

Historic Huntsville Quarterly



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SKETCHES OF THE TIMES BUILDING

by George Dickerson
Station Manager, WLRH

The specter of the wrecking ball continues to take its toll of aging buildings in downtown Huntsville, and the migration away from the central city area leaves former business locations standing empty for several blocks north of the courthouse.

But one landmark structure - the old Times Building - remains alive and well in the midst of urban renewal uncertainty. After nearly half a century, the 12-story white brick building - now called the courthouse annex - still lends its symmetrical effect to the city's skyline while keeping the corner of Greene Street and Holmes Avenue, a busy location.

The proud old high-rise, once proclaimed as Huntsville's first skyscraper, was possibly saved from becoming an empty shell when it was bought at public auction by

the Madison County Commission in August, 1972. The purchase by the county, made to meet space requirements for county and state offices, gave the historic building a new name with a new role and a guarantee of future survival.

The building that once housed the presses and editorial offices of the Huntsville Times newspaper is once again filling its office space. But the lobby directory that formerly listed some of the city's more prominent doctors, lawyers and businessmen as the building's occupants now contained a different group of names. Most of the new tenants are county and state employes along with other government and quasi-government agencies and departments that have moved over from the overcrowded main courthouse.

Tenants who previously occupied space before the purchase by the county will be allowed to remain. County spokesmen say that all future new occupants will

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be official or semi-official agencies and departments.

Before the new landlords took over the old building, occupancy had dropped below 30 per cent. The 12-story structure is now filled to near capacity.

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employees along with other government and quasi-government agencies and departments that have moved over from the overcrowded main courthouse.

Some of the new tenants are the Alcohol Beverage Control Board, Alabama Lung Association, Council on Alcoholism, Sheriff's Department of Investigation, Top of Alabama Health Planning and Family Planning Agency, and the Food Stamp Office.

County Commission Chairman James Record says jokingly, "The county stole the building when it paid only \$100,000 for it at the public auction."

According to Mr. Record, the building is structurally sound and almost as good as new after undergoing some renovation and repair work. But the nostalgia of the structure is coupled with some problems and inconveniences caused by its age.

People on the top floors would like to see the plumbing operate more efficiently. And the somewhat antiquated electrical system doesn't always want to handle the heavy power load caused by the large number of air conditioners. But the commission chairman says that the county plans to install a central air conditioning unit as soon as funds become available.

One problem that has plagued the building since it first was constructed is an underground spring directly beneath the building's basement. An electrical pump has been in operation for years to recirculate the water so that the basement won't become flooded. Another pump was recently installed as a stand-by in case the main pump should fail.

The Times Building might not be considered a towering giant by today's standards of high rise structures in cities such as New York and Chicago. But when the 12-story building first appeared on the Huntsville skyline, it was thought of as a full-fledged skyscraper.

During the 1920's, the nation's large cities were undergoing a skyscraper building spree. Huntsville was then a small cotton mill town, but the city's ambitious boosters said, "build a skyline for Huntsville."



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The seven-story Tennessee Valley Bank Building was the first high-rise to go up. Construction was completed on the bank building June, 1926. The building was later named the State National Bank Building and is now called the Terry-Hutchens Building. Construction began in August, 1927, on the Times Building. And in September, 1928, work began on a new 12-story hotel to be called the Russell Erskine.

The idea for the Times Building belonged to the then editor and publisher of the Huntsville Times, J. Emory Pierce. Pierce then formed a corporation called the Times Building Company and named himself president.

Legend has it that Pierce originally planned for the Times Building to be 11 stories high and elevator equipment was installed for that number of floors. However, it is said that when the newspaper publisher, who has been described as a flamboyant figure, discovered that the Russel Erskine - a few blocks away - would be 12 stories, he ordered another story for the Times Building. Pierce wanted his building to be at least as high as the tallest building in town. The facts of the story are not completely known, but anyone going to the 12th floor of the building knows that the elevator only goes to the 11th floor, and the 12th floor is a walk-up.

Workmen completed the 12th floor of the Times Building in September, 1928. Businesses began moving into the building in November of that year, and the Times moved from its offices on Washington Street and published its first newspaper at the new location on Dec. 17, 1928. The paper marked the occasion by increasing its number of pages from 8 to 10.

J. E. Pierce ran afoul of the federal government and was forced to sell the building by a U. S. district court in 1931. During the same year, the publisher lost control of the newspaper. The paper was sold to the Birmingham News and the building went to a bond holders committee appointed by the court and made up of original investors from Nashville.

Pierce had been charged with having represented himself as a government officer in the sale of Fourth Liberty Loan bonds but those charges were later dropped. In 1936, however, the former Times publisher was convicted on a charge of representing himself as a government officer in the sale of stock in Wheeler Dam and sentenced to 12 years in prison. He died in 1952 while residing in Memphis, Tenn.

In 1935, the building was purchased by R. F. Proctor of Bridgeport, Ala., who maintained ownership until his death in February, 1952. The structure remained in the Proctor estate until the purchase by Madison County in 1972. The newspaper continued publication in the old building until January, 1956 when construction was completed at the present plant and offices on Memorial Parkway.

Have any Experiences to share with other readers? Send your ideas and hints to: The Editor, Historic Huntsville Quarterly, 405 Homewood Drive, S.W., Huntsville, Ala. 35801.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

by Lynwood Smith



As the old saying goes, I have good news and bad news.

First, the bad news. In the last issue of the Quarterly it was reported that I had

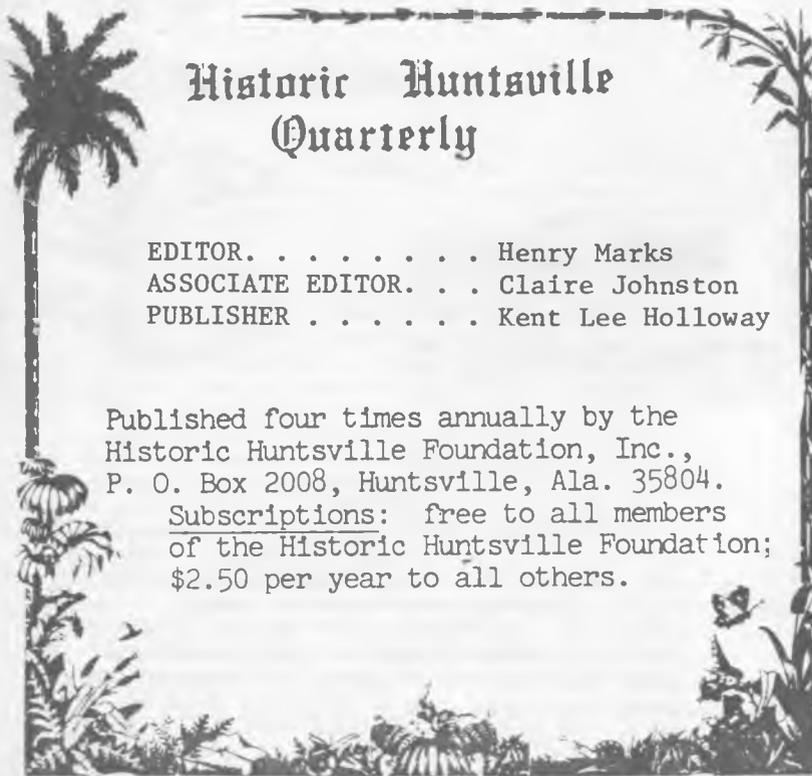
requested Mayor Joe Davis to grant the Foundation \$16,500 in "Comprehensive Employment and Training Act" (CETA) funds for the purpose of conducting a detailed and scholarly examination of Huntsville's architecture from its beginnings to the present time. In that report, it was explained that City Attorney Charles Younger had raised a legal impediment to our receipt of such funds: Mr. Younger instructed the Mayor that, before the city could release such public funds to a private, non-profit corporation such as the Historic Huntsville Foundation, specific written approval first would have to be obtained from Alabama Attorney General William Baxley. The Mayor requested City Attorney Charles Younger to write the Attorney General requesting his approval. However, despite repeated requests by me, Mr. Younger never did so. It became obvious to me that Mr. Younger was opposed to the Foundation receiving such funds because he was afraid it would open the proverbial Pandora's Box. Mr. Younger was afraid that other private, non-profit corporations in the city (of which there are many) would apply for similar funds if the Foundation were granted \$16,500.

When it became obvious to me that dealing with Mr. Younger was an exercise in futility, I sought other avenues for achieving the same result. In November I approached the Twickenham Historic Preservation Commission, which is a public body. I suggested to the Twickenham Historic Preservation Commission that we engage in a cooperative effort to accomplish the objectives set forth in my September 16th 1975 letter to Mayor Davis. (A copy of that letter was reprinted on pages 12 and 13 of the last issue of the Quarterly.) I explained to the Twickenham Historic Preservation Commission that the objections raised by City Attorney Charles Younger could be circumvented if they cooperated with the Historic

Huntsville Foundation in an architectural study because they were a public body, and no legal questions could be raised regarding the propriety of paying CETA funds to the Twickenham Historic Preservation Commission.

However, during the course of my presentation to the Twickenham Preservation Commission, Tom Dozier (Director of the Huntsville Planning Commission, and a member of the Twickenham Historic Preservation Commission) suggested yet a third modus operandi. Mr. Dozier informed me that the Huntsville Planning Commission had, for some time, desired to engage in a detailed, house-by-house examination of structures within the Twickenham and Old Town Historical Preservation Districts. In that regard, the Huntsville Planning Commission had applied for approximately \$4,500 in grant funds to cover the operational cost (but not salaries) for such a study. Mr. Dozier then suggested that those persons who would work on the Historic Huntsville Foundation architectural study become employees of the City Planning Commission, that an application be made for CETA funds to pay the salaries of such persons as employees of the City Planning Commission, and that the \$4,500 in grant funds, if awarded, be used to pay the operational expenses incurred by such employees. This seemed to all to be such a splendid idea that it is the course of action which was followed.

Therefore, I do have good news to report. CETA funds have been approved for payment to the Huntsville Planning Commission to employ two persons. At the time of dictating this report, the Director of the architectural study already has been selected; she is Linda Bayer, wife of Professor Jeffrey Bayer (Historic Huntsville Foundation Vice-President and Head of the UAH Art Department). Jeff promises to assist Linda in this endeavor, but assures me that Linda really is the one who possesses the family's expertise in the area of architectural history. The remaining position on the City Planning Commission's (continued on page 5)



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EDITOR'S REPORT

It is with a sense of humility and trepidation that I begin this issue of the Quarterly as your new editor. Humility, for I deem this both a professional and a personal honor, from you of my adopted hometown. Trepidation, for I want the Quarterly to continue to be a quality production, and this, of course, entails time, interest and work.

Our objectives will be simply to provide Huntsville and you with articles of historical and other interest, as well as information on what the Foundation is currently undertaking. Hopefully, the articles will meet with your approval and will be both informative and readable. Good writing is always so.

Henry Marks

Chairman's Report
(Cont'd fm pg 4)

staff, that of an assistant to Director Linda Bayer, has yet to be filled. At the present time, there are several applicants for the position, but Tom Dozier has yet to select one.

A FEW FINAL POSTSCRIPTS

In November I requested that the Historic Huntsville Foundation be allowed one representative on the Board of Advisors of the Alabama Historical Commission. I have received letters from both Milo B. Howard, Jr. (Chairman) and W. Warner Floyd (Executive Director) of the Alabama Historical Commission stating that the Historic Huntsville Foundation's application for representation will be considered at the next quarterly meeting of the Historical Commission, in January.

Due to the fact that the former slave quarters located behind Sophie Lowe Young's house on Franklin Street are not heated, with the onset of winter we closed the Historic Huntsville Foundation office. I have applied for permission to relocate the Foundation's office to the "Crow's Nest" (Tower) room in the Steamboat Gothic House owned by the Madison County Federation of Women's Clubs. Although I have been assured by Foundation members Margaret Cole and Linda Dowd that our application will be approved, I have not yet received such approval.

At the last meeting of the Foundation held on November 25, 1975, Professor Jeffrey Bayer was elected Vice-President of the Historic Huntsville Foundation, replacing Pat Laxson who has resigned. Sophie Lowe Young was appointed Historian of the Foundation. And, Henry S. Marks was appointed Editor of the Quarterly, replacing Claire Johnston who resigned as Editor-in-Chief, but continues to serve as an associate editor.

I look forward to seeing all of you at the next meeting of the Foundation. Please make plans to attend. Professor Jeffrey Bayer will present another slide lecture on some aspect of architectural history; all which he has presented thus far had been both entertaining and informative.

C. Lynwood Smith, Jr.

Selecting and Using CHEMICAL PAINT REMOVERS



By Arthur S. Green

STRIPPING WOODWORK is the universal preoccupation among old-house restorers. Knowing which of the modern removers is best for your particular job—and more importantly, how to use it—can make the task somewhat easier. But even under the best of conditions, stripping paint or varnish is a messy, tiresome job. Like the search for The Holy Grail, old-house persons are always looking for the magic paint removing elixir that will make paint fall off in helpless shreds merely by carrying the can through the room. Until we find such a wondrous substance, however, we'll just have to learn the advantages and drawbacks of the various materials now on the market. No matter what claims are made for a particular remover, no single finish stripper will handle all types of jobs with equal efficiency.

BECAUSE FINISH REMOVING can be such a dreary job, the first decision to be made is not how to strip, but rather where to strip. Bear in mind that stripping can be overdone. In many old houses—especially those built before 1840—the woodwork was made of softwood and was meant to be painted. So there's no point in getting carried away with a bare-it-all frenzy if all you're going to end up with is a softwood grain of dubious beauty. In addition, paint clings more tenaciously to softwood than to hardwood, so you'll have a tough time getting the wood really clean and in condition to take a clear finish. If in doubt, test a small patch in an inconspicuous corner before plunging ahead into full-scale stripping.

THERE ARE THREE CASES in which it may be desirable to strip off a paint or varnish finish:

- There's a fine hardwood grain underneath that some unfeeling wretch covered with layers of paint years ago.
- There's softwood underneath, but the layers of paint have built up so thickly that all detail in carvings and mouldings are obscured. Or perhaps existing paint layers are very lumpy and alligatored. So it may be worthwhile to strip off the accumulated glop before repainting.
- There's a varnish or shellac finish on the wood that has so darkened with age that it should be removed so a new clear finish can be applied.

IN THE BAD OLD DAYS, the basic chemical removers were lye, trisodium phosphate, soda ash and potash. These would take off paint, all right, but they would also do damage to wood surfaces. That's why many people resorted to physical methods, such as power sanding, torch burning, or chipping away with metal or glass scrapers. These physical methods, however, can also damage wood surfaces, and also have great limitations when it comes to getting paint out of mouldings and carvings. Although some restorers still swear by their propane torch or electric burning iron, most find that chemical removers are the fastest and easiest way to handle most jobs.

ALTHOUGH THERE ARE A NUMBER OF different types of removers now on the market, most jobs involving paint and varnish stripping can be handled by two types of products: (1) A semi-paste water-rinsing remover for general use outdoors; (2) A tough nonflammable fast water-rinsing remover for use indoors or outside. There is quite a variety of products on the shelves, however, and it helps to be acquainted with the virtues of each. In particular, not all removers are equally effective against water-based latex paints; be sure to read labels carefully if you have a layer of latex sitting on top of the wood. Here are some of the most common types:

- (1) Semi-paste, water-rinsing, orange non-benzol remover. This will soften latex, as well as oil-based paints, lacquers and varnishes.

One Special Fire Hazard

USING FLAMMABLE BENZOL-TYPE REMOVERS indoors is inadvisable. There are generally recognized dangers from cigarettes and open flames.

BUT THERE IS ONE SPECIAL HAZARD that many are unaware of: Using benzol removers on wainscoting and baseboards that contain electrical outlets. Steel wool used in the scrubbing phase can contact the outlet—and thereby generate a spark that will ignite the entire softened paint mass. A number of readers have reported fires from this unexpected source. --Ed.

Tips From A Pro

JOE BELZAMO strips woodwork for a living, using chemical removers. His income depends upon being able to strip as much wood as possible as fast as possible. So the techniques he has evolved should be of interest to anyone facing a lot of stripping.

CONTRARY TO WHAT MANY BOOKS SAY, Joe works a large area at a time—sometimes as much as 50 sq. ft. or more. He applies a heavy coat of semi-paste remover and lets it soak in at least 20 min.—or until all paint layers come off with a single push from his putty knife scraper. If a single application doesn't eat through all the paint, he applies a new coating of remover, disturbing the original coating as little as possible.

THE CLASSIC AMATEUR'S ERROR, Joe says, is not allowing the remover to soak in long enough. "Remover is expensive," he says, "so you should get as much work out of it as you can!" Once the remover has soaked

through to the bare wood, he scrapes off as much paint sludge as possible with a wide-blade putty knife. If any of the soaked area starts to dry out before he gets around to scraping it, he wets it down again with more semi-paste remover.

AFTER SCRAPING OFF as much paint as possible, he then rinses down the woodwork with a benzol remover and steel wool pads. He uses generous amounts of material, and works from top to bottom so as not to flood remover on a freshly cleaned area. Unless one takes superhuman precautions with masking materials, some remover inevitably leaks onto the floor. So this is a procedure to do before—not after—refinishing the floors.

WE RECENTLY SAW JOE strip all the wainscoting and woodwork in a 25 ft. by 15 ft. Victorian parlor that was covered with 5 coats of white paint. He did it all in about 5 working days—including some very complex mouldings and cornices. It was an amount of stripping that would have reduced most of us restorers to tears! --R. A. Labine

It is an all-around remover, especially for exterior work. It clings to rounded or vertical surfaces on furniture, woodwork and similar applications. The anti-evaporant film it forms give the solvents in it time to cut deeper and penetrate many layers of old paint at one time. User has the option of either the wash-off or scrape-off cleanup method. Typical brand name: Strypeeze Semi-Paste.

(2) Nonflammable, heavy-bodied water-rinsing remover. This contains methylene chloride, which minimizes fire hazard. It softens oil-based paints, lacquers, varnish and synthetic baked finishes on wood or metal surfaces. It clings to vertical and irregular surfaces and has a strong cutting action for fast penetration of extra-tough finishes. Its nonflammability makes it ideal for indoor work. Typical brand name: Super Strip Nonflammable.

(3) Nonflammable, water-rinsing remover. This contains methylene chloride for nonflammability, but doesn't have the body to cling to vertical surfaces. Softens oil-based paints, varnish and synthetic baked finishes. Excellent for removing finishes from ornamented wood, grooves, and carvings...when you can work on horizontal surfaces. Typical brand name: H₂O Off.

(4) Liquid benzol remover. This is a fast-acting liquid for use on flat surfaces whenever you can work in a well-ventilated area away from flames, sparks and heaters. It softens oil-based paints, lacquers, varnish and synthetic baked finishes. The old finish requires constant re-coating for best results. It can be brushed on or used in a dip tank. It is highly flammable and toxic. Typical brand name: Kutzit.



Remover is laid on thickly, using as few brush strokes as possible. Rubber gloves protect hands from burns. If remover starts to dry out before all paint is loosened, the area is re-soaked.



Remover is allowed to soak in until a wide-bladed putty knife can scrape off all paint layers in a continuous ribbon. If necessary, more remover is applied until scraper can cut through to clean wood.

(5) Prepaint bonder and cleaner. This is not a total remover, but rather a deglosser that cleans as it deglosses, eliminating the need to wash and sand shiny walls and woodwork before refinishing. It is recommended for preparing both interior and exterior surfaces for either repainting or revarnishing. Typical brand name: PBC Deglosser.

(6) Heavy-duty wood floor cleaner. This product mixed in hot water and applied with a stiff brush will clean—and remove—old varnish, shellac and grime from wood floors and stairs. When the surface is rinsed and dried, new finish can be applied to it without sanding. Typical brand name: Mex.

(7) Ammoniated trisodium phosphate. This is a non-sudsing, heavy-duty ammoniated cleaner. Strong solutions of it remove mildew and chalking old paint for exterior repainting. It can be used for washing old calcimine paint from walls. It is also good for washing off the sludge from water-rinsing removers.

Getting Ready

CERTAIN PREPARATIONS will make any stripping job easier—though nothing will make it a joy! The first requirement is old coffee cans. They are handy for holding working quantities of remover and other materials. It seems that one can never have too many coffee cans.

NEXT REQUIREMENT is an old natural- or nylon-bristle brush for flowing on a thick coat of remover. Beware of synthetic bristles like the cheap styrene brushes they sell for latex paints; the styrene will dissolve in many of the chemical removers! You should also have a vast quantity of newspapers on hand.

THEN YOU'LL NEED THINGS to remove the paint sludge. Most important tool is a wide-blade putty knife without sharp corners. If you're using a new one, then round the corners with a file; the sharp edges will gouge the wood. Then comes a variety of special devices for digging paint out of cracks and grooves. This is largely a matter of individual preference, but some of the devices that restorers have found helpful are: Wooden dowels cut on an angle, cuticle sticks, old tooth brushes, nut-picks, and old screwdrivers with the sharp edges taken off the blades.

TO CLEAN THE TURNINGS on balusters, chair legs, spool beds, etc., braided twine, heavy manila cord or twists of steel wool work well. You will want to have quantities of coarse #3 steel wool to clean up what the putty knife missed.

RUBBER GLOVES will protect your hands from burns. Since the fingers on rubber gloves tend to wear out first, you can prolong their life by cutting fingers off an old discarded pair and slipping them over the fingers of the new gloves.

REMEMBER, TOO, THAT PAINT REMOVER will also attack floor finishes, so be careful where you work. When possible, it is best to take pieces to be stripped outside, and work in a garage or

a shady area. Sunny locations should be avoided because the heat will drive off the solvents too rapidly. Keeping newspapers under your work will greatly aid cleanup. Where practical, items like doors should be taken down and set on a pair of sawhorses; it's much easier to strip a piece in a horizontal rather than vertical position. Many pieces of woodwork trim and panelling are surprisingly easy to disassemble, and you may find it easier to take some pieces down and strip them on a pair of sawhorses rather than trying to strip them in place.

Mastering The Technique



OST COMMERCIAL REMOVERS will do an adequate job...once you've selected the generic type that's best for your application. The secret is not so much in what you use as in how you use it. The two major points are: (1) Don't be stingy with the material; (2) Let the remover sit for a long enough time so that it cuts through all the paint.

WHEN APPLYING THE SEMI-PASTE or heavy-bodied removers, flow the material on thickly, using short gentle strokes in one direction only. Let it stand at least 15-20 min. without touching it. Tough old finishes may require longer periods plus the application of additional coats. Test the penetration with a putty knife as shown in photo on preceding page.

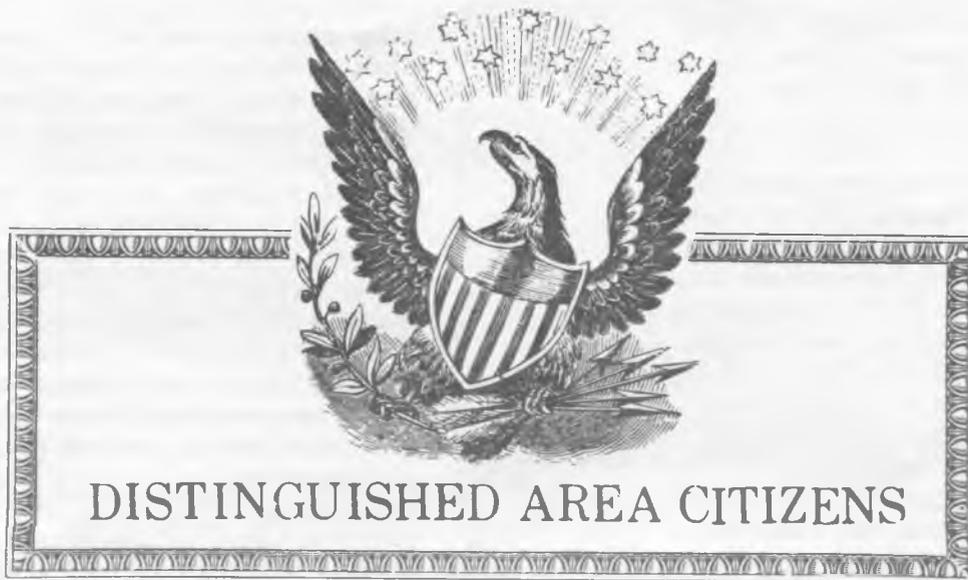
A NEAT WAY TO REMOVE sludge from a putty knife blade is to stretch a wire across the top of an old coffee can. This provides a straight edge against which to clean the blade, and the sludge drops right into the can.

USE #3 COARSE STEEL WOOL PADS to mop up sludge that the putty knife misses. Wipe in the direction of the grain only. You can rinse the sludge-laden pad in a pail of ammoniated trisodium phosphate or a heavy-duty wood floor cleaner to clean the pad for reuse.

AFTER MOST OF THE SLUDGE has been removed with steel wool, use a clear rinse and wipe dry with paper towels or rags. The clear rinse can be plain water if you are using the water-rinsable type stripper. Others prefer to rinse with TSP or alcohol. Still others use a liquid benzol remover as the rinsing solution. Experimentation will show what works best for you.

BE SURE THE SURFACE IS REALLY CLEAN and dry before applying the new finish. You can test for cleanness by rubbing the surface with fine sandpaper. If it clogs or comes up gummy, the surface is still carrying significant amounts of the old finish and needs further treatment with the remover. If the sandpaper produces a fine powder dust, the surface is completely clean and ready to go. ■

Arthur S. Green lives in an old house near Beverly Hills, Calif. He is a frequent contributor to painting and decorating publications.



DAVID MOORE

-by-

Henry S. Marks

David Moore was one of Madison County's busiest and most influential citizens in ante-bellum days. Doctor, politician, planter and financier, he was one of the many Virginians to come to Alabama to achieve his fortune and fame.

Born in Brunswick Co., Va., in 1779, he studied medicine at the University of Pennsylvania. He first moved South to Nashville, where he soon developed an extensive practice.

Dr. Moore became involved with Madison County and the Tennessee Valley in 1809, when he became a major purchaser of lands at the first land sales in Madison County. As a result of these purchases he was selected as one of three trustees to whom LeRoy Pope deeded one half of his purchase covering the site of Huntsville. The trustees had the authority to partition off, sell lots and use the proceeds for the improvement of Huntsville. This began a long financial relationship between Moore and Pope.

It is said that, later, he was the owner of nine choice plantations. He evidently produced good crops on these plantations, for they are said to have yielded about 1,000 bales of cotton annually. One of the reasons for this success was his habit of hiring the best overseers available and requiring them to report to him on a regular basis. He shipped his cotton to Liverpool, England, and was not forced to sell

at any particular time, this usually affording him a high rate of return for his efforts.

Moore became a friend of Andrew Jackson. While still residing in Nashville he became the Jackson family physician. During the Creek War of 1813-1814 he served as a surgeon on the General's staff. After the last battle he was appointed one of the "justices of the quorem" of Madison Co. This was an English and Virginian method of administering justice. Moore continued to serve in this capacity until 1819, when Alabama became a state.

The good doctor next became involved in banking. Under an act passed by the territorial legislature in 1815 Moore became one of nine men authorized to open books of subscription for the first bank established in the territory. "The Planters' and Merchants' bank" began operations in Huntsville in October, 1817. According to historian William Brantley, author of "Banking in Alabama 1816-1860," business was very good. On Feb. 2, 1818 the bank acquired title to its home, buying a lot with a brick house on it "in front of the public square," for \$3,500. The rear of the building hung precariously above the Big Springs. Thus there have been continuous banking activities at this site ever since that date. Today the First Alabama Bank of Huntsville carries on the work of

the Merchants' and Planters' closed by Gov. Israel Pickens on Feb. 1, 1825, for political as well as fiscal reasons.

Inevitably, Moore was drawn into the political arena. From 1820 to 1844 he spent a total of 15 years in the state legislature as a representative of Madison County. First elected to the house in 1820, he served in the senate in 1822, 1823 and 1824; then, by choice, he returned to the lower house. In 1841 he was unanimously elected speaker of the house.

Moore's political life was sometimes colorful and often of much benefit to Alabama. Among bills he originated and personally sponsored, perhaps most important was "the woman's law." This act created a statutory settlement for married women. If a husband went into bankruptcy the family could be kept together by the wife being allowed to keep from liquidators necessaries for the children and herself. At the time the act was passed it was a most progressive one.

Many politicians of the ante-bellum era were faced with threats of a physical nature sometimes (or often) during their public careers. Moore's career was no exception to the general rule. During 1826 Israel Pickens, who had been elected to succeed Henry Chambers as a U. S. Senator from Alabama, discovered that he was dying from tuberculosis. The election for his successor was viciously waged in the Alabama legislature between John McKinley and Huntsville's Clement Comer Clay. Clay lost and Dr. Moore became personally involved due to Andrew Wills, owner of the Huntsville Democrat, who bitterly hated Clay. Moore supported Clay, thereby incurring Wills' wrath. Wills deliberately insulted Moore, stating he was "willing to fight (Moore) in any way and may be killed, as I will take it with knives, pistols, or fisticuffs. . ." However, charges brought against Moore by Wills were found untrue by a committee of the house, with the approval of McKinley, the victor over Clay. Moore was completely cleared in the matter, leaving Wills' reputation tarnished. It seems as if it was understood by those concerned at the time that Moore would refuse to accept the offer to duel due to his religious principles. This refusal added to Moore's reputation as a "Christian gentleman in the highest sense of the word."

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It may well be possible that the highlight of the doctor's political career came in a defeat. In 1841 he was a candidate for the U. S. Senate. On the first ballot Moore received one more vote than did Arthur Bagby, his main opponent. But on the second ballot Bagby was elected by seven votes. Moore had come tantalizingly close.

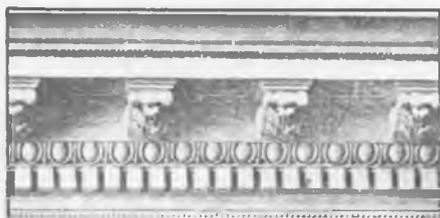
All this political activity did not keep Moore from his economic interests. For example, in Jan., 1833, he joined with six others to charter the Madison Turnpike Company. The company macadamized roads South to the Tennessee River and westward, towards Athens.

Moore certainly led an active, busy life. He died in 1844 or 1845, leaving a considerable fortune to his wife and children. His widow, Martha L. Moore, was able to purchase in 1851 the substantial home at 621 Franklin St., now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Claude Pipes. His daughter, Harriet Moore Barnard, married Col. Robert Barnwell Rhett, Jr. The Rhett family occupied the

house until 1928. The good doctor's influence in Huntsville lasted far longer than his life.



Products For The Old House

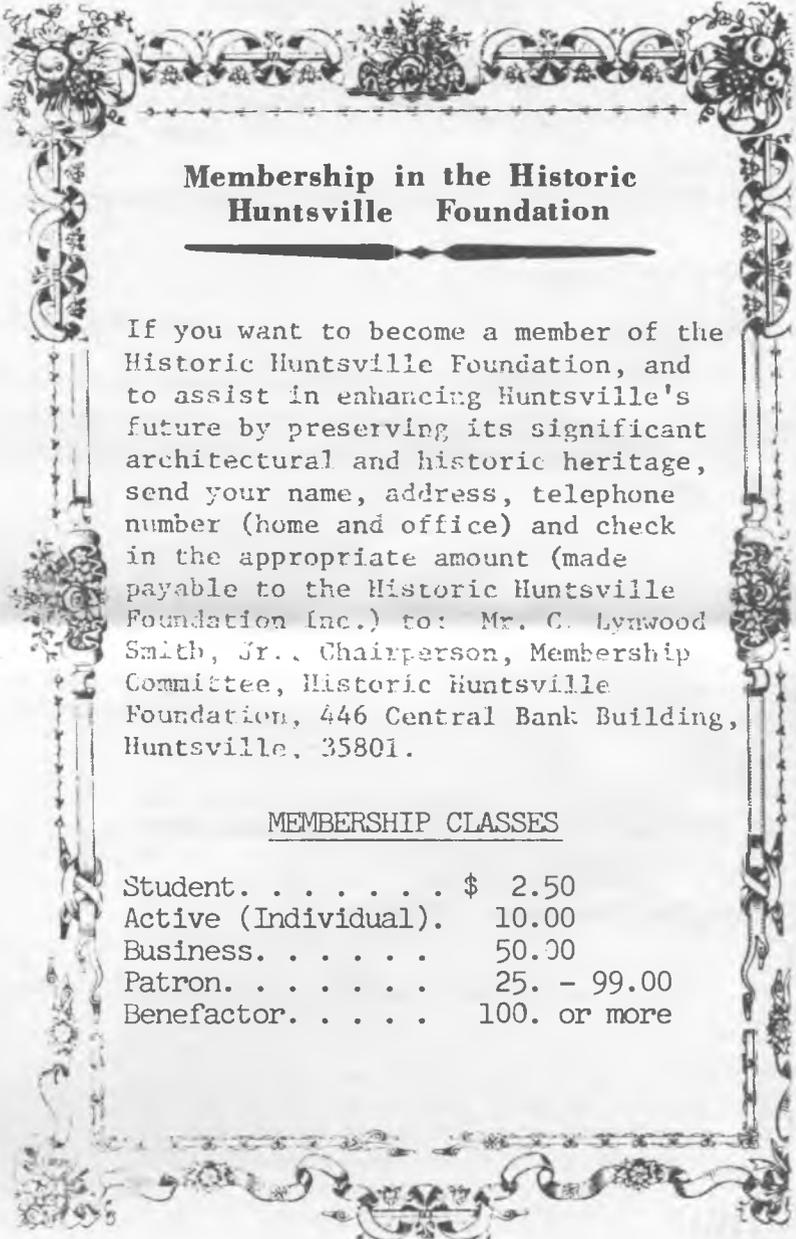


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