was entitled to entertain there. The Club had periodic whist and euchre parties which were social "events". An invitation to one of them was treated as a great victory. It raised the receiver immediately into the inner society set, the elite, the favored daughters of the human race. At a dance in 1895 the ladies wore décolleté dresses with tight bodice, bustles, long trains, and ornaments in their hair, large spangled fans and wide gold bracelets. They were "ravishing". That meant that no male who looked upon them could resist their charm.

They had a grand march led by Conrad O'Shaughnessy and Betty Matthews, a beautiful, curly headed blonde who amply set off his handsome face. He was tall, graceful, a lady's man, with dark brown hair and a goatee. After the march he led the couples out for intricate figures, copied from the court dances of Louis XVI, very fine, beautiful, and gay.

After dancing till twelve a banquet was served from the Struve Restaurant which was on the ground floor of the building. Drinks and smoking followed, for the men alone. Women were almost afraid to take a glass of wine in public. The chaperones stayed throughout the evening. The band was unique. It consisted of a gas pipe, a tin pan, and a guitar. It was the regular Negro band which played for dances at the hotels. They could get music out of the "instruments" too.

At three o'clock the dancers went home in hired hacks. Stegall, Rodgers, Wells, and a few individual hack-owners like William

Fackler supplied many of the vehicles.

On October 15, 1895, a musical and german were given there. The male quartette sang, "My Old Kentucky Home." Miss Keuchbaum played a piano solo; Miss Hurst, who was "the very finest elocutionist and physical culturist who has ever taught here," recited. Mrs. Switzer, a vocal solo; Miss Louise Banister, a piano solo; Miss Turner, a recitation. *The Mercury* gives this conclusion: "After the program was exhausted, a german led by Mr. Conrad O'Shaughnessy and Miss Lucy Turner, another fascinating blonde, was enjoyed." Whether the audience was exhausted too it discreetly forbears to say. The names in this program were not Huntsville names except Louise Banister and Lucy Turner. Miss Hurst was teaching at the Calhoun Building and the others were teachers at The Seminary.¹²

The Club continued to thrive as one of the factors in Huntsville Society - large as they capitalized it.

The Huntsville Musical-Literary Club

The Huntsville Musical-Literary Club was organized Saturday evening, April 12, 1895, at the home of Miss Louisa Coxe on Franklin Street.¹³ The object of the club and of the federation to which it was allied was to make a systematic study of the works of great composers of the classic and romantic schools of music. At each meeting there was a program of the works of one composer or of composers of the same school. Each composition was introduced by a history of its inspiration, a detailed study of its themes and motifs so that each hearer would recognize them and their variations as the composition was played. The life of the composer was given sometimes during the evening. A card game was played based on questions on the work of the composer of the evening, which if not answered correctly lost the answerer a card. It required hard study and genuine information to win.

Mrs. Milton Humes was elected first president; Mrs. Roberts, vicepresident; Mrs. Ludlow, secretary and treasurer; Mrs. Rosalie Sheffey Chapman, Miss Louisa Coxe and Miss Mattie Lee Patton made up the program committee. Other members were: Professor Carl Cramer, Miss DeWitt, Miss Bradford, Miss Felicia Hubbard, and Miss Jennie Cramer.¹⁴ Miss Marion Pleasants, Miss Louise

12 *The Weekly Mercury*, October 16, 1895

13 *The Weekly Tribune*, April 23, 1895

14 *The Weekly Mercury*, April 17, 1895

Banister, Miss Blaesi, Mrs. Switzer, Mrs. Charles Pulley, Mrs. W. L. Clay, Mrs. Richard Walker, Miss Sunie White,¹⁵ Miss Jane Beirne, and Mr. Howard Thomas.

Too much cannot be said for the talent that was represented in this club. Professor Cramer's work is treated elsewhere. Felicia Hubbard was a pupil of Schawinski, and later was the first American pianist to take the Paderewski medal at the Conservatory of Music in Paris. Louisa Banister played as well as any professional, in fact, the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra offered her the position of pianist with them. Louisa Coxe was a finished performer as was Marion Pleasants. Mattie Lee Patton played the organ as well as the piano. Jennie Cramer was a successful teacher of piano in Atlanta.

Just why it did not continue is not explained in the newspapers but it must have been needed as it was revived in 1896. The first meeting of this term was on December 4, 1896. After electing Miss Sunie White president the members gave the following program:

<i>Etude</i> , McDowell	Miss Louise Banister.
<i>Relation of Life to Music</i>	Dr. Duffield.
Beethoven's <i>Fifth Symphony</i> ..	Miss Louise Banister and Mrs. John Reid.
<i>Like a Vision</i> , Gounod	Mrs. Rosalie Chapman.
Phantom Chorus, Bellini	Misses Corine Halsey, Russell, and Motz; Mrs. Rosalie Chapman; Messrs. George Motz, Karthaus, and Dr. Taylor.
<i>Etude in D Flat</i> , Liszt	Miss Jennie Cramer.
<i>When First I Met Thee</i> Rubenstein	Corine Halsey.
<i>Berceuse</i> , Chopin	Miss Louise Banister.
Waltz Song from <i>Romeo</i> and <i>Juliet</i>	Mrs. A. R. Niniger.
<i>Scene from Romeo and</i> <i>Juliet</i>	Miss Nell Ryan
<i>Etude Mignon</i>	Miss Louise Banister
<i>Bridal Procession</i> , Lohengrin	Chorus: Misses Russell, Halsey, and Motz; Mrs. Rosalie Chapman; Messrs. Karthaus, Motz and Dr. Taylor.
<i>Fantasy Impromptu</i> , Chopin	Miss Louise Banister

Meetings were regularly every two weeks until January 15, 1897,¹⁶ when they came to a definite end.¹⁷ This meeting was held at Abingdon Place, "a brilliant finale to one of the most delightful and improving organizations in the history of Huntsville." Miss Sunie White presided.

Characterizations: Berlioz and Saint Saens	Mrs. Clopton.
<i>Dance of Sylph</i> , Berlioz Violin duet	Misses Cramer and Blaesi.
<i>Ah! Mon Fils</i> , Le Prophet	Mrs. Rosalie Chapman.
Piano solo, Chopin	Miss Felicia Hubbard.
Violin and piano duet	Misses Cramer and Blaesi.
Robert le Diable, Meyerbeer	Mrs. A. R. Nininger.
Rhapsody d'Anvergnés, Saint Saens	Miss Jennie Cramer.
Bass solo, Mozart	Mr. George Motz.
<i>Paraphrase from Sextet of Lucia</i> , Donizetti	Miss Jennie Cramer.
Soprano solo, Rubenstein	Mrs. Henry Stills.
<i>Characterization</i> , Donizetti	Mrs. Addison White.
<i>Selections from La Favorita</i>	Misses Cramer and Blaesi.
<i>Themes from Lucrezia Borgia</i>	Miss Jennie Cramer.
<i>Fantasy</i> , Chopin	Miss Felicia Hubbard

Few towns of Huntsville's size had as many gifted musicians¹⁸ in those years. They seemed to have been without the jealousy that characterizes many artists. They had a good time bringing about the opportunity to present a new person to the music circle. Evidently it was a game to bring out competitors. If they came without knowledge of the personnel of the group they must have had to do their best practicing to keep up with the procession.

16 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, January 20, 1897

17 *Ibid*, December 9, 1896

18 *Ibid*, January 21, 1897

The Shakespeare Club for Little Girls

The Shakespeare Club for Little Girls was composed of Frances Jones, Bessie and Louise McAnnally, Mary Turner Clanton, O'Dell Witten, Mimie and Jessie Nance. Miss Laura Bassett inspired them to make a study of Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare*.¹⁹ They studied so that they could take an intelligent part in the conversation whenever the grave question of the relative value of Shakespeare's plays as a guide for life arose. They were as earnest in their approach to the emotions of the heroes and heroines of the great tragedies as their elders were. They memorized the lyrics from *Mid-Summer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest*. They wept over Ophelia and Desdemona and learned to love them. They dramatized each play after having made a thorough study of the text. They also prepared compositions on their settings, the personnel of the drama, and on such weighty subjects as "Was Hamlet Crazy or Only Acting?" and "The Influence of the Supernatural in Macbeth", etc.

The Young Men's Shakespearean Society

The Young Men's Shakespearean Society had club rooms in the White Building on the Square. They met for dinner every two weeks to read one of the Bard of Avon's plays.²⁰ They also memorized whole parts, vying with each other at the tryouts.

Such men as Shelby S. Pleasants, John H. Sheffey, Shelby Fletcher, Matthews White, James H. Ballentine, David Grayson, L. Coleman, Ernest and Frank Karthaus, Conrad and Michael O'Shaughnessy whetted their imaginations to give a virile impersonation of each character. They tested each other's memory by quoting half a line and calling on one of the group to complete it. They had to cite both act and scene with each of these broken lines. They were fond of tripping a fellow by quoting a phrase and assigning it to a wrong play. They responded to a salutation with a quotation. They imitated the character of their favorite Shakespearean hero.

19 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, March 17, 1897

20 *Ibid*, May 10, 1894

The Shakespeare Club

A third Shakespeare Club was established by Mrs. W. L. Clay. It included both sexes and its meetings were at night. A feature of its entertainments was a Shakespearean Salad. A number of "lettuce" leaves were arranged in a large bowl in the center of the table. Each guest drew a leaf. On the bottom of the leaf was a quotation from Shakespeare. The name of the play from which it came with the act, scene and name of the character who used it had to be written on the leaf with the writer's name. The leaves were collected. The one having correct answers received a prize. Definite plays were studied and criticisms and interpretations of characters were given at each meeting.

The Chautauqua Circle

Mrs. Shelton, President of the Chautauqua Circle had many interesting and instructive meetings. Their subject for 1894 was Roman Art of the Middle Ages, Roman Songs and Legends.²¹ On March 2, 1894, Dr. John H. Bryson lectured to them on the Augustan Age.²² His lecture was delivered at the meeting at Mrs. Susan Todd's home at the corner of Gates and Franklin Streets. Aristo,²³ Lorenzo de Medici²⁴ and Tasso²⁵ were a few of their other subjects that year. They had a set of cards with questions based on each subject. It required minute preparations to be able to answer all of them. They stimulated attention and immediate recall. They were equivalent to the present day correspondence courses which are given by our colleges.

The Persian Reading Circle

There was also the Persian Reading Circle. They must have been very ambitious. The plays which they studied were acted in the meetings. Occasionally an act was read aloud.²⁶ *Oedipus*, *Tyrannus* and *Coloneus* were among the plays studied.

21 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, January 3, 1894

22 *Ibid*, March 6, 1894

23 *Ibid*, March 21, 1894

24 *Ibid*, April 18, 1894

25 *Ibid*, May 10, 1894

26 *Ibid*, May 6, 1894

The Church History Club

The Church History Club was sponsored by Mary Ann Cruse who was author of *Little Episcopalian*, *Bessie Melville*, and *Little Grandpa*. She was a faithful churchwoman, an excellent teacher and anything that she touched went over. Although she was semi-invalid she was mentally vigorous. She had, too, the ability to make and hold friends. The Church History Club thrived.

The Card Club

Euchre was a popular form of entertainment during the Nineties. *The Democrat* for March 26, 1890 reports an entertainment given by Mrs. S. H. Denison in complement to Mrs. R. J. Snively. Sixteen couples played in the parlors of the Huntsville Hotel "until a late hour" - that usually meant twelve o'clock. Refreshments were served and prizes awarded.

Dr. W. D. Allen entertained the Card Club at progressive euchre in the parlors of the Huntsville Hotel on December 16th, 1895. The parlors and dining room were festooned in holly, fern and mistletoe. The large mirrors reflected the gay assembly of happy guests whose names filled a fourth of a newspaper column.

Dr. Allen was an immaculate, thin sprightly gentleman with iron grey hair and mustachio and had courtly manners. He was a dentist on whose work anyone could rely. His popularity increased with each contact with him. Unfortunately for him and for some good woman, he was a bachelor.

On the occasion of this party he was assisted by Mrs. D. I. White and Mrs. Milton Humes. His guests assembled at nine o'clock and the game began as soon as each had drawn his tally and found his partner and had led her to their table. In so large an assembly this process allowed a great deal of conversation. It gave the ladies the opportunity of displaying their ornate gowns - heavy brocaded satins, velvets, moires. Each lady had her hair brushed sleekly back from the face with spit-curls on her forehead and by her ear. An aigrette, or other plume, was worn in her hair. Her fan was large and frequently of ivory or mother-of-pearl sticks, hand-painted, and jeweled. Her slippers matched her gown. Her skirt was instep length in front and extended in a long train. She expected, and received, frank adulation.

When all were seated the couples at the head table rung a bell to indicate that the game had begun. Cards were dealt, trumps named. At the end of each fourth hand scores were totaled, the

lady and gentleman having the highest score advancing to the next table where they changed partners with the defeated couple there. Prizes on this occasion were won by Mr. J. R. Stevens, Jr. The lady's prize was an "elegant piece of cut glass" and the gentleman's, a handsome silver match case.



"Abingdon Place," residence of the Humes family

Chapter 16

Schools

Private Schools

Huntsville, like most Southern towns of this period, was a center of private schools. Every child who could afford an education went to school to learn "manners" as well as the contents of books. Children of the upper class families could not be contaminated by association with uncouth individuals from the masses - although the masses in such a settled community as Huntsville were more genteel in those days than many so-called educated, college degreed folk are today.

Schools opened the first of September and usually closed the first of June. The hours were from nine o'clock to four o'clock with an hour for lunch and recreation. Younger children were occasionally permitted to play during school hours while the teacher taught the older group. The classes ranged from the A B C class to the study of Latin, Greek, French and higher mathamatics.

Miss Sarah Bradley's School

One of the oldest schools in Huntsville was Miss Sarah Bradley's on the corner of McClung and California Streets. Miss Sarah had taught many of the fathers and mothers of the boys and girls of the Nineties. She taught thoroughly. Woe betide the youth who appeared in class without fresh mental refreshment of the work in hand. The reading classes had to give intelligent expression, observe commas, semicolons, colons, and periods by a stated count. The alphabet or multiplication table had to be recited backwards and forwards. Latin declensions and rules for Latin prose had to be known by number. Webster's *Blue Back Speller* was the standard for orthography, diction, rhetoric and sentence structure.

Every Friday there was a spelling match. Two leaders were chosen to choose sides to be pitted in spelling. They drew lots for first choice. The best spellers went alternately to head the lines. Then there were whispers of "Choose Mary or Bob next" for the lesser spellers. As soon as the student body was in the two

lines Miss Sarah picked up the *Blue Back Speller* and selected words at random. The speller was given one trial. If he misspelled the word he sat down. It passed to the person opposite him in the other line. If he missed it, he too sat down and the next person in the original line tried it. It passed back and forth that way until someone spelled it correctly. There was great excitement if a word passed more than three children. Fingers popped, arms waved in wild gesture and he who did not know trembled for fear the ability of his side would be tested by him.

When only one person on each side was left standing, Miss Sarah would select such words as propinquity, pneumonia, gnat, peripatetic or pronunciamiento. The sides would go wild as their representative met these giants successfully. In case of a tie, a time was set for another contest between these two. Then the partisans drilled their representatives after school and at recess until they were sure he knew every word in the book. The winner and his last opponent were usually heads of the next matches. It was a great method of assuring a large vocabulary with a maximum interest in the process.

Charles Shepherd's School for Boys

Mr. Charles Shepherd had a school for boys in a miniature brick cottage on East Holmes Street. Mr. Shepherd was a Latin and Greek scholar. He had taught school for half a century and for twenty-seven years prior to 1899 he had not missed a day.¹ He sat in his tiny school room at the back of his house with a hickory stick on the desk before him. It is a question whether the boys dreaded Mr. Shepherd's reproofing looks or the hickory stick more. Both were used unsparingly. There was never a day that did not witness several administrations of the hickory. Mr. Shepherd sat on his rostrum stroking his long brown-dyed beard, looking critically over the top of his spectacles at his class. "Read that passage again, Conrad." Conrad did. "You read as if this is your first acquaintance with it sir. How many times have you been over this lesson?" "Six," boldly from Conrad. The class giggled. They had seen Conrad lay his book carefully open on the sidewalk on his way to school and hop over it as they counted six. "Then your head is as empty as the stovepipe yonder," remarked Mr. Shepherd. "Stay in . . ." but his instruction was interrupted by a loud noise at the back of the room. Henry had pushed Frank off the bench. The room was instantly deathly still. "Stand up, sir!" shouted Mr. Shepherd. "Come here." Henry came. "Take your coat off."

1 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, November 1, 1899

Slowly Henry obeyed. Then the hickory fell in heavy whacks across his shoulders. Grimly Henry bore them. "Are you ready to keep order now, sir?" inquired Mr. Shepherd at last. "Yes sir," replied Henry. "Put your coat on and go to your seat."

Turning back to the lesson Mr. Shepherd said, "Conrad, read that passage." Conrad stammered through it. "Irving, see what you can do with it," ordered Mr. Shepherd. Irving read. "Now give me the syntax of the first three sentences, Shelby." Shelby squirmed and went fearfully to work.

The stems of each noun and objective, the roots of the verbs. "Take the next fifty lines for tomorrow," ordered Mr. Shepherd. As the class passed back to their desks, an arithmetic class was called for a drill on the multiplication tables.

"Now, we shall see how many tables you can say correctly in five minutes, Otto," said Mr. Shepherd as he craned his neck to see where the sunlight fell on the floor. Otto arose and droned, "One times one is one. One times two is two. One times ... " "Next," called Mr. Shepherd. Lawrence took it up: "... three is three. One times four is four. One times five is ..." "Next," interrupted Mr. Shepherd, "... five ... "

When all twelve tables had been said forward and backward Mr. Shepherd called out combinations at random. Everyone was alert for he had to recognize a miss as soon as Mr. Shepherd or it was counted a miss for him too. Three misses kept one in two hours after school.

Everyone did his exercise in his copy book at some time during the day and had it approved for proper shading, capitalization, and punctuation before the end of the day. Occasionally Mr. Shepherd would interrupt the writer by an admonishing crack over the knuckles. That meant that the pen was not being properly held, or that the copier was writing one word straight down the page instead of writing the whole sentence across the page one line at a time.

Punishment for misspelling or for certain phases of misconduct was to write the misspelled word five hundred times, then use it in ten or more original sentences.

Frequently thin lads would appear at school with two or three suits of clothes on. His schoolmates met him with a rallying, "Preparedness is the best policy, 'eh?" or, "Why are you so fat today?" They knew well enough. They, too, had met the hickory and dreaded its second use. It was never slow at Mr. Shepherd's.

Popular School Games

I Spy was a popular game for both out of doors and indoors. The children counted:

Eney, Meeny, Miny, Moe,
Catch a 'nigger by his toe,
If he hollers let him go,
Eney, Meeny, Miny, Moe

Wire, brier, limber lock,
Three geese in a flock,
One flew east and one flew west,
And one flew over the cuckoo's nest.
One, two, three,
Out goes he.

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven,
All good children go to Heaven.

Each child stood for a word and he who was the last word was *out*. The counting then began again until only two were left. The one who failed to get out had to hide his eyes and count until the others hid. He could count to fifty by ones or to one-hundred by tens or fives. Then he would yell, "Coming! One, two, three for all around my base." The first one spied raced with the counter to the base. If the former reached it first he was free; if not, he would have to spy the others next time.

Puss Wants a Corner could be played either out or indoors. Each person raced for a tree or a corner. The last one to get one was *Puss*. He stood around and tried to steal a base whenever two holders of corners tried to exchange them.

Oats, Wheat, Beans, and Barley Grow was played in a circle with a "farmer" in the center. As the children held hands and marched around they sang:

Oats, wheat, beans, and barley grow,
Oats, wheat, beans, and barley grow,
You nor I nor no one knows,
How oats, wheat, beans, and barley grow.
Thus the farmer sows his seeds (sowing seed),
Thus he stands and takes his ease,
(stands with arms folded)
Stamp his feet and claps his hands,
(going through the motions)
And whirls around to view the land,
(whirls with right hand shading eyes)
So open the ring and take one in,
And kiss her as you take her in.
(the "farmer" chooses a girl)
Now you are married you must obey,
So take a sweet kiss and walk away.

Mumble peg and ringing the horse shoe, marbles, baseball, tennis, rope swings, jumping rope and croquet were common. Indoor games were chess, checkers, tiddle winks, battledore and shuttlecock, ten pins, pool, ping-pong and crocknole.

Miss Mary Robinson's School

At Miss Robinson's school, in her home on Meridianville Pike, jumping rope and baseball were the favorite games for both girls and boys. The girls ran endurance races in jumping. They frequently jumped one hundred counts without missing. They liked to thread the needle - that is, run under the rope while it was in the air. They took turns alternating sides and kept a record of their feats. They jumped double, pease porridge hot, jumped at and touched the ground with their hands.

The boys even deigned to play ball with these girls. Anna O'Shaughnessy, Mamie Mastin, and Ellelee Chapman were the girl stars. They were a regular part of the nine. As recess lasted long enough for Miss Mary to cook and eat dinner, they had a long practice each school day. On Saturdays they were apt to meet at Hervey Mastin's to keep in practice for Monday.

Lee O'Shaughnessy's pony, Bingo, furnished as mount for circus stunts at this school. Miss Mary's yard was admirably adapted for such a purpose. There was a long driveway bordered by tall pine trees, a circle in front of the tiny low cottage and a space between the cottage and the schoolroom. Bingo could buck, jump, run like a rabbit, or be a nice pony and allow Leo or other expert horsemen to ride standing erect or on his head on his broad back. The circus spectators could stand back of the trees and whoop things up without being in danger of being felled by Bingo's trained heels.

There was a croquet court, and plenty of pine needles and pine cones for doll-playing girls to convert into rooms for a house. Sometimes the older boys turned architects and aided these premature mothers in building durable dwellings from the pine needles. Some of them were kept intact for weeks. The owners kept house, received callers, and managed to have a great deal of social intercourse with the rest of the school.

When Miss Mary Robinson decided to stop teaching, her pupils moved across the railroad track to General William Moore's place.

Miss Mary Norman Moore's School

It was on the General William Moore's place that Miss Mary Norman Moore became their teacher. She was a fair young blonde with kindly laughing blue eyes, a slim young body, and proved to have the greatest talent for teaching and organizing schools of any woman in Alabama. She graduated at the Huntsville Female College at age fifteen. She taught in one of the rooms of her mother's home. It was a brick building sitting behind a large grove of huge oaks. The house had a tower, a circular wrought iron stair case and the walls were hand painted. The back opened onto a large court with a well in the center and a wide porch enclosed it on three sides.

In the winter the water rose two or three feet in the basement. Crops of milk and butter were kept down there. At least once during the life of the school there was an alligator inhabiting it. When the maid went down to get the butter he rose and looked at her. It was enough. She never went back.

At recess the children ran regularly to the railroad track to wave to the train as it passed. Sometime they were rewarded by a paper which the mail clerk slung to them.

The Huntsville Academy

In 1895 Miss Mary accepted a position as the lady in the faculty of the Huntsville Academy. It opened in the Calhoun House in September, 1895. Most of Miss Mary's children followed her. She was in charge of the primary department of the school. Her room was back of the large ballroom on the first floor and there were double desks for the pupils. The flaps on the front row were used as class seats. Miss Mary taught A B C's, spelling, arithmetic, reading, and penmanship.

The gentlemen of the faculty were graduates of the University of Virginia. John A. Wyatt and Frank Puryear, gentlemen of the old school, were both blue-eyed but the former was black-haired and square of stature while the latter was blonde, slim and tall.

Mr. Wyatt had a very deep dimple in his chin which some belles thought accounted for his tremendous amount of conceit. He knew Latin as well as English, Greek and German. As the classics were popular he had large classes in each of these languages.

Mr. Puryear had a sandy mustache. He was a mathematician and physicist. He taught all of the math classes including one in calculus and one in English grammar. Both gentlemen were good shots and members of the Gun Club. Mr. Puryear held the championship in that club for several years. Both were good horsemen and both liked whist and euchre. They had been in charge of the Huntsville Military Academy on Russell's Hill.

The ballroom of the Calhoun House was arranged as a boys' study hall and classroom for Mr. Wyatt. There was a rostrum with a desk and cushioned chair for the teacher.

The boys played many tricks on each other. They shot spit balls at the plumes and flowers in the frieze around the room and boomerangs at the professor. One day, Reuben Taylor brought a large package of chewing gum to school. As soon as the desks were filled he passed a package to each boy with directions, "Chew it. When the flavor is out, pass it back to me." As the chewing was against rules it had to be done surreptitiously. It was some hours before his returns came in.

Todd Mastin, a little boy in the chair in front of Reuben had a habit of lying over his desk at regular intervals to pull the hair of a smaller boy in front of him. When Reuben had collected a large ball of soft gum he quietly slipped it into Todd's chair as Todd lay over to pull Albert's hair. Albert squealed. Todd flopped back into place just too late. The gum was ready. Mr. Wyatt saw him. "Come here, Todd!" ordered Mr. Wyatt. Todd tried to obey but was unavoidably detained. "Did you hear me, Todd?" inquired Mr. Wyatt.

All eyes turned on Todd. He was twisting and pulling, annoyed at his predicament. He had risen just high enough to expose the adhering string of gum. The boys guffawed. Mr. Wyatt scowled. Todd pulled. He tried pushing. Reuben boosted him. The gum broke. Todd waddled to the rostrum and stood with crimson face toward Mr. Wyatt while peals of laughter derided him from the back.

Later Mr. Wyatt was called out. Todd quickly exchanged chairs with him, covering the gum with Mr. Wyatt's cushion.

Unfortunately, Mr. Wyatt fell in love and broke up the pleasant school arrangement. He sought the hand of Miss Mary N. Moore and was refused. Public opinion would not have countenanced her continuing to tantalize him by her daily presence in his place of business, so she resigned.

The school was then moved to the old Todd house on the corner of Gates and Franklin Streets. Miss Laura Bassett took Miss Moore's place and Mademoiselle Visnaud, a native of Paris, came daily to give lessons in conversational French.

Miss Laura Bassett was the most cheerful person imaginable. She was short and round. Her face was long and wide, her eyes wide and grey, her hair thin, grey and done in a wee tight ball at the back of her head. She loved literature, mythology, and composition, painting and history. She spread the art of being happy with the artlessness of a child. She taught for the love of teaching. She was so uninterested in her salary that she did not know how much she was making. Her nephew, Mr. Ben Lee Young, attended to that and the bills so why should she bother? She was thoroughly

attuned to the beauty of life, to the joy of giving joy. She was an artist, a critic, a lover of all goodness. She radiated vigor and walked with head thrown back with a bouncing step. Her costume was always the same – a plain, tightfitting bask, full ankle length skirt and soft square-toed black shoes. She was genuine. She needed neither silk nor gem to make her beautiful.

In her youth her fiance had been killed by her brother in a duel. Her sister, Miss Lenora, was an invalid. Another sister had died leaving three children to Miss Laura to rear. She had been true to each duty. She had met each situation and made of it a crown.

Rarely are children so fortunate as to have two such women as Miss Mary N. Moore and Miss Laura Bassett as influences in their lives.

The Academy thrived beyond the end of the century. All of the wealthier children of Huntsville were prepared for college or university in its halls.

As the century advanced, these sentiments turned rapidly toward public schools. *The Mercury* helped to mold this sentiment; the influx of Northern and Northwestern people made it a natural step. They were used to public schools. They believed in them as training all children of the community to meet on common ground. It was the word "common" which the Southerner avoided. He was afraid that the influence of the common element in society would outweigh the gentler training of the home when children heard common "talk" for eight hours a day. The result has confirmed their fears.

Miss Carrie Hents' School

Small children went to Miss Carrie Hents' school on Green Street. She and Miss Adele, her sister, had been governesses but few persons could afford them in 1890 so they had opened a primary school for boys and girls at their cottage on the corner of Green Street and Meridianville Pike.² They spoke French fluently. Their father was a refugee from France. He had been a close friend of Robespierre and claimed for that individual a kindly heart and a maligned reputation.³

They were quiet, tiny little women interested in their work and successful with children. Their income was very meagre but their friends, particularly Judge and Mrs. Tancred Betts, looked after

2 *The Weekly Mercury*, September 11, 1895

3 Mr. Hents' diary of the Reign of Terror, written in a fine handwriting, was one of Miss Adele's priceless possessions. It was burned at her death. She let me read it.

them when all other sources of income failed. They were Episcopalians and their school was referred to as a "Church School."⁴

Mrs. Farris' School

Another primary school was maintained by Mrs. Farris at her home on Madison Street. She had been a teacher in the public school and was thoroughly qualified for the work. She was a very small person who had a fascination for children. Having three of her own made her sympathetic and patient with them. She never had a large school but she was successful with those who came to her.

W. M. Adams' Select School for Boys

Professor W. M. Adams had a "select school for boys."⁵ The adjective indicates aloofness from the "common herd." "Gentlemen only," sort of pushed into manners because they were the sons of gentlemen. It was not poor reasoning. If a boy is to be the carrier of a name, which has been a name for generations, the parents are supposed to set a standard which he has to reach. If he is thrown with uncouth, crude boys he had not yet the discrimination to abhor that crudeness. It was apt, however, to make him snobbish. He was told to avoid so-and-so's society as he "is not good enough for you." If he happened to observe uncouthness in an individual he was usually greeted with the comment, "Well, look who he is. You can't expect any better. Water runs no higher than its source."

In Professor Adams' school the standards of scholarship and conduct were set so that the pupil reaching them might receive a reward. Levert Coleman received the gold medal for being the best scholar in this school in 1892.⁶ That was, of course, in keeping with the idea that one must recognize a standard if one is to reach it. There was one good point in its favor, the medal was a tangible object for which the boys strove. Incidentally, they learned their lessons in order to attain it. Getting it was almost as great an honor to the child as getting a college degree was to a grown person. In the last analysis there was really very little difference in them. Each was a stamp of a definite requirement. Each was

4 *The Weekly Mercury*, September 11, 1895, charges \$2.00 and \$3.00 per month.

5 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, February 24, 1892

6 *The Weekly Mercury*, August 30, 1892

an honor which was conferred by an institution. Only there was but one best pupil and there were legions of those winning degrees.

Public Schools

An Industrial School for poor children was opened in a cottage on Howe Street by Mrs. Brannon in 1892. The children who attended it had a Christmas treat that year,⁷ but after that the papers did not mention it so it must have not been continued.

With all of the private schools in existence it was a wonder that there was a public school. It was located on the site of the old Green Academy which was incorporated in 1812, 1816, and 1818.

When Professor Eugene Smith, the last principal of Green Academy, died he left the property to the city to be used in perpetuity as a public school. It was a beautiful site. The brick buildings of the Academy were destroyed during the Civil War by Federal forces.

Up to 1899 the trustees of the Smith estate had not put in a claim for reimbursement while other schools which were destroyed had been reimbursed.⁸ As has already been indicated, public education was frowned upon by the upper classes but they considered the education of the masses desirable in the main. There was a popular belief that some people did not need to be educated as they were incapable of learning.

The Mercury began propaganda for an increase in State appropriations for public school maintenance and free text books. It gave as its first demand a full-time trained superintendent. Superintendents carried on their own businesses and looked after the schools on the side. It believed that a Board of Education should issue licenses to teachers and that township trustees should be paid for their services. It hoped that they would then be more interested in education and less interested in supplying jobs for those who were incapable. They should, it said, have full authority in all school matters, especially in the appointment of teachers. They should be elected by the people for this purpose. Another evil it considered was the practice of holding public schools in private houses. They should be in State property. *The Mercury* believed that there were too many subjects being taught ineffectively. Those who attended public schools needed only those subjects which were necessary for them to make a living. It did not define them. There were plenty of private schools for those who could afford "the trimmings" in education. Very probably that was an attack on the

7 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, December 21, 1892

8 *Ibid*, July 19, 1899

classics, elocution, music, dramatics, and dancing. The next item is a revelation of the paucity of State funds for education, remembering that the sixteenth sections devoted to public education in Alabama included originally the coal and iron fields of Jefferson County.

"Enough money," plead *The Mercury*, "for six months of two terms each; one in the winter, one in the summer." That arrangement allowed the county children to help with the crops in the spring and fall. When we consider the paltry salaries paid teachers in those days, the demand is a terrible arraignment against the State officials. The kinds of licenses were of too low standard. *The Mercury* advocates reducing teachers licenses to two grades only. Then there should be compulsory attendance at institutes with pay, and uniform text books.⁹

"The great question in Alabama," it writes the following October, "is what has Alabama in the last seventeen years done for the people? The answer is, it has kept them in ignorance and poverty.

"So far as that disgraceful farce known as the public school system of Alabama is concerned it is a blot and a disgrace to any State, and under its influence as shown by our census and educational report, has yearly increased. We concede that Birmingham and Montgomery and a few more cities of the State have good public schools; we concede that there are several normal schools in the State which are as far from the reach of the average citizen of the State, so far as sending his children to them is concerned, as the North Pole is for the purpose of knocking persimmons. We believe that the future development of the State, the attainment of high civilization, is absolutely dependent upon the education of the masses. The cities of Alabama have been favored by legislation, that is to say they have taken care of themselves in this particular . . . but the country precincts have been absolutely ignored by the past legislation . . . and as a result the loss of pride, which is one of the handmaids of ignorance has led to poverty, and often to crime. With a view to the education of the neglected masses of Alabama, we have taken the part of the people and are trying to use plain English - so that there can be no mistake about it - to excite them to an interest in the legislation of the State, so that they may remove the handicap that has so long and so unfairly rested upon them."¹⁰

A bill to regulate the apportionment of school funds in this State by the Superintendent of Education passed the legislature February,

9 *The Weekly Mercury*, January 7, 1891

10 *Ibid*, October 21, 1891

1891."¹¹ But those distributed to Huntsville were insufficient for salaries and supplies. The superintendent, therefore, laid a fee for incidentals on each pupil. Three Hundred Dollars was raised for the half year. It was used to equip the school with desks.¹²

Thirteen months later *The Democrat* says, "Huntsville has one of the best managed schools for white children in the State. Our citizens should go and see for themselves the pains taken to make their children good and true citizens. The school needs a large and better building with the best equipment to keep it abreast of other city schools."¹³

Mr. Malcolm R. Murray and Mr. R. E. Pettus were candidates that year for the position of County Superintendent of Education. It was an appointive office at that time. Both candidates were popular men. Mr. Murray was a member of the firm of Murray and Smith, jewelers and book and china dealers. Mr. Pettus held a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Alabama, having graduated with honors in chemistry. After leaving school he became an assistant to Professor Eugene Smith.¹⁴ He had also been a trustee of the county schools. His qualifications were better than most people's but Mr. Murray was appointed.¹⁵

That year Professor A. N. Eshman was principal of the city schools. The enrollment was between 240 and 250 pupils.¹⁶ That was small when we consider the size of the average family then.

Taken with the private schools though, it was not out of proportion. Education was not compulsory then either. There were, no doubt, many other children of school age who were running at large or who were employed at home or in trades. By 1895 there were 625 children in the various schools.¹⁷ That year, Dr. A. B. Jones, Alderman, asked for an increase in the primary department of the public schools as the crowded condition hampered the efficiency of the teachers.¹⁸ Mayor Hutchens replied that he would be glad to see an increase in the whole school but that the people would not vote the money for a new building.¹⁹ They had very fine teachers in the school that year.

Mr. S. R. Butler²⁰ was principal, Mrs. Fanny Taliaferro,

11 *The Weekly Mercury*, February 11, 1891

12 *Ibid*, March 18, 1891

13 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, April 27, 1892

14 *The Weekly Mercury*, October 14, 1891

15 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, March 19, 1892

16 *The Weekly Mercury*, October 14, 1891

17 *Ibid*, February 6, 1896

18 *Ibid*, June 5, 1895

19 *Ibid*, June 19, 1895

20 *The Weekly Tribune*, November 17, 1896

primary, Misses Mazzie Pamplin, Ella Ware, Mary Slaughter, and Gertrude Collins handled the other grades.²¹ Mr. Butler was a small stout man with curly brown hair and blue eyes. He was a master teacher and rigid disciplinarian. The children and teachers respected him and would work to the limit for him. He had high standards of requirements for teachers and pupils. He stressed professional reading, attendance at institutes, summer courses or normal training for every one whom he employed. He was frank but ready to help any teacher who wanted to improve herself professionally. He was really a pioneer in professional standards for teachers in Madison County.

Mrs. Taliaferro was past middle age but she was a teacher. A little child's mind was as open to her as if it were really a printed book. No matter what method she used they learned. She made every story so graphic that the little children thought she had lived all of them.

One day when she was relating an incident of the American Revolution, one of her wee listeners raised his hand asking, "Was you there, Miss Fanny?" "No," she replied, "but I have been in every war since."

Another day when one of the boys had been rude he said in great terror, "Are you going to send me to Mr. Butler?" "No, sir," she replied quick and sharp. "I am Mr. Butler enough for you, sir."

As James said, the children were an organ and she was the organist, and she always drew perfect harmony from them. She had a very bright grey-blue eye, frank and appealing. She wore her grey hair brushed smoothly back from the sides with curled bangs covering the top of her forehead. She had a lovely voice and merry laugh which won immediate confidence.²²

Miss Mary Slaughter was a small brunette. She had a quick, decided way of speaking. She read characters well and rarely had trouble with discipline although she taught the seventh grade and high school subjects. English was her hobby but she did not slight the other subjects of the curriculum. She formed a Teachers' Study Club which met once a week and proved to be a great source of recreation and study to the members. She wrote and talked well, was a good parliamentarian, and gave her services freely to Church, home, and friends.

After Professor Butler took charge the school increased and confidence in public education grew. Several of the old families,

21 Professor Butler was re-elected every year until the end of the century.

22 I know Mr. Butler personally, and taught with Mrs. Taliaferro and Miss Slaughter the first year I taught.

including the Garths, the Mastins, and the Matthews actually sent their children to the public school. It was a great compliment to that system of education. In 1899 the city passed the necessary bonds for a new building and it was about completed at the end of that year. The enrollment had increased to such an extent that Professor William Humphrey was elected assistant principal that year. He was a gentle, kindly, light blue-eyed old man, rather small and stout. His relation with both faculty and student body was gentlemanly and thoughtful.²³

The Mercury had not gotten the ward schools which it demanded but it had effected an improvement in school conditions. It complained on January 2, 1895 that the fault lay in the State constitution. Not enough money could be collected under it for ward schools. When the Constitutional Convention met at the end of the decade that short-coming was ironed out.

The Huntsville Female College

For the first five years of the decade there was another school in Huntsville which enjoyed a state-wide patronage. It was the Huntsville Female College which had developed from the Huntsville Female Academy. It was established by the Methodist Conference in 1843. One of its commencement exercises will give an idea of what some of the girls of the past were supposed to ponder.

The Reverend Dr. A. B. Jones, Drs. C. C. Baldrige, W. C. Wheeler, and Reverend Z. A. Parker, all members of the faculty and members of the graduating class were arranged in rows on the stage before the "vast" assembly. After prayers and Scripture reading the salutorian delivered her essay "As Rosebuds Will, You Know." Unfortunately there is not the slightest inkling given of the contents of this or of any of its successors. The graduate who delivered it was Miss Jennie Jenkins. She was followed by a piano solo by Miss Jessie Shealy. The next girl might have taken Domestic Science. Her subject was "The Broom, Duster, and Shovel." Miss Mattie Eddins and Miss Mary Sue Rand spoke on "The Ancient and Modern." Miss Annie Mallory advised her classmates to "Keep Step." Daisy McFall of Kentucky wrote on "The Sovereignty of Song." Miss Sallie Barnes Richardson entitled hers, "Then." She was followed by the valedictorian, Miss Lillie Ganong of Maine, whose doleful subject was "Buds That Never Open."²⁴

This institution brought a great deal of trade to Huntsville merchants. Naturally, they tried to keep on good terms with the

23 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, August 9, 1899

24 *The Argus*, June 2, 1892

girls. Every afternoon one of the teachers was assigned the trying task of taking the girls for a walk. The whole school was lined up by two and taken down town or in any other direction which the teacher wanted to walk.

One afternoon when about ninety of them were in line with the teacher in the rear, as they passed Humphrey's Drug Store, Dr. Humphrey came to the door. As the teacher approached he said, "Had I seen the young ladies in time, I would have invited them in and set them up to soda."

Immediately the order was given and the teacher said coyly to the doctor, "Oh, it isn't too late." They had to drink in relays but they did not mind that.

On Tuesday morning, January 8, 1895, the fire department was ordered to the College. The City Hall bell clanged vigorously until a large crowd was gathered in the street in front of the college. The firemen connected the hose at the plug, the fire engine whistle sounded but the water would not reach the fourth storey of the building. Men volunteered to carry trunks and furniture to safety. They went in in squads while the Hook and Ladder Company put their extension ladders to the roof. One man, bolder than the others, went to the part of the roof nearest the flame. The hose was finally gotten to him but the water pressure was too weak to be effective. A high wind pounding the trees swayed them near the flame and scattered sparks over neighboring buildings. Men on the ground floor were moving pianos while others were letting trunks out of upstairs windows to men below. Many of the girls were frantically wringing their hands crying, "My clothes are all burning up!" The crowd's attention was suddenly turned by a great cry to the fireman on the roof. The flame had broken out in a long line between him and the ladder. He surveyed the situation calmly. It was too high to risk crossing it. The crowd held their breath while he crawled to the edge of the roof and looked over. There was a large gutter a little to the left. Slowly he crawled to it. Clutching it in both hands he swung himself around it and slid the four stories to the ground in safety. The crowd stood dumb. It was a miracle they thought.

The piano squad saved twelve out of twenty pianos. As the fire raged on sparks carried by the wind set the next house, and those facing Clinton Street, afire. Volunteers began a bucket brigade and were almost as effective as the fire engine.

Finally it was too dangerous to go into the College building or to stand near it. The people were pushed into Lincoln Street and up Randolph to Calhoun. Even after the roof fell in some of the girls wanted to go in after their clothes. The fire burned most of the afternoon.²⁵

Dr. Jones rented the Seminary and kept the boarders there until January 23. Then he sent them home and turned the Seminary over to Mrs. Babb and Miss Robinson who had a school there the rest of the year. They employed Miss Florence Hardy to take charge of the primary department; Miss Binford taught instrumental music; Miss DeWitt, voice; Miss Coulter, art; Miss Clarke, elocution; and those wishing college work were taught by the directors.

Dr. Jones received Twenty Thousand Dollars in insurance on the building and Nine Thousand Three Hundred Dollars on the College furniture. He tried to raise the money to rebuild but the citizens were too poor to give their share so the idea was abandoned and the lot subdivided for cottages.²⁶

The citizens regretted the death of the college. It had added much to the social life of the city. The students' patronage had added to business, including stamp sales. Dr. A. B. Jones was cared for by being elected Alderman in April, 1895. He proved to be a factor in improving the public schools by persistently presenting their needs to the Council.

Negro Schools

Negro schools were maintained by State and City taxes too. Their school was in Georgia. In 1891 there was a colored General Alabama Academy on lower Franklin Street. The principal of this school, A. W. McKinley, solicited the Mayor and Aldermen to recommend Huntsville as a location for a negro college.²⁷ Mr. Charles H. Halsey guaranteed five acres as a donation from the North Alabama Improvement Company. The Mastin place was purchased for the location of the Negro Agricultural and Mechanical College.²⁸ In 1895 the teachers at the negro school were Rev. J. F. Humphrey, principal; Gertrude McGill, Maria L. Clay, Lula B. Rankin, and Carrie P. Fackler were teachers.²⁹ Normal had a primary, grammar, and high school, nursing school, manual arts, agriculture, and music. The pupils were taught that self respect was the basis of all progress.

Mr. Council wanted his pupils to develop as negroes. He was very strict about honesty, cleanliness, thoroughness, and ambition to progress. He had the ability to put his ideas into practice. His graduates were successful and his school grew.

26 *The Weekly Mercury*, January 23, 1895

27 *Ibid*, January 28, 1891

28 *Ibid*, May 20, 1891

29 It must be remembered that Negroes had the same family names as their old masters. *The Weekly Mercury*, December 4, 1895.

In 1892 the commencement sermon for this school was preached at the African Methodist Episcopal Church by Bishop H. P. Turner, to a large audience of white and colored people. His theme was "Africa, the Dark Continent." His discourse was based on his own experiences as a missionary to that land. *The Argus* says of him, "He is a Negro born and reared in South Carolina, a man of good education, striking appearance, graceful, strong and earnest in speech, at times exceedingly humorous, sometimes unintentionally so, and at times pathetic, and reaching the highest effect of the orator. Some of his humor was very fine. His theme was an interesting one.

"At the close of his address he paid a high tribute to Prof. Council and to the State of Alabama for its aid in establishing such a noble institute."³⁰

Council was a force in the development of his race and in that work. He was a patriarchal character, a man in whom his race may well be proud. The white people who knew him admired him as an earnest leader of his people. They felt that his purposes were right.

Domestic Science

The gentle art of needlework was a great pastime with the ladies. They spent all of their unplanned moments embroidering, drawnwork hemstitching, crocheting, knitting or talking on their front porches in summer and before their fires in the winter. It was a sociable occupation. They made intricate patterns in shaded silk embroidery, or fine crochet while listening to the latest scandal or while telling of some personal adventure.

Mrs. J. F. Carpenter advertised that she taught fifty stitches in embroidery. The pattern was stamped on linen and held between hoops while the stitches were made. Cross stitching was so perfect that it could not be distinguished from beadwork at a short distance. Drawnwork was made with No. 100 thread as was hemstitching. Whole bedspreads were made of crochet and of knitting.

Mrs. Caroline Karthaus, Miss Sarah Burnstein, Mrs. Willis Harris and Mrs. Milligan were among those who could crochet a difficult pattern without looking at their hook. Baby Irish, fillet, and popcorn and shell patterns were among the popular laces.

Another interesting art was making table mats of corset strings which were sewed in the desired pattern much as some rag rugs are made. As soon as they were finished they were starched stiff.

They were then ready for the next eight or ten months use without washing. Miss Jennie Sheffey, Mrs. Molly Pleasants, Mrs. Milton Humes, and Misses Mattie and Mary Larnard Newman were expert at this work.

Faggoting was turned into yokes for dresses and ruffles for underclothes. Underskirts were edged with tatting and crochet as well as with real lace. The flounces were frequently tucked with feather stitching between the tucks. Collars, cuffs and baby clothes were also heavily featherstitched.

Miss Jennie Sheffey crocheted two afghans in red, black and orange stripes. She then embroidered the stripes in autumn leaves, matching the colors in real leaves. These afghans were fringed at the bottom and top and corded between the stripes.

Every lady, too, made a "crazy-quilt" of scraps of silk which were featherstitched around each edge and quilted with a wool padding.

"Tomato" pincushions were popular Christmas gifts. They looked more like red pumpkins with stripes around them and green caps atop. Needle cases made of colored flannel bound with ribbon or made of scalloped flannel in a leather case and containing needles of all sizes were common Christmas gifts.

Chimes of sachet were very decorative. They were made of ribbon cut into inch bags and attached to ribbons.

Chapter 17

As They Cooked

Cooking was a fine art in Huntsville. No woman was ashamed to learn how to cook or to serve as cook at Church bazaars, fairs, or picnics. Hospitality demanded that every woman be prepared to feed a guest who came at unexpected hours. Stoves were heated with wood, coal, or oil. They were hard to regulate and uncertain for baking. Utensils were iron, tin or copper. There were iron pots for cooking vegetables, boiling water; iron skillets for frying; iron griddles for broiling meats; iron molds for muffins and cakes; and iron waffle rings. They were heavy and retained heat long after the fire was low which was their value in a wood stove. The things cooked in them tasted better, too.

Materials were bought in wholesale quantities and stored in a pantry. Every household of any pretention bought coffee and sugar by the hundred pound sack, flour by the barrel, sides of bacon, and bushels of meal. Coffee was roasted in the pan and ground in a small hand-mill on the kitchen wall, or a smaller one which could be held in the grinder's lap. The grains were put into an open top, passed through grinders, and fell into a little drawer in the bottom. Experienced cooks knew exactly how much coffee to grind for a meal. Preserves were canned by the gross. A few women were successful in canning vegetables, but most families did without vegetables out of season. In winter, sweet and Irish potatoes, cowfield peas, dried okra, turnips and turnip salad, cabbage, and butter beans were the ordinary menu.

Meals were heavier than they are now. For breakfast, oat-meal, muffins and biscuits, or battercakes or waffles, steak or chicken, eggs, milk, coffee and cream were a normal meal. In season, five vegetables, not counting rice or Irish potatoes, two meats, and a dessert were the ordinary dinner which was usually served between one and three o'clock. Supper was simple. Biscuits, jams, cold meat, grits, bread and milk, tea or coffee, supplied their needs. Children were fed about five o'clock and were put to bed by seven.

In the following recipes please note the "quick heat." This is important as your baked goods will collapse unless you use it. Our

modern, quick oven is not quite as indicative;

Rich Jumbles

Rub a pound of butter into a pound and a quarter of flour; beat four eggs with a pound and a quarter of sugar; when very light mix them with the butter and flour; mix in a glass of rosewater and a nutmeg; roll them in rings and bake slowly; sift powdered sugar over them after they are baked.

Date Rocks

One pound of shelled pecans or scaley barks; one pound of seeded dates; three eggs beaten together; two cups sugar; two light cups flour; one-quarter pound of butter; one teaspoonful of soda sifted with the flour; one teaspoonful of cinnamon; one of cloves; two of allspice, also sifted with flour. Butter-milk.

Cream butter and sugar; add the beaten eggs; sift flour and spices in gradually. Add nuts and dates. If it is too stiff add enough buttermilk to make it the consistency of fruit-cake dough. Drop on greased tins. Bake in quick oven until light brown.¹

Beaten Biscuits

One pound flour, three ounces lard, one teaspoonful of salt, one teacupful of ice water. Cream the flour and lard. The salt is sifted with the flour. Beat on a biscuit block until the dough blisters with every stroke. Roll out. Cut with small cutter. Stick each biscuit four times in rows in the middle with fork. Bake forty-five minutes in a quick oven.²

Stuffed Ham

Cut off all extra fat. Boil in a pot of water until it is tender. Remove, dry, and put in baker. Run in the oven until it is dry. Take out. Prepare meal or rolled cracker crumbs with some of the

¹ Mrs. Milton Humes' recipe

² Mrs. Rosalie Chapman's recipe

juice of the ham, two eggs beaten together, sweetened vinegar, salt and pepper.

Slice 1/8 inch strips out of the ham about four inches apart. Chop sweet pickles into the bread-crumbs. Stuff strip with mixture. Cover the ham with it. Decorate with hard boiled eggs. Take the yolk out, slice into disks. Use these as the center of a daisy. Make petals out of strips of the white. Cut pickles for stems of daisy. Run into oven until the dressing browns. Take out, set aside to cool. Serve on large platter when cold.³

Chicken Croquettes

Boil hen until the meat leaves the bones. Strip skin and meat off the bones. Grind through a meat grinder with onions. Boil a set of brains. Mix the chicken with bread crumbs and chicken gravy. Salt and pepper. Red pepper adds to the flavor. Beat two eggs together, stick into the meat. Form meat into balls and roll in beaten biscuit crumbs. Fry in deep fat until a rich brown. Serve hot on parsley leaves.⁴

Mock Duck

Get a thin round steak. Roll it over like a cylinder. Stuff with bread crumbs mixed with two eggs; one onion, chopped; salt, pepper to taste. Bake in the oven until the steak is tender. Serve hot. Slice round.⁵

To Keep Suet

Chop the suet you wish to preserve until some are as fine as for mince pies or pudding; add a tablespoonful of salt to three tablespoonfuls of suet. Mince all well together and put in a jar. Keep it tied up close as exposure to the air will make it strong. It should be soaked an hour before you wish to use it to remove the salt.⁶

3 Mrs. William E. Matthews' recipe given to Mrs. Chapman

4 Mrs. Reuben Chapman's recipe

5 Mrs. Chapman's, from her cook book

6 *Domestic Cookery*, page 105; my grandmother Chapman's cook book which Mrs. Reuben Chapman used

Sponge Cake

Take twelve eggs the weight of them in sugar, and the weight of six of them in flour; beat the yolks with the sugar, and beat the whites alone; season with nutmeg or grated lemon peel; put altogether, adding flour last; stir it quickly after the flour is added as it will make it heavy to beat it much; you then grease several small pans and put it in; bake with a quick oven and they will be done in half an hour or less. They are pretty when iced.⁷

Light Bread

Boil Irish potatoes. Mash them in their own water, cup for cup; add one cup of plain luke warm water; one yeast cake dissolved in a cup of luke warm water, one cup of sugar. Beat to smooth consistency and let rise in a warm place two hours at least. Add one tablespoonful of lard; one teaspoonful of salt, half the yeast mixture and enough flour to knead into a light dough. Form into rolls or into loaves. Let rise in a warm place until they are double their original size. Butter tops. Bake. The remaining half of the mixture may be kept in a cool place and used two days later.⁸

Recipes were passed from friend to friend. Miss Mattie J. Davis had an especially good way of frying oysters. Here is how she did it:

Beat cream into white of egg, mix cracker crumbs, salt and pepper. Dip the oyster in the mixture. Fry in hot grease.

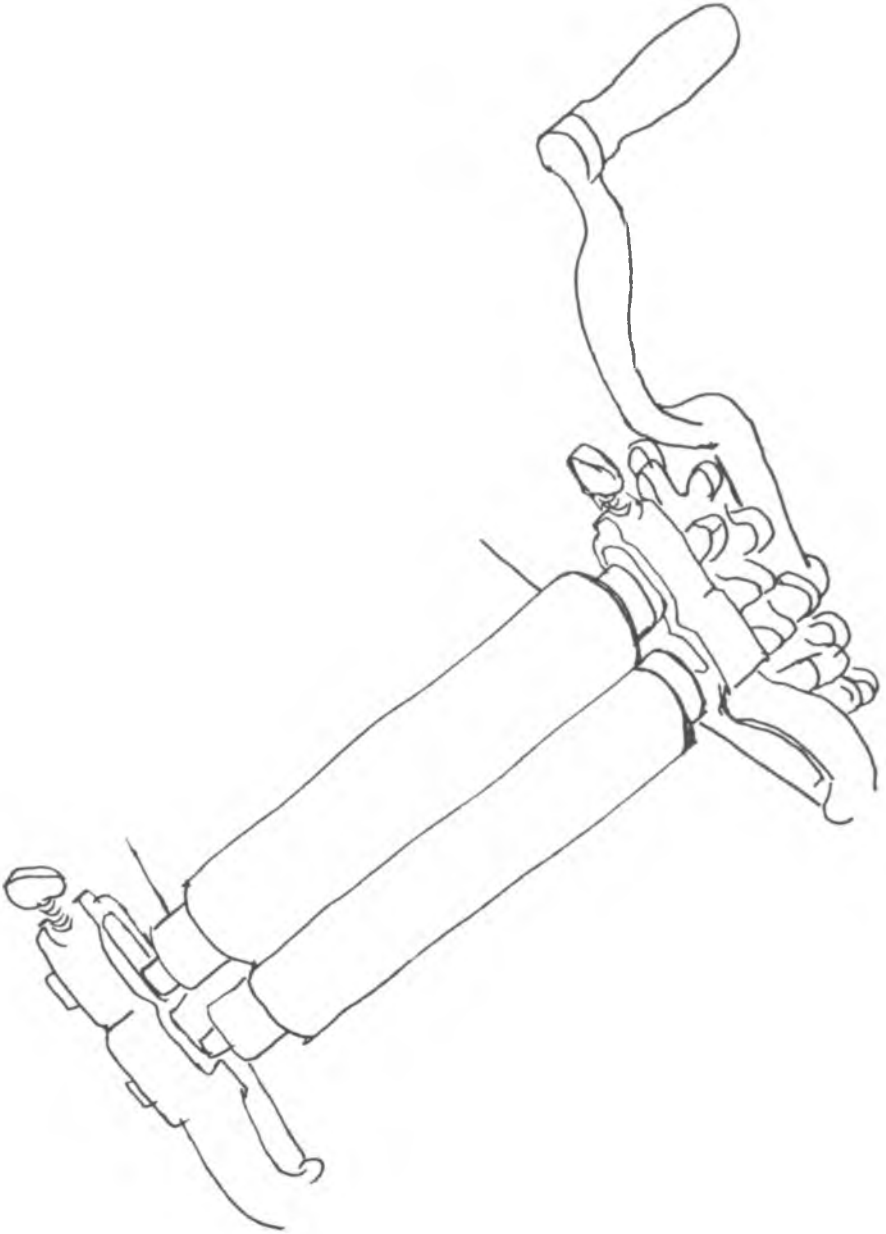
There was a smoke house on all of the old places. Hams were cured with saltpetre, pepper, salt, brown sugar, and smoke from hickory chips. A few people cured beef, also. The fire had to be kept up three weeks. The hams and other pieces of meat were swung from the smoke house rafters. There were no windows in it nor was there a floor. The door was fitted as closely as possible so that as little air as possible could get in.

A good many families made their own wine or cider. They

⁷ *Domestic Cookery*, page 117

⁸ Mrs. William E. Matthew's recipe

used hard presses, left the new wine in barrels with a cyphon leading into water to take off the impurities. After it stopped fermenting it was syphoned into bottles. They were corked and stored in cellars with the date on a label.



A beaten biscuit machine



The Negro cook was usually the boss.

Chapter 18

The Color Line

In Huntsville, Negroes have always been considered a vital part of society.¹ In 1892 in every issue of *The Democrat* there were discussions of the question of social equality between the races as being an undesirable thing for both races. At the Industrial Convention meeting in Huntsville in 1899, one of the chief speakers was William Council, President of the Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical College for Negroes at Normal, Huntsville, Alabama. At that time he was one of the greatest Negro educators in the United States.

In this speech, which covered a whole page of *The Tribune*, October 17, 1899, he plead for Negro education for the Negro as a Negro. He thought that the races should be friendly, each in his own sphere. He thought that his race and the white race would be destroyed by intermarriage; that self-respect should prohibit it. He set forth the experiment which he was making on his own race at Normal. He said he was sure that the Negro could be trained in time as well and as highly as any other race. He was fully cognizant of the debt which they owed the people of the South and the State of Alabama. His school was maintained by State appropriations, and active work of a white Board of Trustees. He was grateful to the City of Huntsville for its share in moving the school from its first location on Franklin Street to its present location on the old Mastin place.

He had, under scientific cultivation, three hundred acres of fertile land. His shops were good but not large enough for the number of pupils who were in the school. He needed larger appropriations and more teachers. The music and dramatics departments of his school were directed by Negro graduates of the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music and the Boston School of Expression, respectively. His hospital was well equipped and the doctors of Huntsville lectured to his nurses as faithfully as they lectured to the white and colored nurses at the City Infirmary.

1 "Society" in the community sense, not in its social meaning

Mr. Council was fully alive to the shiftlessness of some of his race. But he thought that adequate educational facilities would decrease that attitude quite as much as it had in the white race. He thought that the tendency to steal would also disappear as the children were trained to work intelligently for themselves. It was a part of the lack of self-respect. It was reflected in the slovenly dress and untidiness of the homes of many of his race. Crowded living quarters helped to engender it too. That also accounted for the low standard of morality among Negroes. He thought that as they got farther from the jungles they would improve in every phase of life. He plead for an equal opportunity for his race, but no social intercourse, except on a business footing. He thought that Negroes should have their own professionals, their own hospitals, schools, churches, and stores. He believed that given the proper education they would, in time, develop their own institutions, their own writers, poets, musicians and orators. His own speech proved how eloquent the Negro could be; his own music department, how far he excelled his white brother in that field.

The position of nurses and family servants in the old family in the South proved that the races could live in harmony and mutual respect. The number of mulatto children showed that white men did not maintain their self respect nor had they a due regard for the social status of their children. It also showed that the Negro women were proud to be the mistresses of white men. They considered it an honor to be the mothers of the children of white men. They were non-moral. Some of them considered it an honor to have each child by a different father.² So long as they lived with only one man at a time they did not consider themselves immoral.³

The old Huntsvillian took great pleasure in the naivete of his black associates. One day about 1895, Kate, trusted maid of Mrs. Milton Humes, announced that she was to be married. A little later in the day Mrs. Humes had occasion to go to the kitchen. There was a long back porch that formed an "L" as an approach from the house to the kitchen at Abingdon Place. Conversations in the kitchen could be distinctly heard as one stepped out of the back hall door onto this porch. As Mrs. Humes stepped out she heard Pearl Macklin, her coal-black Negro man cook say, "Kate,

2 Mr. Harsh's cook on Highland Avenue, Birmingham, Alabama, had eleven children. "The proudest thing of my life, Miss Harsh, is dat they is none of them by the same father." Mr. George Bridges, Birmingham sculptor, heard her say this.

3 Lilia Tucker, Mrs. Rosalie Chapman's cook, in Huntsville, Alabama gave such a version of morality as being a justification for the attitude of her race.

yer better be a-thinkin' about yer weddin'."

"How come?" said Kate.

"'Cause dem dats single bears dey own in-e-qui-ties, but dem dats married has ter bear deys and dey husband's in-e-qui-ties. Dat's som'in ter deter yer."

But the wedding came off before an improvised altar in the bay window in Mrs. Humes' back parlor. The bride entered through the dining room dressed in white with white veil and orange blossoms, white kid gloves, and white fan with a large bouquet of white lilies-of-the-valley from Mrs. Humes' own conservatory. Byrd Chapman, Negro Baptist preacher, performed the ceremony before the assembled friends. Felicia Hubbard played the wedding march and Shubert's *Serenade* during the ceremony. All of Mrs. Humes' family connections and a few friends attended the ceremony. There was a long banqueting table spread on the back porch and decorated with tulle, flowers, and a huge wedding cake hanging in lace icing with the bride and groom surmounting the pyramidal whiteness. The white guests did not interrupt the banquet. It was served in courses and wine flowed freely from Captain Humes' cellar.⁴

A similar wedding was described by *The Democrat* for Leah, the maid of Mrs. George Turner. The groom on this occasion was Brewster Townsend to whom Mr. Wilson had left all of his property. The parlors of the Turner home were decorated with Jackson vine and smilax. Presents were displayed and the guests had a banquet afterwards just as in Kate's case.

An example of a Negro church wedding in 1892 was that of Nanny, maid to Mrs. Milton Humes, to Jackson Turner, headwaiter. For this wedding, engraved invitations were sent out. The Primitive Baptist Church on Spring Street was decorated with flowers and Jackson vine. Negro ushers wore dress suits and the bridal party wore light dresses with long trains and carried bouquets of roses. The bride wore a wedding veil of tulle with orange blossoms, and a dress with a two yard train. A section of the church was reserved for white people. It was filled to capacity.

A yearly event at the Primitive Baptist Church (Negro) was the baptizing.⁵ So many people attended this that the foot-bridge over the Spring branch collapsed with the crowd, and caused a great deal of excitement on an occasion before our period. The women candidates for baptism wore long, white robes and white bandannas. They had a service in the church first then they marched by two's out of the church and down the hill to the Big Spring branch. As they came they sang an improvised hymn. The tech-

4 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, December 4, 1892

5 *Ibid*, September 15, 1897

nical name for it was "wording-it-out." They were followed by the congregation singing *Swing Low Sweet Chariot*. Stopping at the edge of the water they waited in exultation as the minister and his assistant in long, black frock coats descended to the middle of the stream near the foot-bridge. Loud prayers and invocations to the Holy Spirit were then shouted over the waters. The candidates were called singly, the congregation sang:

"Let's go down ter de water,
Let's go down ter de water,
Let's go down ter de water,
Religion is so sweet.

"I promised de Lord ter be baptized,
I promised de Lord ter be baptized,
I promised de Lord ter be baptized,
Religion is so sweet.

"This little band is a happy little band,
A happy little band, a happy little band,
This little band is a happy little band,
Religion is so sweet."

The candidates shouted and hollered:

"O, Jesus I'se coming! Coming,
Lord, coming!"

Then, as he was taken by the minister: "Hallelulah! Hallelulah!" He continued in long gasps as the preacher submerged him.

Occasionally the shouting became so violent that other assistants had to be called in to immerse him wholly. As all were baptized, the choir sang as the preacher was coming out of the water:

"I've finished de work I had ter do,
I had ter do, I had ter do,
I've finished de work I had ter do,
Religion is so sweet."

Now and then when there were a great number to be baptized the following hymn was sung for every other person:

6 The words of this song were supplied by Cinderella Johnson, Negro cook of Mr. and Mrs. Erle Pettus, Birmingham, Alabama

"Take me down ter de water,
Take me down ter de water,
Take me down ter de water,
To be baptized."

On the return march to the church they sang, *Oh! Dem Golden Slippers*. As their voices gradually receded the crowd dispersed, satisfied that they had seen a great event.



A big occasion at the Big Spring



Sacred to the Memory of . . .

Chapter 19

Obituaries

Some of Huntsville's oldest and best citizens finished their courses during these years. Death is natural; it is expected, but it is unusual for it to carry off as many long-lived, valuable citizens in a short space as it did in Huntsville within the decade from 1890 to 1900. They came of a generation of educated and cultured folk; they left Huntsville to a new regime. The courtesy shown to the dead is quite typical of that old neighborly life. The dead, high, low, rich and poor are one. Each is a friend whose memory and good works were sacred to the community. Their bad work and qualities are unrecorded; only the best appears.

James Scott

On February 17, 1891, Mr. James Scott, who had lived in Huntsville for nearly ninety-two years, went to give a final account of his record to the Heavenly bar. His life had covered nearly the whole span of Huntsville's history. He was a respected citizen, yet he took his account with him. Ninety-two years of quiet life.¹ His life's history is summed up in a few lines. "He was active up to a short time of his death. He resided on North Washington Street." That was an obituary which took for granted more information than we are now able to collect. He was well known. The editor writes as if he were a familiar figure, a landmark, so to speak. Now he is just a name. He and his deeds are gathered in peace to his fathers.²

Lionel W. Day

The number of Union army men who returned to Huntsville

1 *The Weekly Mercury*, February 18, 1891

2 *Ibid*, February 18, 1891

was surprising. Among them was one Captain Lionel W. Day, who having been encamped in Huntsville during its occupation by Federal troops, returned to live there after being mustered out of the army. In 1891 that had been twenty-one years before. All during the Reconstruction days when Yankees were none too popular, he had withstood criticism. He must have lived well for one of his Southern neighbors witnessed that "He was a lawyer, a good adviser, a courteous gentleman. He befriended even sparrows."

As sparrows were a great pest in Huntsville, Mr. Day must have had a kindly spirit. For a Southerner to call him, a Yankee, "A courteous gentleman," he must have been, indeed, a man. He died at the home of Mr. W. E. Lynskey, March 13, 1891.³

F. Varin

Another outsider who left a warm spot in the hearts of his Huntsville neighbors was Mr. F. Varin, who entered into rest on March 23, 1891. He was born in Montreal, Canada, and moved to Huntsville in 1853.⁴ The length of his service with the Memphis and Charleston Railway revealed the character of the man. For twenty-one years he had been faithful in his work there. He was a master car builder and had been in charge of the shops while the Federal troops were in charge of them, during and after the Civil War. As an honest, upright citizen he was respected by the best people in town. His home on Mill Street was humble but happy. There his wife and five children were content with his earnings. They had the sympathy of the community at his death. He was buried from St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church.

His is a good example of how honest toil is respected, even in a community where work was avoided as being the province of Negroes alone. Poor whites were pitied, not for being poor, but for having to do Negroes' work.

Peter M. Dox

On April 2, 1891, at the home of Mrs. Richard W. Walker, the soul of Judge Peter M. Dox passed to its great reward. Though a Yankee, he was a respected citizen. Born in Geneva, Ontario County, New York, September 11, 1813, he was educated at Hobart College, Geneva. He was graduated in 1833. Studying law, he practiced it until he was elected to the New York State Legislature

3 *The Weekly Mercury*, March 18, 1891

4 *Ibid*, March 24, 1891

in 1841. After serving in that body he was appointed judge of the Ontario County Courts where he presided until 1855. In that year, he moved to Alabama and settled in Huntsville. In 1865 he was elected as a Union man to sit as a representative from Madison County in the Convention which was called to revise the State Constitution. After actively participating in restoring Alabama to the Union he was elected to the 41st and 42nd Congress. In that body he served on the committee of Banking and Currency. He was an active member of the Episcopal Church.

The respect in which he was held was shown by a called meeting of the Huntsville bar to draw up resolutions on his death. They were as follows:

"Resolved: The death of Judge Dox, who has long been prominent in public life and who was for many years a judge and practicing lawyer, brings unfeigned regret and sorrow to the members of this Bar.

"Resolved: That he was a gentleman of the old school, of strong social qualities, great surety of life, high Christian character and eminent usefulness, both in the counsels of the country and in the offices of the Church.

"Resolved: As a mark of respect we will attend his funeral in a body.

"Drawn up by Daniel Coleman, D. Irving White and John H. Sheffey."⁵

He was survived by his wife, Mrs. Madge Dox, sister of Mrs. R. W. Walker, Sr.

Elizabeth White Sheffey

Mrs. Elizabeth White Sheffey died at her residence on East Holmes Street, April 14, 1891. She was the daughter of John Humes and his wife, Margaret White of Abingdon, Virginia. She was born in 1826. As a little girl she was chased by her twelve brothers around the great dining room table, while they sicked the dog onto her pantalettes. She grew tall and beautiful. Colonel W. W. Garth frequently said, "In my day she was considered the prettiest girl in Virginia." She rode a horse like a Walkyrie. Her large brown eyes were admirably set off by black lashes, black

5 *The Weekly Mercury*, April 8, 1891

brows and black hair which was brushed smoothly back and curled in a tight knot at the nape of her neck. Her oval face was animated. She had a beautiful voice for both speaking and singing. She was witty. She liked poetry, languages, and literature.⁶

In 1845 she married her cousin, Dr. Lawrence Brangle Sheffey. The trip to Alabama was made by stagecoach to Mooresville where she lived two years. Seeing that that settlement had no future, Dr. Sheffey moved her to Huntsville. At first they boarded with Mrs. Flemming on East Holmes Street. He then bought the adjoining lot, building three large rooms and a wide hall onto the old brick house which was already on the lot. In this house their fourteen children were reared.

Dr. Sheffey was a good physician but a poor collector. When he died of cholera in 1865 she was left to support her six living children. Fortunately, some of her husband's debtors were as honest as Mr. Cabaniss who paid her Fifteen Hundred Dollars which he owed for services to his slaves. There was no such record on Dr. Sheffey's books.

While General Mitchell's men occupied Huntsville, the family ran, at first, with the refugees, to Mr. George Steele's place⁷ to hide in the wine cellars. All of her silver was hid in the garden. When they became used to the sound of firing they came home again. Then General Mitchell took Douglas Sheffey, one of Mrs. Sheffey's slaves, as a body guard. Douglas saw the full pantries of the general's kitchen and the empty pantry of the Sheffey home. He helped himself every night to hams, flour, potatoes, and lard to carry home to his "white folks." Thus, they lived through 1865.

Then the children had no clothes. John, Mrs. Sheffey's oldest son, went without shoes all winter. She struggled through. When her father died and her brothers, Milton Humes and Tom Humes, came to live in Huntsville they supported her. As soon as her sons John and Lawrence were old enough they began working. She also received help from her brother, Andrew, who lived in Memphis, Tennessee.

Hard times did not matter. She kept her spirit, her beauty, her wit. Those who knew her had to seek her. She was almost a recluse after 1865. She was a strict Presbyterian. Sunday was a holy day. Her children and grandchildren were taken to church. She usually supplied tea cakes for the grandchildren to nibble on while they lay with their heads in her lap during the long sermon. The pews of the old church had doors on which the children frequently swung during hymns. Her life was a prolonged sacrifice but she did not recognize it.

6 *The Weekly Mercury*, April 15, 1891

7 The Steele mansion is on Maysville Road in northeast Huntsville

Reuben Chapman

Mr. Reuben Chapman died at the residence of his sister, Mrs. Milton Humes, April 24, 1891. He was born in Livingston, Ala., June 20, 1858. In 1863 when his father, Reuben Chapman, was sent as an emissary from the Confederacy to France, he was taken along. He remained in France until 1870. He was graduated from the University of Alabama at seventeen, the youngest graduate from the University to 1875. He studied law at the University of Virginia. Instead of practicing it, however, he became a farmer on one of his father's restored places* in 1878. He left his widow and three children.⁸

William H. Moore

On August 7, 1891, Colonel William H. Moore, "one of the brightest moral and intellectual lights with which a community was ever blessed" died at his residence. He was a man of good family, a good father and husband. He was a member of the Methodist Church. He left a wife and five children.⁹

Mrs. Alfred Moore

Mrs. Alfred Moore, mother of W. B. and A. Moore, died at her residence April 1st, 1892.¹⁰

Edward Chambers Betts

Judge Edward Chambers Betts died at the residence of his son, Tancred Betts on Walker Street. He had been active in public life for a great many years and in his death the town lost a valuable citizen. He was born in June, 1819. He served several terms in the State legislature and was appointed Judge of the Probate Court under the administration of Governor Reuben Chapman and appointed first commissioner of Agriculture by Governor E. A. O'Neal. Near the end of his second term he resigned this office on account of a stroke of paralysis. He died September 17, 1890 and was

* Gladstone Place on Dairy Lane in northeast Huntsville.

8 *The Weekly Mercury*, April 29, 1891

9 *Ibid*, August 26, 1891

10 *The Independent*, April 1, 1892

buried from the Church of the Nativity.¹¹ He was a profound thinker and scholarly gentleman.

Ellen Hunt

Miss Ellen Hunt, a school teacher who, for years, had been a loved citizen of Huntsville, died in a hospital in St. Louis, Mo., February 9, 1892. She was born in Nashville in 1831. She and her sister, Miss Mary, lived in a two story, brown frame house next door to the Klauses on Lincoln Street. She loved good literature, children and flowers. She had a beautiful English garden which she tended before and after school hours. She gave much of her time to the Church and was a kindly neighbor, active in good works, home duties and club life. She was buried from the Church of the Nativity, and was survived by a brother and a sister.

Susan E. Erskine

Anyone passing down Franklin Street in 1890 and 1891 would have been attracted to a stately old lady wearing a lace cap, sitting on the porch of her tall house next door to Colonel Garth's. She was greatly loved by the community. They had been blessed with her presence eighty-seven years when she was called on the great journey in 1892. She was Mrs. Susan E. Erskine.

Henry McGee

The McGee Hotel was one of the best known, best managed hotels in Northern Alabama. Its proprietor, Mr. Henry McGee, was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1836. Coming to Alabama in 1866, he decided to build and operate a hotel in Huntsville. In 1869 he erected a building on the northwest corner of Jefferson and Clinton Streets. He enlarged it many times. He was a good business man, a genial personality, and a faithful husband and father. He was married twice. Miss Molly was his only child. He was one of the most faithful members of St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church. The white marble altar in that Church was installed to his memory. On June 20, 1892, he died of fatty degen-

11 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, June 22, 1892

eration of the heart and was buried in Maple Hill Cemetery.¹²

Solomon Schiffman

Among the many Jewish families who chose Huntsville as their home, none was more respected or more useful to the community than the Schiffmans. Mr. Solomon Schiffman came from the old country to Huntsville, living on West Clinton Street. He was a merchant who had built up a large trade by his friendliness and honesty, and made a loved place for himself in the hearts of his associates. He died March 6, 1894, leaving a widow, a son, and two daughters.¹³ He was an active member of the congregation of Temple Emmanuel.

Mrs. Tracy W. Pratt

The community was shocked on August 15, 1895, to hear of the death of Mrs. Tracy W. Pratt. She had been a resident of Huntsville for only a few years, but in that span she had made an agreeable impression on her associates. She was an inspiration to her husband in his many industrial ventures, an unselfish mother to her three children and a gracious hostess to her many guests. She might have recovered had she not nursed her little girls through a virulent case of scarlet fever. The death of one of the children was more than she could endure. She survived the child only two weeks.¹⁴

James Hervey Mastin

Old citizens respected an old gentleman who came to Huntsville in 1829 from Maury County, Tennessee. That state was not the birthplace, however, of Mr. James Hervey Mastin. In the little town of Newton, near Winchester, Virginia, he saw the light of day November 1, 1812. After coming to Huntsville he attended the old Green Academy which later became the East Clinton Street grammar school. It was a thorough school. He was well prepared for entrance to the University of Alabama. Receiving his degree from that institution in 1834 with Clement C. Clay of Huntsville, Judge Thomas M. Peters of Moulton, Dr. William A. Cochran of

12 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, June 22, 1892

13 *Ibid*, March 21, 1894

14 *Ibid* August 8, 1894

Tuscaloosa, Judge J. F. Bailey of Marion, and Dr. John B. Read of Tuscaloosa, he came to Huntsville to open a drug store. From that profession he went to the dry goods business. In a few years he was the leading merchant of Huntsville. So highly did his townsmen regard him that he was a director in the Northern Bank of Alabama, an institution which was a factor in the business life of Madison County before the Civil War.

At the close of the War he became President of the First National Bank of Huntsville. He set such a high standard of business efficiency for that institution that it maintained its strong position in State finances through the stress of four panics.

In 1843 Mr. Mastin married Miss Mary Jane Erskine, eldest daughter of the distinguished physician, Dr. Alexander Erskine, and his devoted wife, Susan Catherine Russell. Their union was happy through fifty years. On the anniversary of their golden wedding, November 8, 1893, hundreds of friends called and brought tokens of their esteem.¹⁵ They had three sons and a daughter to bless them.

He became a member of the First Presbyterian Church in 1893. His staunch fidelity to duty, his devotion to his wife and his children are traits which he handed down to his children and grandchildren. Love of family was a passion with him. His children's devotion to him, their unostentatious daily work and service to the community proved how truly they respected him. After eighty-one years of purposeful living he passed to his reward, August 13, 1894.

Milton C. Baldrige

1895 saw the close of a life that had been dedicated to the service of humanity. Doctor Milton C. Baldrige was a beloved physician, a skillful surgeon, a trusted friend and advisor of old and young. He was a cheerful personality. Having the ability to inspire confidence in his own knowledge, he used that trust in helping his patients to help themselves. He was also active in the business life of Huntsville. He was the type of man whom everyone loved. His skill as a physician won the gratitude of poor and sick alike; his business acumen, the respect of realtors and financiers. His name on a Board inspired faith in the enterprise; his advice taken brought many investors an increased income. As a physician he set a standard for up-to-date methods. As President of the Madison County Medical Association, he furthered the cause of

¹⁵ *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, August 15, 1894
N. B. I am indebted to Sallie Mastin Gill for the dates of his birth and education which she got from the family records for me

public health and sanitation by bringing before the County Commissioners statistics to illustrate the results of quarantines, vaccination, inspection of dairies, water supplies, premises, and public sewerage. His papers before the Medical Association were scholarly. His work was a constant example of conscientious application of science by experiment and research. He left this great work to his son, Felix, who was a living monument to his parents' ideals.

Charles J. Mastin

At a meeting of Confederate Veterans, Egbert Jones Camp No. 357, at the Court House, April 2, 1895, Dr. J. H. Bryson and Colonel R. B. Rhett introduced resolutions on the untimely death of Captain Charles J. Mastin. Captain Mastin served in the 4th Alabama Regiment at the first Battle of Manassas. Being transferred to the West in 1862, he served on General Breckenridge's staff in the Battle of Shiloh, and in the first campaign of Vicksburg; at the Battle of Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Murfreesboro, Tennessee; Chattanooga; and Missionary Ridge. In 1864, while on the staff of General Bates, he went through the Georgia campaign. He was severely wounded at the Battle of Jonesboro and disabled for active service in 1865.¹⁶

After this interesting military career, he returned home to take up the work of painful and uneventful living. In an effort to rebuild his community he entered heartily into the work of the Church and of education. His interest in this work elected him as a trustee of the Huntsville Female College. It also made him spend lavishly of his means in furthering education in the state. His only son, Edward Vernon, studied medicine and became a noted surgeon of St. Louis, Missouri. Mr. Mastin died at the Huntsville Hotel, March 29, 1895. He was born in Huntsville March 22, 1837. His memory and unselfish life was sincerely revered by his generation. He was one about whom the halo of military glory rested without harm. Many a soldier with his afflictions would have become a burden to the community. He overcame his disability as much as he could.

His career is one of the hundreds which were glorified through this period. Melancholy rested as a virtue upon many otherwise worthy souls. They nursed it and made themselves miserable with other persons' miseries.

16 *The Weekly Mercury*, April 3, 1895

J. Withers Clay

The Clay family was prominent in Alabama history for several generations. Huntsville knew no more devoted or faithful citizen than Mr. J. Withers Clay, editor of *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*. He was born five miles west of Huntsville, January 11, 1820, the son of Clement and Susanna Clay. His home environment was cultured and his education the best that the times offered. He was graduated from the University of Virginia with a bachelor's and a master's degree. After leaving school he practiced law in Huntsville for ten years. He became editor of *The Democrat* in 1856. During the Civil War Mr. Clay changed the name of the paper to *The Confederate*. At the close of the war he changed it back to *The Democrat*. He was a man of fearless convictions. The motto of his paper, "The People Must be Heard and Their Rights Vindicated" illustrated his attitude toward his fellowman. He must serve as fearlessly for them as he would for himself.¹⁷

Although Mr. Clay was a helpless paralytic for years before his death, he never lost his cheery smile nor his interest in progress. He listened attentively to any speaker. He frequently criticized them through his wife's or his daughters' interpretation.

His marriage to Mary Lewis in 1846 was a great source of happiness to both of them. His finances were frequently involved, but poverty was no handicap to Mrs. Clay. She knew that he did his work thoroughly, that subscribers to a county newspaper frequently forgot to remit, so when money failed to come in she made over old clothes and took in pupils for instruction in French, music and literature, and sang to keep Mr. Clay from worrying. When he became an invalid all of his daughters assumed the support of the family. He was so loved by them that care of him was never a burden to them. As he had been true to his duty to the public, they were true to him and always addressed him as "Love." He died March 30, 1896 at his home on Maiden's Lane [Eustis Street]. Mr. Clay was survived by his wife, four daughters, and two sons.

Mary M. Lewis

Mrs. Mary M. Lewis died at the home of her daughter, Mrs. J. Withers Clay, May 30, 1897. She was born on Amelia Island off the coast of Florida, May 22, 1806. At an early age she was baptized in the old cathedral at St. Augustine. Her father was Mr. Samuel Betts. When she was six her mother died. Mrs. Fenwick

17 *The Weekly Tribune*, March 31, 1896

reared her. In 1824 she was married to Mr. John Haywood Lewis at Litchfield, Connecticut, and came with him to his home in Huntsville where she spent the remainder of her life. Being associated with the town so long, she felt herself a part of every good activity for it. She was very domestic. Few women could break her record of sewing. In one year she made two hundred garments with her own hands, and each of her burial garments included the sheets that covered her. She worked steadily for the Needlework Guild, the United Charities, Church bazaars, and in making favors for friends' parties. Her last work — over two hundred pincushions, needlebooks, and spool cases — were for favors for a meeting of the Alabama Press Association and the United Charities. Being reared in an age when "woman's place was in the home" and duty was woman's first thought, she made loving service a work of love and duty a pleasure.¹⁸

She was one of those little, old ladies whose lives beautified homely things; whose thoughts, dwelling on service to others forgot their own wants, and were happy. Their ability to make happiness out of trifles was a grace which the present age has lost to its hurt. These little old ladies making mercy out of scraps sew love into rags and bits of yarn.

Mary Louise Banister

The Church of the Nativity was blessed during most of this decade with a talented organist and choir mistress, Mrs. Mary Louise Banister.* She was a Virginian by birth, born near Petersburg at Kingston, the family estate of her father, General William Broaduax, eminent jurist, on March 3, 1831. After her marriage to Doctor John Monro Banister on February 1, 1848, she moved to Greensboro, Alabama. In 1860 they moved to Huntsville. Mrs. Banister had been organist at the Church of the Nativity since that date. She was the mother of five sons and four daughters. In her happy home on Adams Avenue she received her friends, was an active member of several clubs, a gracious hostess, a skilled musician, and capable mother.

The following description of her funeral attests the respect in which she was held:

"At her funeral the hearse was preceded by the vested choir, Walker Bolling, crozier; the Woman's Guild in a body, and the pallbearers: James Matthews, D. I. White, James R. Stevens, Daniel Coleman, P. W. Walker, O. B.

18 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, June 2, 1897

* She died June 2, 1897

Patton, William L. Clay, Winston Fearn Garth and Samuel R. Cruse. The choir: Mrs. John Reid, organist; Mrs. Rosalie Chapman, contralto; Misses Jennie Sheffey and Corine Halsey, sopranos; Mr. Frank H. Newman, tenor; and Dr. Fred Moss Taylor, bass. Those who were not able to get into the church stood in the church yard during the service and along the route to the cemetery as the funeral passed.

John H. Bryson

Among the beloved figures of Huntsville, Dr. John H. Bryson, minister of the Presbyterian Church, was one of the best known and most popular. During his pastorate of seventeen years he had won the love and confidence of every class of citizen. He had ministered freely to any who called on him and had sought out many whose pride had prevented them from calling. He was a "man of purity, piety, and mental acquirements."¹⁹ His snow white hair and mustache gave him a venerable appearance. His twinkling blue eyes radiated sympathy with all phases of life. He was a wholesome friend, a scholar, a gentleman, and a Christian who practiced Christianity unflinchingly.

Dr. Bryson was born April 3, 1831, in Lincoln County in the state of Tennessee. He was graduated from Erskine College, South Carolina, from the Theological Seminary, Newburg, New York, and from the University of Virginia. After being ordained, he received his first call in his home state, Hopewell Church, Maury County, Tennessee. When Tennessee seceded from the Union he became a chaplain in the Confederate Army. Throughout those four terrible years the young presbyter learned the way to men's souls by constant service on the battlefield and in camp. At the end of the war he accepted a call to Shelbyville, Tennessee. Five years of effective work there won him a trip through Europe, Egypt, and Palestine.²⁰

Bare facts tell so little of the real man. From those years in college, seminary, and University, he gathered knowledge to divert weary human beings to an interest in others, to bring the past to the present so that they would interpret each other and make clear the difference in true and false values. From his conversations the sin-racked soul could choose the way to peace. His visit to the sick brought cheer and happiness, the desire to live in the fullness of life. He was equally at home in mansion or hovel.

19 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, June 2, 1897

20 *The Weekly Mercury*, February 2, 1897

He entered saloons to try to reclaim those who, by throwing away all their earnings on drinks, were leaving their families in want. A wife had only to appeal to Dr. Bryson to have him undertake such a mission.

In the work of the general church, Dr. Bryson was an active figure. He had been moderator of the General Assembly at Augusta, Georgia. His interest in education took him into the educational work of Presbyterian schools in Alabama and elsewhere. He was also interested in foreign missions and was glad to welcome missionaries to his pulpit. He was a friend of Helen Keller. Whenever she came to Huntsville she spent part of her time at the Presbyterian manse with him. He said that her presence proved to him, if he needed proof, how lonesome an old bachelor is. He took the liveliest interest in entertaining for her and Miss Sullivan and introduced them as if they were really his own children. He and Helen had the love of education in common, and the love of life, of course.

On one of these visits to him she gave a demonstration of her abilities at the Opera House. Miss Sullivan gave a sketch of her life. Helen spoke, touched objects, telling their color, and held a pencil on a piano while it was being played. She then read conversations by placing her fingers on the speaker's lips. The proceeds of this lecture went to the education of afflicted children who were supported by the interest from the Keller Fund.

Dr. Bryson treated Helen Keller as a prodigy of whom he was pardonably proud. As he sat on the stage that day after introducing her, he looked at the audience after each of her demonstrations as if to say, "I told you so! Do you believe me now?" Never did he minimize, however, Miss Sullivan's teaching ability. In fact, he thought that if either were ahead of the other, Miss Sullivan perhaps stood first. She had the spirit and vision to believe that a soul could be led from blackness to beauty by sympathy and patient effort. She had proved that belief. To him, Helen was a walking example of faith. Through Miss Sullivan, she had not only helped herself; she was helping others. Dr. Bryson rejoiced in that triumph openly and unashamedly.

Health began to fail Dr. Bryson in 1896. As he was alone in the manse, he went to the home of his sister, Mrs. Olive Cowan, in Shelbyville, Tennessee, where he received every care and attention until his death, February 1, 1897. At his request, he was buried in Huntsville. His body lay in state in the Presbyterian Church the night of February 2nd. Dr. DuBose and Reverend C. W. Johnson officiated at his funeral. All other ministers in town attended it in a body. His pallbearers were the elders and other officials of the church. The citizens of the town put a large window in the Church in his memory. Old citizens still speak of him as "one of the Saints of God."

Miss Augusta A. K. Betts

Augusta A. K. Betts was shot to death on August 25, 1894, at the home of Mrs. Monroe McCarthy about five miles from Huntsville. As she had been in poor health, the family accepted the coroner's verdict of suicide. Circumstances seemed to point to it. Mrs. McCarthy had been with Miss Augusta about ten minutes before the shot was heard. Hearing the shot she ran first to the porch then to her own room where she found the girl's body, prone with the pistol beside it.

The community sympathized with her brother, Mr. Tancred Betts, with whom she lived.²¹ The church was in a quandary as to whether the burial service would be read over her but no one suspected foul play.

In 1929 the third person to die suddenly on that place brought an investigation. It was proved that Mr. McCarthy killed Miss Betts, his wife, and the person whose body was found in the cornfield.

Mammy Charity

The loving sympathy which existed between the old servants and their masters is perfectly presented in the following *In Memorium* to Aunt Charity, lifelong servant of Mrs. Daniel Coleman:

"Mammy Charity is dead. Like a knell on our hearts the sad news fell, and echoed and re-echoed the sad, sad, refrain, 'Mammy Charity is dead!' It did not seem possible that those dear, faithful hands could ever be stilled in death; those tireless patient feet could be forever quiet; that sweet, tender voice, whose sweet cadence had soothed the sorrows of her "Babe" (Mrs. Claude Levert Coleman) through infancy, girlhood, and motherhood could be hushed in death. But it proved too true. Mammy Charity is dead indeed, and lives on earth only in the hearts and minds of those who loved and revered her. She passed away on Wednesday morning, January 13, 1897, after a painful spell of pneumonia, and left a sweet message to her white children Levert and Veredot Coleman to meet her in Heaven. A sweet smile illuminated the dear, old face and we believe her Christian spirit rejoiced to meet those loved ones gone before.

21 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, August 29, 1894

"Mammy Charity belonged to a family of Negroes who had been slaves in the Withers family for a hundred and fifty years or more, all of whom bore good characters. To her, emancipation meant nothing but an impertinent attempt to separate her from her 'white folks' to whom she was loyal for 85 years.

"The funeral service was held on Thursday evening, from the African Methodist Church, the Paster, Rev. E. W. Williams, officiating, attended by a sad cortege of white and colored friends. The sermon was simple and touching. The hymns, sung by the Normal Choir, were rendered in the sweetest melody and harmony.

"The dear old lady was laid to rest by the side of her husband, 'Uncle' Jim Withers, who died in 1884. On his headstone is the well-earned inscription:

'An honest man is the
noblest work of God.'

"Beautiful tributes of flowers and evergreens were lovingly placed on the humble mound, bedewed with tears. Thus has another dear form that reminded us of the happy days of yore gone to its Redeemer.

"Faithful, honest, and true. Well were you named the greatest of all human virtue."

Charity

"We're always young 'till Mammy dies,
But when her hand no longer lies
As once it did, upon our head
We feel that Youth with her has fled.
We watch her wing her way to Rest,
And see ourselves upon her breast,
Our young selves, cradled as of yore,
Now borne from us forever more;
And as they soar beyond our reach,
We wave farewell to each, to each!"

Howard Weeden²²

If in this obituary there seems too frequent use of the adjective "sweet," too loose construction of sentences, too flowery phrases, remember that persons in the '90's wrote as they felt - with an un-

22 *The Huntsville Weekly Democrat*, January 20, 1897. Aunt Charity was one of Miss Weeden's subjects.

critical attitude toward the use of words. The feeling here is genuine, just the sort of way every child who is fortunate enough to have had a mammy feels toward her. In the South, the old nurse held a unique position. She was the honored member of the family. She frequently ruled the family as a despot; only the family was unconscious of the despotism.

Vere Coleman, the little Veredot of this *In Memorium*, said that when "Uncle Ben" Jolly died, all the "white folks" were up on the mourners' bench. The flowers sent to "Uncle Ben" were particularly beautiful, the sermon fine, the music rendered by the Normal Choir perfect. But when the church service ended the minister said, "Now, brother, open Brother Jordan's coffin and let the congregation give him their last message."

The undertaker obeyed. As the congregation filed past the casket each said something to the dead and laid flowers on him.

"In every instance," Vere said, "they pitched the paper [from around the flowers] under the coffin 'till I thought I would have to jump up and tell them about it whether or not Mother held me down! When we got home Mother said, 'Well, Vere, you should have seen yourself at the cemetery. You had the expression of one who says, 'Well, you'll see now who has charge around here.' And I fixed the flowers there. Zene Pruett helped me and the grave was beautiful."

The style is too ornate for present writings but the sentiment was really there. Mammies were treated and loved as part of the family. They shared as definitely in all of the happenings of a household as any of the members. They were frequently kept in the house and trained the children as the mother did.

Mrs. John Withers Clay

Mrs. John Withers Clay was the center of community life during the whole of her married life. The work which she accomplished was prodigious. Her home life has already been described. Her death on February 16, 1898 was a cause for universal mourning. She had made herself so completely a part of the community that the gap left by her absence was distinctly wide. She had put all of her talents to work and left that ideal with her children.²³

Conclusion

The decade had wrought a great change in the physical appearance of the town. If the traveler had left the city in 1900 by the same route over which he came in 1890, he would scarcely have recognized it as the same place. In the east, the Dallas Mill's smoke stack sent its long, red point into the sky. On the west, West Huntsville Cotton Mills, Lowe, and Merrimack hovered like great ogres above their villages. These were harbingers of the new century which would mold Huntsville into a changed form of industry with its attendant ills and progress, reckless of the old, regardless of the standards of the past. It was indeed, a different place.

The changes within the town were steadily increasing. The Federal Building had been finished in 1890. Right across the street the walls surrounding the Calhoun yard and the building had been leveled. Marble yards and new cottages occupied its garden. The old Easley Hotel had been razed for the new buildings which we now know. The old Sprague house which stood across the street from the McGhee Hotel in 1890 had been moved to Adams Avenue; it was the second time that the old house had had such a trip - and Van-Valkenburgh and Matthews had a brick building where its flowers used to bloom. The Female College lot had been divided into lots for cottages. The new Public School was nearly completed where the old wooden building had stood on East Clinton Street.

The Southern Building and Loan were in their own building on the southeast corner of the Square. Even the Spring had changed. All of the saloons were closed. The *Moody Bill* had effected that change. A dispensary was operated on the south side of the Square in the middle of the block. Drinkers could buy only a quart of whiskey at a time, and it could not be drunk within fifty feet of the building. That was a radical change from the old saloons where they who drank stayed to enjoy themselves. It had not been in operation long enough in 1900 to show what a radical step it had made toward making the highways safe for sober persons on a Saturday. In saloon days, men came to town on Saturdays to get drunk. Going home they amused themselves by shooting guns and pistols and hollering as much and as loud as they could. Horses ran away and spilled them into the ditches; they shot each other; and they called that a good time. The dispensary improved those

conditions.

In thinking of the old families, the traveler would have had to concede that they were a charming people. They worked in their special lives; they were sensible in taking time to enjoy recreation. To them, that term really became re-creation. They steeped their minds in great thoughts and let their thoughts off in creative amusements. Perhaps they were better off in their lack of manufactured amusements than we are in ours today. The number of turns which their fancy took to pleasure is astounding. Just to count them over makes us wonder when they ever worked.

They were comparatively poor. They enjoyed simple pleasures. They were rich, however, in mental ability and in the desire to forge ahead. The men who instituted the new regime did it with good intentions. They wanted to see their people learn to use the gifts which nature had given them to their greatest profit. Their mistake was: they did not train their children to take the wheel. The life which they knew is gone. Huntsville is, indeed, a modern city.



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