Six Dollars

Winter - Spring *1991*

THE HISTORIC HUNTSVILLE
QUARTERLY
Of Local Architecture & Preservation

THE RED AND BLUE

BUY DEFENSE BONDS FOR VICTORY

CITIZENS NEED TO UNDERSTAND AMERICA

NEW BONDS CREATED FOR DEFENSE

THE RED AND BLUE

STAMP SALE PASSES $25,000 MARK

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THE RED AND BLUE

AIR RAID DRILLS HELD IN SCHOOL

SPANISH CLUB MEETING HELD

ANNUAL STAFF WORKING HARD

STARLIGHTERS CLUB PRESENTS PLAY

MORE PICTURE SHOWS SHOWN STUDENT BODY

THREE AIR RAID DRILLS HELD SO FAR

THE RED AND BLUE

SERVICE HONOR ROLL DEDICATED

SEGER AND MALCOLM SPEAK IN CHAPEL

UNIVERSITY TRIO IS HEARD BY STUDENTS

SIX ROOMS GO 100%

PROGRAM HONORS SERVICE MEN

SPANISH CLUB HOLDS MEETING

TOMMY TAYLOR MAKES SUPREME SACRIFICE

World War II 50th Anniversary Issue

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Founded 1974

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COVER:

Huntsville High School "Red and Blue" cover pages from 1941 & 1942. These and other issues are available in the Huntsville - Madison County Public Library Heritage Room.

ARSENAL PHOTOS CAME FROM THE ARMY MISSILE COMMAND AT REDSTONE ARSENAL. FAMILY PHOTOS CAME FROM THE INDIVIDUAL FAMILIES CONCERNED.

THE HISTORIC HUNTSVILLE

QUARTERLY

of Local Architecture and Preservation

Vol. XVII, Nos. 1&2 Winter-Spring — 1991

CONTENTS

From The Editor.............................. 2

From The HHF Board Chairman...................... 3

The Class of '43.............................. 4
Huntsville High School

Letters Home.................................. 12
Dick Dickson

Huntsville, the Arsenal, and Miss Susie................ 23
Nancy Dickson

To Grandmother's House We Go..................... 42
John Moorman Shaver

Two "Arsenals of Democracy"...................... 48
Kaylene Hughes

Goddard House................................ 67
Pam Rogers

Memoirs of John L. McDaniel...................... 73
Introduction by Mark McDaniel

Historic Huntsville............................ 93
Elise Hopkins Stephens

From the Editor...

War brings together people whose lives would normally take separate courses. In preparing this Anniversary of World War II issue a similar phenomenon has taken place. The most important event in Huntsville's history in 1941-5 was the advent of the Arsenal. The date was July 3, 1941. Although the announcements by Senator John Sparkman brought the chilling reality of war closer to Huntsvillians, their immediate reaction was jubilation at the prospect of a quickened economy. There would be work for all comers, and come they did.

Dr. Kaylene Hughes is the Senior Historian at the U.S. Missile Command, Redstone Arsenal. She captures the excitement of those times and lays the groundwork for this issue. Her contribution to *The Quarterly* is timely as well as significant. Kaylene has removed much of the mystery surrounding the Arsenal.

Pam Rogers, a public affairs specialist for the Army Missile Command at Redstone Arsenal, gives readers a closer look at the Chaney-Goddard House.

Three who answered the call for Arsenal workers were Nancy and Tom Dickson from Memphis and John McDaniel from Georgia. Their recollections make compelling reading. I quoted liberally from them in *Historic Huntsville: A City of New Beginnings*. Now *Quarterly* readers will have the opportunity to read their unedited manuscripts.

I asked John Shaver to write memories of his grandparents' house where the Dicksons found lodging. And I asked Huntsville Attorney Mark McDaniel to introduce his father's memoirs.

Another approach I wanted to investigate was the effect of the war on Huntsville High School. While perusing old "Red and Blue" newspapers, I read a letter written to Annie Merts, beloved mathematics teacher. The author was a 1943 graduate stationed in Pennsylvania taking an intensive Air Force training course. The letter impressed me so that I went to the phone book, looked up Dick Dickson and on the second try, found its writer. Upon meeting with Dick and his wife Arlene, I learned that he fit into this *Quarterly* picture in more ways. He grew up in the house next door to the Moorman's on Holmes, he served as Scout Master to young John Shaver, and he became an architect (that special profession this *Quarterly* holds in high esteem). Furthermore, his mother wrote a letter to General Patton and received a reply. This connects his story to John McDaniel's, who is pictured with Generals Bradley and McCarthy and Karl Malden while working on the film "Patton."

The Huntsville High School 1943 year book is excerpted to give an idea of how vital the war was in the daily life and thought of young Huntsvillians. It comes as no surprise that the student leaders of the Classes of 1941, 42, 43, 44, and 45 are now the city's leaders, putting into practice the lessons of good citizenship that they learned in those war years. To them and their teachers, this *Quarterly* is dedicated.

Elise Stephens

From the HHF Board Chairman,
Ginger Fail:

Very special thanks to the ad hoc committee appointed in December, 1990 to "save the 'Coca Cola' House." Members were Lynn and Harvie Jones, Ralph Allen, Nancy and Richard VanValkenburgh, Bill Munson, and Roger Nicholson. On three days' notice during the week before Christmas, the committee sprang into action to meet and tour the house; then they worked hard into late evening hours to draw up proposals and handle publicity — meeting all deadlines set by Mr. Bob Wilkinson of Coca Cola (Big Spring Properties). We appreciate Harvie Jones for working more overtime hours to draw alternate architectural plans for Mr. Wilkinson's perusal. Thanks also to VanValkenburgh and Wilkinson Properties for providing office space for our meetings. Because of the dedication of these Foundation members, the Humphreys-Rodgers House has been saved! We are also indebted to the Mayor, City Council, and Constitution Hall Village Park Staff/Board for giving "our" house a new owner and new address! Watch the newspapers and television for news on the exciting moving date and joint fundraiser between HHF and Constitution Hall Village Park coming in the Spring.

The past couple of months have held A LOT of excitement for the Foundation. Besides realizing the fulfilling house-conservation effort, we were notified by the Alabama Historical Commission that we are being awarded a $1,000 grand for the purpose of surveying the historical Dallas Mill Village area. A million thanks to Roger Nicholson, Bill Munson, Harvie and Lynn Jones, Linda Allen, and Pat Ryan for all the research and other work involved with the grant application.

Watch out. Here we come again! The wheels have started to roll as we try to preserve the oldest freight depot in continuous operation in the United States. Thanks again to Harvie Jones for initiating this effort.

Do you feel stimulated by YOUR Foundation? This truly is an exciting, very worthwhile organization, always working to improve our community. On two different occasions recently, I received telephone calls from civic leaders in other cities with questions as to "how does your city of Huntsville DO all its preservation and conservation?"! Indeed, we, the Foundation members, have a right to be proud of our endeavors — at the same time realizing that there is a lot left to do!

Ginger Fail

THE AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOL

Symbol of the Homefront
of Our Own

UNITED STATES

The '43

DUSTY ANDERSON — Editor-in-Chief

JACK ANDERSON — Business Manager

To Richard with all the luck possible Jane . .

PIERIAN

Published by

THE SENIOR CLASS OF HUNTSVILLE HIGH SCHOOL
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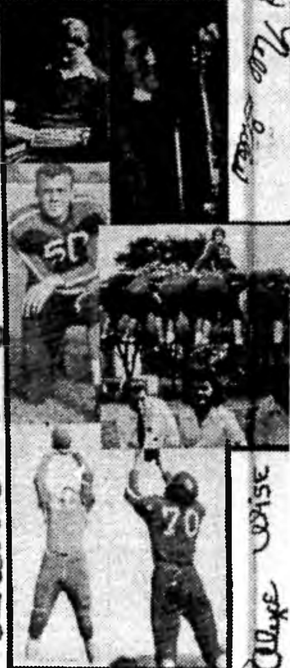

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Our HOME GUARD

Athletics

The
Athletic Field
of Today . . .

The
Battle Field
of Tomorrow

Outstanding ATHLETE

In recognition of an athletic career unequaled by any other person ever to attend Huntsville High School, we present—

BILLY JOE ROWAN

He has been outstanding in all sports for the last three years, a triple threat football back, selected on both the all-state and all-southern prep squads, capable pivot on the Panther cage team, chosen for all-district honors for the last two years and for two seasons the mainstay of our tennis team. He is the only athlete ever to win the Acme Award three times.

CHEERLEADERS

Throughout the entire football and basketball seasons, the members of this cheering squad, full of life and pep, have led our yells for the boys on the gridiron and on the gym floor. Their clever antics and hearty cheers added much spirit and color to our athletic contests

The group is composed of: Mary Willie Garvin, Mary Goggin, Sue Hutchens, Jessie Ann Yarbrough, Ray Monroe, Wilton Harris, and Bill Adair, Head Cheerleader.

LETTERS HOME: 216 W. Holmes Street
'Dick' Dickson,
H.H.S. Class of '43

6/3/43

I'm writing on an improvised desk which does very well. It's my new gas mask box. We have been issued a gas mask and 1 pr. pants and 1 shirt which are called fatigues. They are lovely stuff, green herringbone twill. ... They cause a condition similar to a Turkish bath. They keep us taking salt pills. The sun's ruthless. You can't tell when it's going to rain. The camp's built on sand and sea shells. When the sun's out and its dry the sand blows and makes you itch. You slip in the dry sand when you walk. When it's wet you track it in your tent when you come in. When it's wetter you bog down. The mosquitoes have multiplied and grown. ... We march everywhere we go. The mess hall, the supply room or wherever it may be. They had me measuring men for uniforms. Some fun! J & M's specialty (expert fitting service). [Dick had worked at Johnson & Mahoney Men Clothiers.]

I ain't never been so hot. I ain't never sweated so much. I ain't never marched so much. I ain't never ate so much. I like it.

Lights out.

Love, *Dick*

7/6/43

Hi Mom,

... We are either marching on crunching roads made of dead oyster shells or on dusty sand that you sink in up to at least 3 inches and the dust gets so thick you can't see the front of the colume (sic) ... You choke up with dust and heat and sweat by the buckets. We've actually sweated so much that our fatigues are covered with white streaks of salt that is left when the sweat dries out. We eat salt tablets

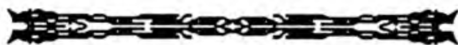
about 10 a day. Sand gets in your clothes and sticks to your sweaty body. The place is made of Sand, Sun, Shells, and dust. The temperature reaches 120° …

… I never knew I had as much resistance to pain, soreness, fatigue, and misery. It's great to find it out and I'm happy. Of course, I'll always miss home but I've got lots of new and swell pals. I just looked out the back of the tent and there's the most beautiful sunset that I've seen since last year at camp. It makes me happier than ever. … I'm happy that this hectic day is over, I'm happy that I've had enough to eat, I'm happy that I'm in the air corps, I'm happy that I'm an American and everything else.

The Army herds me around all day but all through it, the Lord is my shepherd still.

Love to all,

Dick



A letter from the November 12, 1943 issue of the Huntsville High School paper, The Red and Blue, to Annie Merts..

Oct. 15, 1943

Dear Miss Annie,

Here I am in a grand little town of sixty thousand people who attend seventy-five churches. The people are very nice to us and we all like it very much.

I've been hoping to find time to write to you. We really have a hard time finding time for anything, even writing home.

There are so many things I'd like to tell you, but that would take pages and hours. I've improved quite a bit about being on time. In fact I've been late for only one formation and only then because I stayed after a lab period to finish an experiment. I don't ever sleep or even dose or dream in class — I know that must seem remarkable to you. Once you get a little idea of the acceleration of the course we're taking you will easily understand why.

We changed from B to C squadron and started Geometry with a new teacher — then things began to happen. Mr. Sanders, our new teacher, is the most remarkable teacher I have ever seen. He teaches to live and lives to teach. The first day he had us we were hit by a bombshell — his words come out in machinegun rapidity, but in precise order. His English is excellent and you can understand everything he says. If you don't think very, very fast, however, at the end of the period you will be thirty minutes behind him. He isn't like most people who run off rapidly at the mouth — everything he says counts and "Lord help the guy who misses a few seconds."

The first day in his class we covered the first six weeks of Plane Geometry. The next day he knew everyone's name. He then started descriptive Geometry of the types used in navigation. This is one thing that is stressed. We did a great deal of practice work on these things. Mr. Sanders buzzes off a fast, but clear and complete explanation of a new type of problem and we go to work with rule, compass, and protractor. Nine days out of ten he greets us with a short test on previous work — and after about a minute he starts buzzing around the room grading and collecting the papers all at once and, when the last man finishes, the tests are all graded and we start something new (only 5 minutes gone and forty-five to go).

Sanders comes over to the study hall when he has no class and helps anyone he can. At night he comes through the dormitory and visits and helps the boys; between classes he does the same thing. He always looks neat. He is short and quick moving, wears glasses and invariably he wears his

Sunday morning smile. We're all crazy about him. He never stops digging out things that will help us at the classification center. He makes his class such a picnic with his interesting way of explanation, his jokes, quips and tall tales — We can hardly wait to get there. He throws in all kinds of extra aids to Algebra, fundamentals, etc., without charge. He has helped us a lot on problems. These by the way are very important. One day he gave us a time test on addition and deliberately tried to heckle us and break up our concentration by making lots of noise and by counting each 10th second out loud. At the end of the time most of our nerves were on edge, so as soon as we checked the papers he held the waste paper basket over his head and had us have a basketball game with the papers. It took about one minute to get all the papers in the basket and we went on our merry way with our nerves fully relaxed. His free hand straight lines, right angles, and circles on the black board are better than I could draw with chalk, string, and rulers.

We started trig this morning. Within the first ten minutes one of the boys asked a question. Sanders said, "I'll get to that in a few minutes; we're supposed to cover a month's work this morning anyway." And away we went again — in a few minutes the question was answered.

Our Physical Training is as regular as the afternoon and it is plenty rugged — but Okay!

We start our first flying in two weeks. We are due to fly ten hours in a light plane before we leave here.

Miss Annie, tell the boys to go after all the Math and Physics they can get. And then if they are about to get into service — tell them the Air Corps can't be beat in any way. I'm thankful every day for the excellent foundation you and Mrs. Dark gave me in Math and Physics. So far it has been easy for me, but plenty of the other fellows haven't been as lucky as I have in the matter of these foundations.

"Dick" Dickson

1 Feb. '46

Dear Mom,

Since I began to realize that I shall soon be free again I have been hysterical with a strange excitement. I am now on duty at surgery for the last night. Much is passing through my weary brain. I wish I weren't leaving Miss Palmer in such a predicament. I'm the last scrub man she has. … I am to leave Buckley on Thurs. the 7th & I believe I'll go to Lowry Field to be separated — How long that will take I cannot say. …

I have a crop of G.I. clothing which I am going to make use of in civilian life. You may be getting all sorts of junk soon.

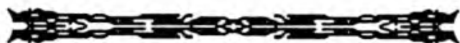
Last night we had an appendectomy. I got to bed at 3:30 … I must admit that I fear some aspects of return to civilian — we never are free from fear — not completely.

Now however I'll be free to run my own life. I cannot but agree with Dad in the conviction that Army life is a lousy way for a man to live in that it makes a complete puppet of him — no more than a stupid sheep. It seems to me I'm talking big — especially since I'm not sure that I can make a success but I still think I would have more respect for myself if I knew that I'm responsible for my life.

In less than three weeks perhaps I shall see you —

I Love you,

Richard



The young man, William Richard Dickson, whose letters are quoted here graduated with the Huntsville High School Class of '43, an Eagle Scout and his classmates' selection as Most Handsome Senior. Quick to enlist, Dick Dickson joined the U.S. Army Air Corps. After basic training at Keesler Field in Gulf Port, Mississippi, he was detailed to a college "crash" course training unit in Williamsport, Pennsylvania. Pilot training followed, but the closest young Dickson got to the fighting was the mission to Bangor, Maine as waist gunner. V.E. Day came just in time to keep him stateside. The Army, taking note of his First Aid Merit badge, promptly reclassified him as a medic and shipped him off to Buckley Field, Colorado where he completed his enlistment.

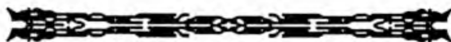
Upon return to civilian life in 1946, Dickson joined the swelling numbers of college students availing themselves of the G.I. Bill. His pre-med career at the University of Ala-

bama was cut short after an horrendous experience one night as emergency room attendant in Tuscaloosa when eight college students were brought in, victims of a head-on automobile collision. After several hours of frantic effort, only three young lives were saved. Dick decided medicine was not for him.

Architecture appealed to him. His math teacher in high school had encouraged Dick to pursue courses calling upon math and science. So, he shifted gears, changed course, and entered Auburn University where he received his B.S. in Architecture in 1951.

After his initial employment in Knoxville with the TVA, Huntsville, proud of its past and eagerly looking to the future, welcomed back the young architect who could help give Huntsville the face-life it needed after years of neglect. Apprenticed to Turner and Northington, which became Northington, Smith & Kranert, Dick participated in the design of the City Hall, the Senior Center, and many urban renewal projects.

Upon passing the examination of the National Council of Architectural Registration boards, Dickson opened up his own office in the Elks Building on Eustis Street. He was a member of the City Planning Commission and Vice Chairman of the Madison County District Boy Scouts of American. Harvie Jones, Huntsville's noted restoration architect apprenticed under Dick Dickson and became a partner in those urban renewal years when "modern" was in and old was out, especially in the "Rocket City."



Famous Last Words

It is fitting that this article conclude with a letter Dick Dickson's mother wrote to General George S. Patton and his reply to her. Who better to have the last word than the famous general?

Huntsville, Alabama
November 24th, 1943

Dear General Patton,

I am impelled by an inner sense of righteous indignation to express to you my deep chagrin at my countrymen making so much ado about one ethical mistake Yet in another mood I find gratitude in my heart for a nation showing so deep concern for one of its lesser rank and from a personal standpoint I wish to say "Thank You" for your apology and the example you have given to a twelve year old who got a big kick out of your exploits and with typical boy street [talk] spoke of you as "Blood and Guts" Patton. You see, my biggest problem in handling the great-grandson of a valiant Confederate Major has been to help him learn to control himself when "fits" of anger overtake him. My simple statement as I handed him the article in our local paper was, "You see even a general cannot afford to lose his temper." I wish you might hear him praise what you have done in battle for he is justly proud of the four high ranking officials from His Home Town.

May God bless you and your men, especially the one over whom this unfortunate incident occurred and my nephew who is with you and is one of your staunch supporters. All power to you from Him who is able to pardon us from all our unrighteousness.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Wm. G. Dickson

HEADQUARTERS SEVENTH ARMY
APO # 758
c/o Postmaster, N.Y.C.

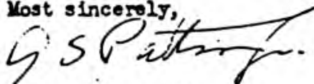
22 December, 1943

My dear Mrs. Dickson:

Please accept my sincere thanks for your nice letter, and also tell your son that he should profit by my horrid example and not lose his temper.

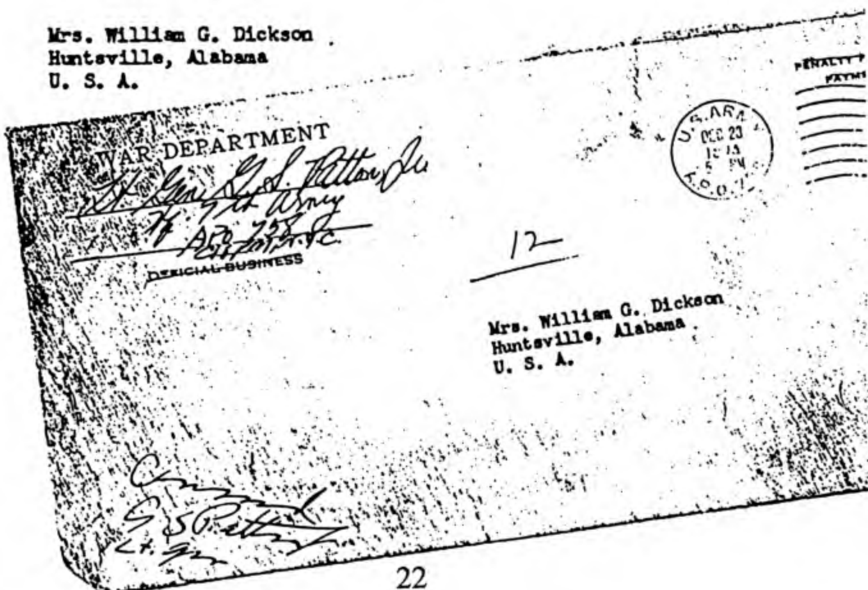
I appreciate your continued confidence and good wishes, and wish you and your family a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Most sincerely,



G. S. PATTON, JR.,
Lieut. General, U. S. Army,
Commanding.

Mrs. William G. Dickson
Huntsville, Alabama
U. S. A.



Huntsville, the Arsenal, and Miss Susie: Recollections of Nancy Dickson

In early September 1941, three months before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, my husband, Tom Dickson, learned that a new plant was being constructed at Huntsville, Alabama. The plant was to be under the supervision of the Corps of Engineers for the Chemical Warfare Service and several of the surveyors he knew were going to work there. The work might possibly last for more than a year, and many men like him who had struggled to earn a living in the lean years of the Depression in the South were flocking to Huntsville. As the Reserves had just the month before been called up, there would be jobs in military camps and munitions plants opening up all around the country in what was still known as the "defense program" of President Roosevelt.

Even when we learned that the product of this manufacturing facility would be various types of poison gas, none of the outraged horror which seizes upon the innocents of today caused us to reconsider. Memories of Germany's first use of poison gas in World War I were still green in many families; my favorite uncle had died of its effects. It was assumed that the Nazis would not scruple to use it and that the United States must be prepared to counter any such plan with equivalent weapons. There was at this time an added sense of urgency; anyone who could read or listen to the radio knew that it was only a matter of time until we were drawn into the war. The Nazis now occupied most of Western Europe, and in June had attacked Russia, their partner in crime in the Molotov Pact of 1939. If Russia should again come to terms with the Germans, the position of our country would be perilous indeed.

Probably because of this unspoken sense of common danger, the Huntsville people gave the newcomers a kindly welcome. And, there were many newcomers, largely from the South — Tennessee, Mississippi, Georgia, and other places in Alabama; mostly men without their wives and families, unless they were married to childless women like

me who could find secretarial or clerical work in the offices of the Architect-Engineer, *Whitman, Requardt & Smith of Baltimore*, the General Contractor, *Kershaw, Butler, Engineers Ltd.*, the Corps of Engineers, or the Chemical Warfare Service.

Tommy returned from his successful scouting expedition to Huntsville to say that he had a job as a surveyor laying out warehouses, roads, and drainage facilities for WRS, and that he had rented a bedroom for us in a house near the jobsite where a friend of his also had a room. We would have to eat our meals at the cafeteria on the job or at a cafe. Having given notice to my employer, we packed our clothing, coffee table, record player, and several 78-RPM records (breakable) in the back of the 1939 black Chevrolet we had bought secondhand the year before for $300 and set out for Huntsville, whose claim was to be known as "the watercress capital of the world."

As early as we arrived, that is, while surveying was still just beginning, the effects of the new money were already evident in the cafe where we stopped for hamburgers on the outskirts of town. The waist-high booths were so new that the shining varnish could not disguise the odor of rosin from the recently cut pine planks of which both walls and booths were built. Something else new to me was the sight of a large group of young officers in nearby booths. They were still wearing their summer white uniforms with gold buttons and braid, and my impression of the scene was that the war was already upon us. This sense of living in a world become completely unfamiliar was to last for the next four years.

Another unfamiliar sight greeted me when we arrived at the house where Tommy had rented our bedroom. It was a bungalow of the type thrown up everywhere after World War I. The exterior was of some sort of tarpaper patterned to resemble buff-colored brick. Access to the garage was by way of a dirt driveway, deeply rutted, with a

deep ditch on either side, so that the first time Tommy left me the car to go find a job, I promptly backed into the ditch and remained there until he came home to get me out. The interior was not better than the exterior. The bedroom was bare of any signs of comfort, the bedding scant, the mattress thin, and springs non-existent. Linoleum, worn through in some places, covered the floor. I had no idea of staying there more than a week or two and said so, not very pleasantly, I am afraid. Until Tommy's first paycheck came in, however, it would have to do.

I have never enjoyed looking for employment, but a few days of being immured in that ghastly bedroom with no place to sit except on the bed, with no lamp to read by, with nothing to eat except crackers or sweet rolls, with no car until Tommy could arrange a ride to the job, made me eager to go back to work. After a few false starts, I learned the route to the arsenal, where salaries for skilled office workers were of course higher than in local offices. By this time, the fall rains had begun, and the scene of desolation which the jobsite presented was almost enough to drive me back to the bedroom. Bulldozers had cleared the site of every tree and shrub and blade of grass. Red mud in deep troughs stretched in every direction to barbed wire fences, broken here and there by guard towers in which were stationed M.P.'s. A number of regulation Army barracks had been erected, interconnected by wooden walkways, some bearing names of organizations painted on signs at the corners, others bearing only a letter and a number. At the front gate, every visitor was interviewed by an M.P. and, if given permission to enter, handed a temporary badge without which the visitor would not be permitted to leave again. When I learned the amount of salary earned by a temporary Civil Service clerk-stenographer — $135 per month — sixty-five percent more than the salary I had earned in Memphis, the mud and the rain and our dreadful room seemed more bearable. It was several weeks, however, before I was called for an interview, and I learned that every employee was very carefully and fully investigated before being hired.

With a dated and signed permit from Personnel and conducted by an M.P., I was introduced to Lt. J. H. Kaminer, Officer in Charge of Piping and Mechanical in the Operations Office of the Corps of Engineers. I recognized him as one of the young officers we had seen at the cafe on the highway, but now he wore the brown-green trousers and tan shirt of the Army officer's winter uniform. He was not much taller than I, of stocky physique, somewhat hunched in carriage. His face was remarkable for the ivory pallor of his complexion, through which, though he was close shaven, his heavy beard showed blue over the jaws. His forehead was very high and broad, the top of the head covered with a cap of shiny black hair. His eyes under plainly marked brows were brown, direct, and very keen. Interrupted in his study of a huge roll of blueprints, he absentmindedly motioned me to the straight oak chair beside his oak desk. Saying that he had read the file from Personnel, he said he did not believe that I could do the work since I had had no engineering, oil refinery, or mill supply experience. Eager as I was to have the job, I pointed to my excellent scholastic record as proof that I learned quickly. Recalling that I had studied for two years at the Rice Institute, he allowed himself to be persuaded, told me to report at eight the next morning, and

handed me a huge orange catalog of the Crane Company, my homework being to learn the names and descriptions of all the pipe fittings described in it. He was right; it was a demanding job with constant pressure and the most exciting I was ever to have, because he was the most intelligent engineer I ever worked for.

About this same time, Tommy found us a better place to live. It was another bedroom for rent, but this time in the home of Miss Susie and Doctor Moorman, whose family had lived in Huntsville since before the Civil War. Up until then, we had had only a fleeting glimpse of this Huntsville during Sunday afternoon drives, but what we saw was different from Mississippi towns we had visited. Half the size of Vicksburg but half again larger than Corinth, and older than either, Huntsville seemed to have settled long since into the bowl of its wooded foothills. Since before the Civil War a stop on the vital railroad line connecting Memphis and Chattanooga, its occupation by Union troops had left it virtually undamaged. Like most Southern small towns, it had grown around the county courthouse on the square, from which a few tree-lined streets, some still brick-paved, boasted a number of stately antebellum homes, most of red brick, some with white columns and verandahs, surrounded by lawns shaded by magnolia, pine, oak, and elm trees. One such house was the Moormans', a two-story brick townhouse, soft rose red in color. Three steps led up to the

verandah, the plinth on either side of the steps supporting a large stone lion couchant. The wide planking and the balustrade of the veranda, which was some six feet in width, were painted gray like the rest of the trim. The veranda began at the left of the entrance and ran across the right half of the facade all the way around the right side of the house. Several tall, rather narrow windows, which began at floor level, lighted the right-hand half of the ground floor, which Doc Moorman used for his consulting room and dispensary. The front door with its sidelights and fanlight led into a hall at least eight feet wide and ten or twelve feet high, which ran the length of the house to a stairwell at the back leading to the second story, where four bedrooms and two baths were located. The wide planks of the hall floor and the baseboards, wainscoting, and trim were varnished dark brown. Between two separate Turkish carpets sat a large black Franklin stove on a tiled base, central heating for the house, augmenting separate fireplaces in most rooms. Double doors at the left of the hall closed off the parlor and behind it, the dining room.

Miss Susie Moorman, the lady kind enough and brave enough to rent a bedroom in her home to these two strangers, was the sort of Southerner who believed in Southern gentility, and my husband's Vicksburg connections may have had something to do with her decision. Other Southern gentlewomen were renting rooms to officers or company officials of WRS and KBE, though they, no more than we, took meals with the family. These ladies were not operating boarding-houses, though there were some of these where many of the workmen found rooms and meals. Miss Susie was shorter than I, with a slender, trim figure and a brisk manner. I saw her only rarely, though I lived in her house for six months or so, and usually she dressed in black crepe, with hems below the knee, black silk stockings and neat black kid pumps. Her complexion was very fine, the famous magnolia-petal skin of Southern women, and her gray hair, combed back and up from her face, escaped in little curls from the knot at the top of her head. I think her

eyes were brown, but with the liveliness of very bright blue eyes. Although we did not meet Doc Moorman until several days later and then saw him even more rarely than Miss Susie, he was as charming as she, a man a little above middle height, of graceful but gaunt physique, with wavy iron-gray hair and a leathery face creased by the ironic humor so common to the family physician of those days. I am not sure that Doc Moorman was a family physician; I have some vague recollection that he was an eye doctor; he was not a dentist nor a surgeon, for when my tooth abscessed, he referred me to a dentist; and when Tommy had an attack of appendicitis, he told us how to find a physician and the hospital.

The bedroom Miss Susie showed us must have been a guest room or the bedroom of one of her sons, now away from home. It was located at the back of the second story

next to a bathroom which I think only we used. After the horror where we had been living, this room and indeed the whole house seemed the essence of luxury. Across from the door to the hall, on each side of the window were twin beds, separated by a night-table with a reading lamp. The wooden bedsteads were enameled green with sprays of flowers stenciled on the headboards in the manner of the Twenties. Pretty as they were, their real beauty was the plump mattresses and pillows and the clean white counterpanes. In the center of the right-hand wall was a fireplace, where a fine fire was burning to dissipate the November chill. Across from the beds was a large green-painted chest of drawers with a mirror and near the back window a small, armless, white-painted rocker. At the windows hung white net curtains; there was a carpet covering the floor; the walls were papered in white with a tiny flower design. It was a dainty room which reflected the personality of Miss Susie. We moved in that afternoon, our moving consisting of transferring clothing and the precious coffee table, which we placed at the back window with the record player and our records on it.

Only a week or so later, we became acquainted with Miss Susie's secret weapon in the housekeeping battle — Rose, a sturdy, comfortably padded mulatto, dressed in a long gingham dress, a white apron, and a turban. Older than Miss Susie, she had always kept house and cooked for her or her family. She and her grandson Benjy lived in the quarters, I believe, behind the house, and Benjy drove the car, kept the yard, the garden, and the fruit trees, and tended the fires. Rose's grumpy manner belied her kind heart, especially where Tommy was concerned. During the coming cold, dark, often rainy winter days when he had to report to the job by seven, she got up early to start the fire in her stove to make coffee and cook his breakfast. Generous as he was with tips, he could not have really paid for this kindness, because the cafes where we ate most of our meals were not open at that hour, nor the cafeteria at the base. Since I usually did not have to be at work until eight, I was

not often invited to Rose's breakfasts. Once or twice, though, I remember sitting down at the polished mahogany dining table to eat delicious pancakes from a fine china plate set upon a lace-trimmed doily anchored with a sparkling crystal glass. Truly gracious living!

As matters stood, however, we were to spend very little time in this island of tranquility. Even in the months preceding Pearl Harbor, the Operations Office of the Corps of Engineers, as well as the offices of WRS and KBE, was a very busy place. Field crews, including my husband's, worked six 12-hour days, usually half days both Saturday and Sunday; Operations inspected this work, though not on Sundays. The Commanding Officer, Major Carl Breitweiser, who wore riding boots and jodhpurs and carried a quirt, and his Executive, Captain Paul Sadler, were officers of the regular Army, and therefore supervised most of the work on roads, drainage, railroad sidings, and warehouses. The officers called in from the Reserve were more knowledgeable in the techniques of constructing a chemical manufacturing plant, which somewhat resembled an oil refinery. Among these, Captain David Fowler, Operations Officer, a graduate of Georgia Tech, was a tall, graceful, blonde in his early thirties who could have passed as a Confederate Army officer; Lt. Thor Ingvald Madson, Asst. Op., an honors graduate of M.I.T., was tall and burly with curly dark hair and spectacles, markedly Yankee in his manner and a fine theoretical scientist; and Lt. James Heath Kaminer, Piping and Mechanical, a graduate of The Citadel, had worked on refinery construction in Haifa and Houston before the call to the Reserves and therefore had more practical experience in this type of work than any other officer on the job. I do not remember the universities of the other four lieutenants assigned to Operations, but they were Lt. Reggie Murphy, another Yankee, a brown-haired, brown-eyed, debonair Irishman who had lately been employed by York in air-conditioning and refrigeration (at the beginning of the next summer, I found out that his air-conditioning skill was applied not to our office in the barracks, which utilized the open-

window method of cooling, but to the cooling of chemical processes); Lt. Major, a slight, quiet, kindly brown officer in charge of electrical work (subject to jokes about being called Major Major when he was promoted); and Lts. Hudson and East, assigned to inspection of layout and concrete work, I believe.

There were more than three secretaries, besides myself, working in the Operations Office, but I remember three especially, two because I worked with them daily. Captain Fowler's secretary, Grace Powell, was of my height, but willowy, with the pale skin, dun-colored hair, and the iceberg calm of a Greta Garbo. An efficient Civil Service employee, she and her husband had been transferred to the Huntsville project from the TVA project at Oak Ridge (before the atom bomb project, of course). Lt. Madsen's secretary, Mrs. Reilly, was pudgy, with brown hair straying out of the knot at the back of her head, myopic blue eyes behind spectacles, and an abstracted manner which matched Lt. Madsen's. The third, Jewel Henshaw, was secretary to Lts. Major, Hudson and East, but she caused more comment than the rest of us. She was unmarried, an inch or two taller than the rest, with a model's figure, dusky skin faintly flushed, smoky, wavy shoulder-length hair, and the most beautiful green eyes with long eyelashes, which the men referred to as "bedroom eyes." Though she was flirtatious in manner, she led the life of a proper young Southern lady, traveling back to her parents' home in Florence (or Anniston) every weekend.

For a week or two after I reported to work, Lt. Kaminer was busy hiring the three inspectors (Civil Service) assigned to him. Two of them, Roland Brooke and S. J. McCune, came from other peacetime Government projects. Brooke was a large, shambling, dark-eyed man with thinning straight dark hair, who was kindly, easygoing, and soft-spoken. McCune was short with graying blonde hair, disinclined to talk, constantly smoking a pipe, and always wearing a tan trench coat and slouch hat, the garb later caricatured as that of the OSS. Both Brooke and McCune were in

their forties. The third inspector, W. Harvey Allen, was senior to us all, being in his sixties; he was tall and angular in build, with wavy gray hair, blue eyes, an ironic sense of humor, and an authoritative bearing, because he had been assigned and transferred to this project by his permanent employer, Babcock & Wilcox, the foremost builders of industrial power plants of that day.

Working for and with all these people, I came to know them in their office personalities very well, but since we never met after office hours, I have no idea where or how they lived, what or when they ate, or where they shopped. I did know that most were married, that some went home when the pressure of the job permitted — rare after Pearl Harbor. Ships that pass in the night, to coin a phrase! Lt. Kaminer, being unmarried, did date several young women who left messages for him. One was Ruth deRussy, said to be the most beautiful girl in Huntsville because of her manner, elegant figure, creamy white skin, green eyes, and red hair.

The work was unremitting. The chemical manufacturing facilities, the power plant, and what was known as the ordnance plant had been designed and materials and equipment for them ordered months before in Baltimore by WRS under the supervision of Chemical Warfare Service. As soon as the site was leveled and fenced and spur tracks laid, materials and equipment began rolling in, to be unloaded, sometimes higgledy-piggledy, into warehouses whose concrete walls were scarcely dry. His function being to keep up with this flood of materials, Lt. Kaminer and his inspectors, aghast at the higgledy-piggledy, designed charts for scheduling and handling these. From these charts he was able to pinpoint those vital pieces of equipment whose delay might slow the completion of a unit, and take steps to expedite them. There was no time to write many letters, for none could be written except according to Army regulations, sometimes with as many as thirteen tissue copies "bucked" to various offices. (The only type of duplicating machine in use was the mimeograph, and it was not used for correspon-

dence. Xerox was a device whose invention was far in the future.) Officers of that day must smile at the hue-and-cry lately over recording telephone conversations. We secretaries recorded in shorthand all incoming and outgoing phone conversations as a matter of course, unless the caller told us to hang up, and then transcribed them. I also typed from each inspector's daily dictation what was called "the daily log," a detailed account of his activities, a record which was often used to substantiate facts in care of controversy. Since Lt. Kaminer worked with the steady rhythm of a piledriver, those of us in his section did likewise — not willy-nilly. Eight o'clock did not mean two minutes past eight, I learned, and lunch did not mean an hour of relaxation and chatter with the other secretaries. As often as not, breakfast was coffee and a cigarette while I was placing the first of several long-distance calls, and lunch was sometimes just a sandwich, coffee, and a cigarette at my desk.

I remember only one real controversy, and that a month or two after Pearl Harbor, though doubtless there were others I did not know about. Generally speaking, the impersonal relationship established from the first among so many different personalities, largely unknown to one another and to each other, persisted to the end of my stay in Huntsville. What social life we had was in the company of WRS and KBE personnel with whom my husband Tommy was acquainted. The only party I remember took place sometime in November when the field men reserved a large dance hall a good way up the mountain for anyone who contributed his share of the cost. When we arrived, one of many cars parked around the building in the pine woods, I saw that it was a long, rustic tavern, raised a foot or so above the ground, and made of pine boards that looked quite new. It was decorated, in honor of the coming Season, with a string of Christmas tree lights at the edge of the roof and over the gable of the small entry porch. When we entered, I could smell the aroma of the new boards. Though the dance hall, in which a jukebox was playing "Elmer's Tune," was large, there appeared to be at least one other room beside it,

I suppose for diners. I recall two other songs from that night: Dinah Shore singing "Blues in the Night," a very new song and new singer; and an old favorite "Deep in the Heart of Texas," which always evoked much clapping and stomping from the dancers.

Although Madison County was "dry," and strict about it, everyone brought a bottle, chastely concealed in a brown paper sack, and the waiters brought ice in bowls and glasses of Coke or Seven-Up. It was a wild party. We realized that as we drove back down the mountain over a road completely hidden by thick fog. Here and there, party goers, some very intoxicated, all unable to see the road through the fog, had driven into the ditches at the side, had climbed out of their cars, and were walking around them or leaning dangerously to leeward, depending on their sobriety, as they tried to find a way to extricate themselves. We arrived safely at the Moormans'.

Drinking too much could be expensive. If it was done on the job, the penalty was instant dismissal. If it was done in the town or in the county, noisily or otherwise improperly, a policeman or the sheriff might appear and jail the offender at once, freeing him the next morning only upon payment of a stiff fine. Nevertheless, there was much hard drinking among the men in the field crews, many of whom were living in bedrooms without their wives or families. Also, it was difficult and dangerous to get liquor. There was a State-operated store in Florence I think, but its hours were short and I believe the prices were high. The store just across the State line in Tennessee stayed open later and sold liquor by the case at cheaper prices. Many ran the risk of being caught; quite a few were. They were charged with transporting liquor illegally across the State line and found themselves in desperate trouble.

There were no more big parties for the next few months. As Tommy had gone to work early, I had slept late and was taking a shower when Miss Susie called to me

through the bathroom door. It was the bright, sunny Sunday morning of December 7. She had just heard the news of Pearl Harbor on the radio. Dreadful fear and outrage wash from my memory what I did that day after that; I have a dim recollection that Lt. Kaminer sent a staff car for me and I spent the rest of the day at the job, but I cannot really recall anything. On Monday, no one was absent and no one suggested we stop work to find a radio to listen to the President. We knew he would declare war. All leaves, including Christmas, were canceled, both for Operations and for the contractors' personnel. Anyone who did not report for work was subject to dismissal without recommendation. Manpower was frozen. The schedule became seven 12-hour days for field crews. Officers reported at seven instead of eight o'clock, and civilian personnel were subject to call seven days a week. Sometimes the work went on until nine or ten o'clock at night, with meals of sandwiches and coffee brought in on trays by enlisted men and eaten at the desk. If you were called and had no transportation, an olive-drab Ford was sent from the Motor Pool to fetch you. Bulletins from the Commanding General were circulated, warning workers against loose talk that would aid the enemies' spies.

Christmas was gloomy. The war had become personal. My sister's fiance had been drafted into the Army, and she had married him the Sunday after Pearl Harbor, but I could not go. When the Philippines were invaded, I learned that Lt. Kaminer had been born in Lingayen Gulf on the Mindanao Peninsula. We had just learned that Wake Island had fallen after a heroic stand by the Marines. The West Coast feared Japanese submarine attacks. In the Atlantic and Caribbean, wolf-packs of U-boats were sinking great numbers of our merchant ships. Gulf Coast ports and shipyards expected German commando raids.

Christmas evening we walked downtown to a fine hotel, the Russel Erskine, where we ate Christmas dinner. The dining-room was old-fashioned and stately, with buff-painted plastered walls above dark polished paneling, im-

mensely high-ceilinged, with deep recesses for windows, below which steam radiators hissed. Carpeting and heavy brocade draperies muffled sounds. The tables were covered with damask tablecloths and set with good china and crystal. The other diners were well-dressed, the atmosphere subdued. Our waiter was a polite, very elderly Negro dressed in the hotel livery. I suppose we ate turkey and dressing; what I remember is that the salad was the famous Huntsville watercress with vinaigrette dressing, a wonderful salad. The meal ended with dessert and a demitasse of strong, good black coffee, and we walked back to Miss Susie's, passing under the only Christmas decorations, some strings of colored lights across the streets nearest the courthouse.

Bad news grew worse: the terrible bombing of Britain, the siege of Leningrad, the increasing hold of the Japanese everywhere in the Pacific made us fearful that American would soon be left to fight alone. As the sense of urgency increased, we became more diligent. Since all the materials and equipment for the Arsenal had been ordered months prior to Pearl Harbor, our section was involved with expediting delivery of these, chiefly by long-distance telephone, as there was certainly no time to write letters according to Army regulations. I recall that dished heads for one particular pressure vessel had been preempted under higher priority. Upon learning that delivery of them would be delayed for perhaps six months, Lt. Kaminer began a telephone search for substitutes, beginning with Lukens Steel in Pittsburgh and extending as far west and south as Wyatt Metal & Boiler Works in Houston. Needless to say, he found them. In like manner, he uncovered sources of scarce pipefittings and valves, often appealing to old friends like Sam Wilson of National Supply in Tulsa and Art Allison of the Savannah River Project. I recorded and transcribed all these phone conversations, hanging up the extension phone only when Lt. Kaminer said, "Thanks, Mrs. D."

As deliveries of materials and equipment vital to erection of one unit or another were postponed, sometimes in-

definitely, Lt. Kaminer began to scrutinize the architect-engineer's designs for possible substitutions or shortcuts which would result in savings of materials or time. His efforts precipitated a controversy with Lt. Madsen, who staunchly defended the original design. Matters came to a head over the pipe-runs, shown in blueprints running overhead on stanchions of welded pipe, for which Lt. Kaminer proposed to substitute pipe-runs in trenches with runs supported on concrete pillars, thus savings much pipe, fittings, and welding. This controversy eventually moved from the office of Captain Fowler to that of Major Breitweiser to that of General Sieder of CWS, who came down on the side of pragmatism, that is, for Lt. Kaminer's solution — an early victory of the "Can Do" philosophy.

Shortly after, the officers in Operations were promoted: Captain Fowler to Major, Lts. Madsen and Kaminer to Captain, 2nd Lts. Major, Murphy, Hudson, and East to 1st Lieutenants. Captain Madsen and his secretary were transferred to another post, and Operations moved its offices to the second floor of the barracks building. Captain Kaminer was promoted to Assistant Operations Officer, and his desk and mine were moved to an office enclosure next to Major Fowler's office.

Though there was still no break in the constant stream of bad news, Tommy's working hours were cut back because the surveying was almost completed. At the same time, the relentless pace of the past three months slackened as materials and equipment rolled in, and erection of the various units got under way. All the officers and the civilian inspectors spent long days in the field.

The first Saturday afternoon I did not work, I went shopping downtown for material for an Easter dress. On the square was a drygoods store, narrow, with walls covered with dark shelving and a gray-painted ceiling. The dress materials were displayed on bolts standing on long tables. Most were light flowered or printed cottons, some cham-

bray, but only one piece of linen, not handkerchief linen, but linen customarily used for tablecloths. It was of beautiful quality and reasonably priced, so I bought it, some large pearl buttons, needles, thread, thimble, scissors, and a pattern. Since I had no machine, I made the dress by hand, sewing every night after work, and I was really pleased with it. At Easter we drove up to Sewanee on Saturday afternoon to spend the holiday with Tommy's mother and sister, who was married to Tom Govan, history professor at the University of the South and already an authority on Nicholas Biddle. Even on top of the mountain, the war had brought many changes. There was now a Naval ROTC unit on campus, and many students were wearing sailor's uniform. As the community was so small, Tom Govan had received his draft notice, though he was thirty-five years of age, and was to report for Army basic training at the end of the spring term. He and his good friend, the poet Allan Tate, no longer discussed the Agrarian South, but the status of the war. It was too cold for me to wear my new white linen dress; I went to church in a navy blue suit borrowed from Jane, my sister-in-law. As we drove down to Monteagle after lunch, Jane pointed out the abandoned Chataugua building, which Robert Lowell had rented to live in for the duration, where he scandalized the natives by practicing Yoga in the nude.

A few weeks later, we drove to Birmingham for the first time so that Tommy could talk to a friend of his about a surveyor's job when his work at the Arsenal ended, as it would in the next month or so. We stayed in Homewood and gazed in awe at the statue of Vulcan and the view of the smoky, fiery, city below.

Separations brought about by the war were only just beginning; there were many for millions of young people over the next four years. Tommy left that week to go on a surveying job at Covington, Tennessee, but I stayed on in Huntsville. Captain Kaminer was to be transferred at the first of June to Denver, where he was to be Operations Officer in charge of construction of the Rocky Mountain Arse-

nal. He would arrange my transfer there at the same time, and Tommy would finish the Covington job by then, and be employed by KBE, which had the contract for Rocky Mountain under the name of Kershaw, Swinerton, and Walberg.

Sometime in May, I made one more weekend trip, this time to Memphis, where Tommy met me at my parent's home. I had not seen my family for months, and the visit was all too short. As Tommy had to drive back to Covington that Sunday night, he saw me on board the Plantation Special in late afternoon. That train was fascinating, much like the Zephyr I had once ridden from Houston to Dallas. An aluminum bullet, it whizzed along at high speed, scheduled to arrive in Chattanooga — the Chattanooga choo-choo — just after midnight and in Washington by mid-morning. There was a Pullman, but the coaches were luxurious, decorated in pale green with scenic murals and seats comfortably upholstered in soft dark-green plush, seats which would recline with enough room for the passengers to stretch their legs. Most people rode the coach, and everybody enjoyed the club car. When the train arrived in Huntsville around eleven, I alighted at the long old red-brick station house with its high roof and its tall green freight doors (closed at night, of course) and found a taxi to take me to Miss Susie's. It was still too early in the war for women to be afraid to be alone on the streets, even late at night.

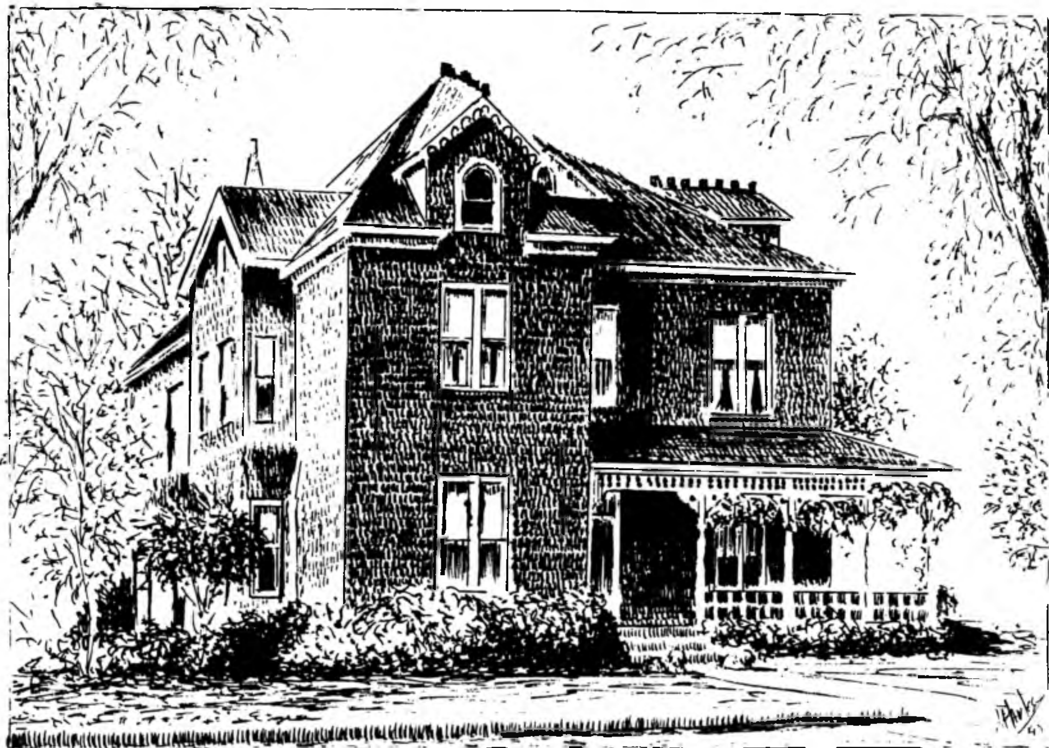
About this time, I was invited, surely by courtesy of Miss Susie, to the only truly social event I attended in Huntsville. A formal Sunday afternoon tea was being given to benefit some cause connected with the war effort, possibly for the U.S.O., at the Hutchens residence, I believe, and Miss Susie was to pour. Happy at having an occasion to wear my fine white linen dress, my best black Panama straw, and my white kid gloves, I walked downtown and beyond, to a tree-lined street one or two removed from the square, to a stately red brick house with white columns and a verandah. The matrons of Huntsville society were receiving the wives of the officers and the officials of the Arsenal. I

spent a pleasant hour listening to the cultured conversation of mostly Southern women of much charm.

The final memorable event of my stay in Huntsville was connected with the job. One night at the end of May, Captain Kaminer sent a car to bring me back out to the Arsenal for the start-up of the power plant. This facility, a huge dark iron monster, had risen from bare earth in the short period of nine months. I knew the names of all its components, as if they were old friends: the boiler, the turbines, the hopper, the coal conveyor belt, the condensate tanks, etc., which, now assembled, would furnish electricity, steam, and hot water for the manufacturing processes as well as for the office areas. Climbing up the narrow iron stair to the operator's platform and gazing down through it to the foundation so far below, I was thrilled at the idea I had had some part in completing it despite so many difficulties in locating and procuring the materials. Here was good news at last! All over the country men and women working under conditions of great stress were accomplishing their tasks in record time. I don't remember whether it was days before or days after that we heard the news of victory in the battle of Midway, but the two events, so far distant from each other in space, seemed connected in time and seemed to signal the ability of America to do!

Captain Kaminer left for Denver; Tommy left Covington and came back to Huntsville for me, my clothes, the record player, and the coffee table, and we too went west.

Huntsville and our life there for a few months became a fly caught in amber. As old Heraclitus remarked, "One cannot step twice in the same stream." Reminiscences of those days, incomplete, one-sided, partial as they may be, may nevertheless afford the reader, if there is one left, some insight into a particular time, in a particular place, and a particular frame of mind. A slice of life, that is, at least for the person remembering.



To Grandmother's House We Go

John Moorman Shaver

It really wasn't over the river and through the woods, but it seemed so to a seven year old boy off with Mother and Charles and Susie to visit Grandmother's house. Leave Locust Street (not Avenue), up Adams Avenue (not Street), down Williams to Gallatin and across Big Spring (the river), past enemy territory (West Clinton School was the enemy to us from East Clinton School), and turn left on Holmes, canopied by a primeval forest of trees (the woods).

Grandmother would be waiting on the front porch, as always, to greet us. After hugs all around, Grandmother hugs being a more pleasant memory than Aunt hugs and cousin hugs, we three children would make a mad dash to the two majestic lions guarding the front porch entrance. All three naturally had to ride the same lion. And naturally the results were always the same ... big brother Charles up front, little sister Susie at the rear, and 'you know who' middle child sandwiched between.

After a stormy ride, Charles being the only one left astride, it was off to the front porch. Kathryn Tucker Windham knew what she was doing when she wrote Alabama: One Big Front Porch. The world made sense from Grandmother's front porch, even while peering through the ever-present Jackson vine. (Grandmother's Jackson vine, by the way, can be found all over the Twickenham District — a rather comforting thought). Adults' problems and childrens' questions could always be solved and answered while rocking on the front porch rocker or swinging on the side porch swing.

After Grandmother asked us children to spend the night, probably preplanned by Grandmother Susie and Mother Sarah, it was inside for the evening. The interior can be described in one word, BIG. Paul Bunyan could have

Grandmother's Jackson Vine. Photo was taken by a local nursery for advertising purposes.

stood ramrod straight in the parlor. The furniture was big, the portraits were big, the rugs were big. And the doors. The polished wooden doors were not only big, they even disappeared into the wall. I can't remember how many sets of doors did that, but it was wondrously magical to us.

Mother Sarah and John Shaver in Grandmother's parlor with BIG furniture and BIG portrait. 1944

The biggest of big, though, was the dining room table. King Saul could have comfortably dined there with his family. All of his family. We spent many an hour running around and around and around that table, almost fast enough to be melted into Little Black Sambo's butter.

Which brings us to the kitchen, and to Rose. The kitchen was Rose, and Rose was the kitchen. My mind's eye can't see her, but my mind's nose can certainly smell of Rose's meals, especially her rolls. Everyone knew of Rose's rolls.

After supper (not dinner) it was time for a lazy evening of Parcheese and then off to bed. Up the long, steep staircase to more bigness. But before bed, we would always help Grandmother with some housework, dusting the bannisters with death-defying slides, and waxing her wooden staircase with thump, thump, thumping joyrides to the first floor. Grandfather Doc may not have been a surgeon, but he did extract many a splinter from many a grandchild's impaled landing pad. Exhausted, we were tucked in bed by either Grandmother or St. Peter.

Morning would have brought more adventures, but it was time for the trip home. So there's no time to tell of the screened porch off the kitchen, of the never ending back yard, of the serpent-free Garden of Eden that was Grandfather Doc's vegetable garden and Rose's cornucopia, and of the unconquerable Fort Apache, cleverly disguised as the chicken house.

All of that is gone now. Street names are changed. Schools become parking lots. Primeval forests become forestless. The furniture (now antiques), the rugs, and the portraits have been distributed to children, grandchildren, and soon to great-grandchildren. And the ever-vigilant lions now stand guard at the home of Dr. Bob Moorman (he being the first grandchild and rightful heir). I, however, have the most priceless treasure, a cross-stitched gift to Grandmother from her friend Odell Whitten Smith, who spent her growing up years in the Spite House on Lincoln.

AT THY HEARTHSTONE'S STEADY GLOW,
PRECIOUS MEMORIES EBB AND FLOW,
ALL THY DAYS THIS HOME HAS BLEST
THY BUSY LIFE WITH TENDERNESS

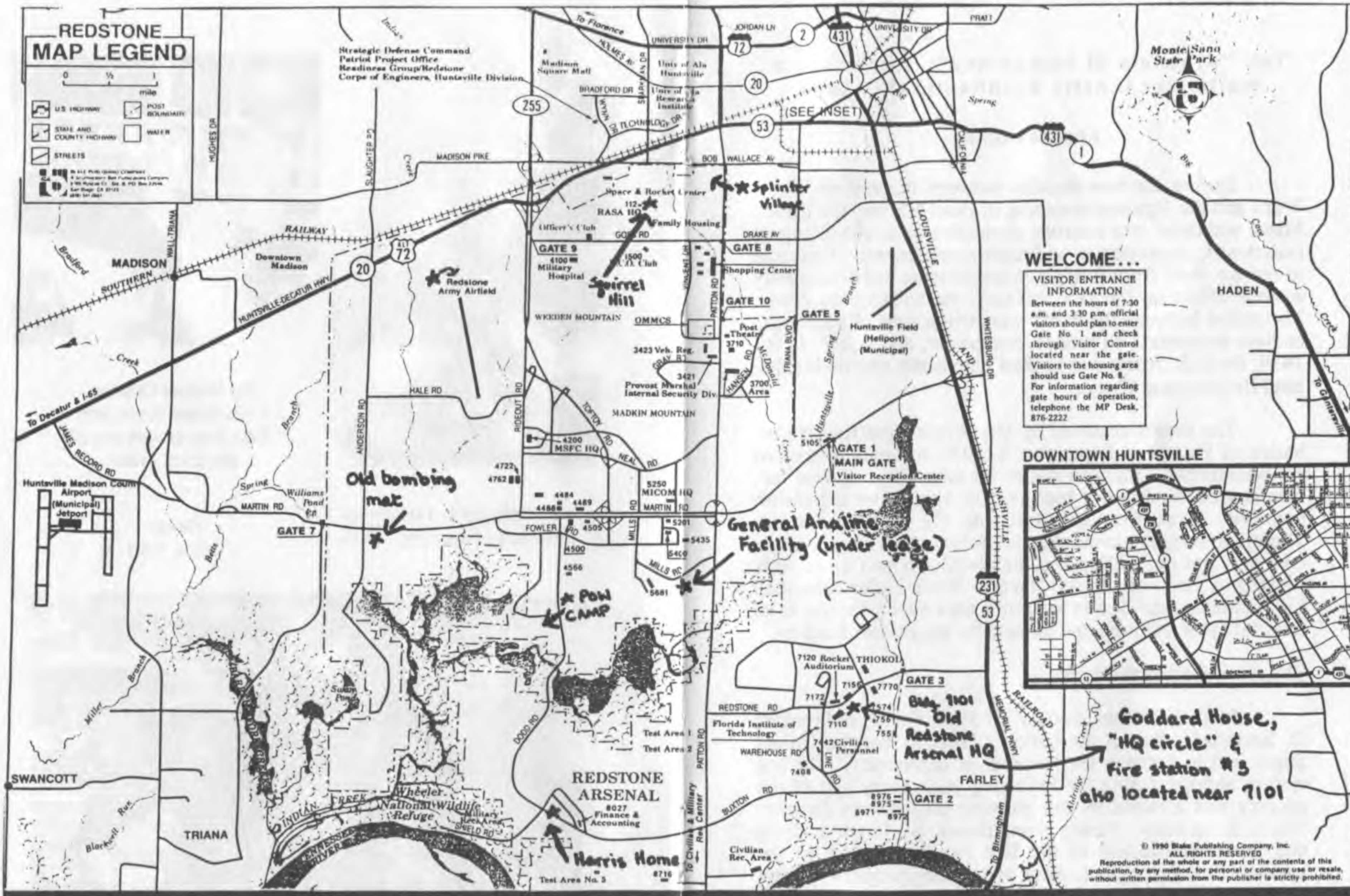
This memory trip prompted me to take a ride around the West Holmes and West Clinton area. My forty-something mind became quite angry as I saw the dismantling of the Rogers home. But my seven year old eye saw something else, a noticeable sigh of relief from the old place, a relief from the fenced-in barrier to corporate expansion, to a fenceless new life on Gates, under the watchful eye and protective wing of Constitution Hall Village. And we can come and visit. Who knows. Maybe your grandmother will be there. I know mine will be. On the front porch. Possibly with a basket of hot rolls. And most assuredly with a Grandmother hug.

Miss Susie Dement (Moorman) and brother
William Dement and the lions. 1891

Big Brother Charles,
Little Sister Susie, and
John Shaver with one of
the lions. 1947

Dr. Bob (Bobby) Moorman
and one of the lions. 1936

Below:
John, 1991



* Arrows point to general location of selected buildings or areas

Two "Arsenals of Democracy": Huntsville's World War II Army Architectural Legacy

Kaylene Hughes

During the two decades between the end of World War I and the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor, the United States withdrew into a strong protective shell consisting of isolationist, protectionist, and nativist sentiments. This urge to remain aloof from foreign entanglements had a decidedly adverse affect on the U.S. military, particularly the Army. The period between the world wars was a time of seemingly endless constraints on money, manpower, and materiel. By 1939, the U.S. Army was ranked nineteenth worldwide, behind Belgium and Greece.

The events spawned by the German and Russian invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, however, disrupted the widespread American desire for neutrality. It was further eroded by Japan's increasingly aggressive expansion onto the Asian mainland and into the western Pacific. Though it sought to avoid another military conflict, the United States was not willing to retire meekly in the face of Axis (Germany, Italy, and Japan) threats. When Hitler unleashed his "lightning war" it was high time the country looked to its own defenses and prepared to meet the aggressors head-on.

The Army Comes to Huntsville

In his last "fireside chat" of 1940, President Franklin D. Roosevelt advised the nation's citizens that the United States had to become the "arsenal of democracy." In one way or another during the following year, every part of the country was affected by the growing preparations for war. The U.S. military, greatly strengthened by larger budgets and the establishment of the first peacetime draft in the nation's history, began a spate of building projects to erect the production facilities for the munitions and materiel needed to successfully confront the country's enemies in Europe and the Pacific.

In April 1941, Congress approved funds for the Army to construct another chemical manufacturing and storage facility. This installation would supplement the production of the Chemical Warfare Service's only chemical manufacturing plant at Edgewood Arsenal, Maryland. Col., Charles E. Loucks headed the selection team dispatched by the Army to locate a suitable site for the new facility.

The team visited several areas, searching for about 30,000 acres of land located inland far enough from the coast to provide sufficient protection from enemy attack. Access to adequate rail, water, and highway transportation; sufficient fuel and electrical power; ample construction supplies; and enough raw materials for subsequent operations were other prime considerations. Among the areas appraised were Florence, Huntsville, and Tuscaloosa, Alabama; El Dorado, Arkansas; Kansas City and St. Louis, Missouri; Toledo, Ohio; Memphis, Tennessee; and Charleston, West Virginia.

The first stop on the Army's inspection tour was at Huntsville on June 8, 1941. A three-man delegation, representing a local group which supported the city's selection, initially escorted Loucks and the civilian engineer who accompanied him to a spot on the south side of the Tennessee River. When the engineer rejected the proposed location as unsuitable because it was too uneven for building without a lot of leveling, the delegation showed them an alternate site on the southwestern edge of the city. Although no one knew it at the time, the Army had found the future home of the chemical munitions installation to be known as Huntsville Arsenal.

After completing his inspection of the other sites, Loucks submitted his recommendation. On July 3, 1941, fire trucks raced through town delivering an "EXTRA" edition of The Huntsville Times. The paper's banner headlines heralded the construction of a $40 million chemical war plant "south of [the] city and extended to [the] Tennessee River." Included in the reservation composing Huntsville

Arsenal was over 7,700 acres which were to be used for construction of a depot area.

During this same period, the Army Ordnance Corps was also in the market for a place to build a chemical shell loading and assembly plant. The Ordnance Corps had undertaken this expansion program in response to President Roosevelt's proclamation of May 27, 1941, declaring the existence of a state of unlimited emergency. New Ordnance facilities were needed in order to assure adequate production of ammunition in keeping with the time-objective requirements of the General Staff.

Recognizing the tremendous economy of locating the new facility close to Huntsville Arsenal, the Chief of Ordnance acquired a 4,000-acre tract east of and adjacent to the Chemical Warfare Service's installation. Initially known as Redstone Ordnance Plant (so named because of the area's predominantly red soil), the new post was redesignated Redstone Arsenal on February 26, 1943.

Before the Army Came

The land acquired by the Army in 1941 to establish Huntsville Arsenal (32,244 acres) and Redstone Ordnance Plant (4,000 acres) was located in a part of the Tennessee Valley that archaeological remains have proven was first inhabited over 2,000 years ago by a prehistoric Indian culture known as Copenas. By the beginning of the 20th century, the approximately 57-square-mile area of rolling terrain, which contained some of the richest agricultural land in Madison County, comprised such small farming communities as Pond Beat, Mullins Flat, Union Hill, Elko, Cave Hill, Hickory Grove, Horton's Ford, and Bettle Slash.

Cotton, corn, hay, peanuts, livestock, and various fruits and vegetables were the primary agricultural products cultivated by the area's inhabitants. Although there was no electricity, indoor plumbing or telephones; few roads and fewer cars or tractors, the people who lived in the area that

one former resident recalled as being "nearly out of the world" prospered enough to support their own stores, mills, shops, gins, churches, and schools.

Of the 550 families (about 6,000 men, women, and children) living in this part of the county, 76 percent were black. Some of the families were tenant farmers, but many, black and white, were landowners who had worked the fertile soil of the region for several decades. White or black, tenant or landowner, all of them were forced to leave their farms when the Army came to Huntsville. Understandably, there was a lot of concern at first among the area's residents about when they had to leave and where they could go.

Despite some early rumors to the contrary, the Army postponed the moving date until after the autumn harvest. This was done not only to benefit the local farmers, but to save the federal government the cost of the crops that would have been abandoned. Because their farms were located in a section of the reservation where construction was slated to begin first, some families did have to move in July and August, 1941. The majority, however, relocated to other farms or moved into town later in the year. By the middle of January 1942, all of the area's former residents were gone.

The federal government also provided assistance to the displaced farmers through the Farm Security Administration (FSA). The agency was authorized to provide small grants for those without sufficient funds to move; to help in locating new farms; to make loans to those with farming experience but not funds to start over; to maintain a list of vacant properties for sell or rent; and to give advice on the suitability of a new farm.

The FSA also joined with the Alabama Relocations Corporation, a private organization sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, "to buy or lease large tracts of land to be divided ... and put in shape for tilling," with suitable shelter also provided. These farms served as temporary stopping places for some families, while becoming perma-

nent homes for others "who proved themselves worthy of a chance at ownership."

Of the 550 families that had to relocate, 295 of them made their own arrangements. A total of 273 of the original 550 moved to farms in Madison or other adjoining north Alabama counties, while 183 moved to town. Many of the latter found jobs at the arsenals, since former residents of the Army reservation were given preference in hiring as part of the government's assistance effort.

In addition to more than 500 houses and other assorted buildings, there were 3 schools for blacks; 1 church for whites and 11 churches for blacks; 31 known cemeteries; and several black lodges. Certain structures, such as the Chaney house built c. 1835; the antebellum Lee mansion; and the Cedar Grove Methodist Church, were considered to be among the oldest buildings in Madison County.

The Chaney house, which was relocated to another site on Redstone Arsenal in 1955, has been so extensively renovated during the ensuing years that it "possesses little architectural or historical significance." Originally remodeled for use as guest quarters for visiting dignitaries, the Chaney house, renamed the Goodard House in honor of the father of American rocketry, now serves as military quarters.

The Chaney house prior to being moved.

The Chaney house, renamed the Goddard House, after begin moved & remodeled.

The Army used the Lee mansion as an office building in World War II and then as a residence for a number of years. It was sold and moved off the arsenal in 1974. The historic Cedar Grove Methodist Church building was relocated to a spot on Jordan Lane after the Army acquired its land. Cedar Grove and Center Grove, another church on the arsenal reservation, merged into the Center Grove United Methodist Church after moving into Huntsville.

The Lee mansion, 1940s

Throughout the war years and into the following decades, the Army made use of many of the vacated buildings on the arsenal reservation usually as office space, storage, or housing. Most of these structures are gone, although traces of them can still be found. The only pre-Army building still on Redstone Arsenal which has not been moved or altered is the Harris house on Buxton Road, close to where the Lee mansion originally stood. Parts of the old home date from the early 1800s, but most of it was built, starting in the 1920s, by joining two older existing structures. It has been used as a military residence since 1941.

The Harris house, 1940s

Huntsville's Two "Arsenals of Democracy"

The first commanding officer of Huntsville Arsenal arrived on August 4, 1941, and broke ground of the chemical plant the following day. By March 1942, the installation's initial production facility had been activated. Huntsville Arsenal became the sole manufacturer of colored smoke munitions, starting in October 1942. The dye used in

the production process colored the workers' clothing and stained their skins. Throughout the war years, it was not uncommon to see people of rainbow hues in the Huntsville area. As one former munitions worker recalled, "You could tell the color of smoke grenades we were running out here by the color of the people walking around downtown on the streets. The dye — yellow, red, violet, green — would get on your skin and you had to wear it off. It wouldn't wash off."

In addition to colored smoke grenades, the arsenal was noted for its vast production of gel-type incendiaries. It also produced toxic agents such as mustard gas, phosgene, lewisite, white phosphorous, carbonyl iron, and tear gas. During World War II, more than 27 million items of chemical munitions having a total value of more than $134.5 million were produced. Personnel of Huntsville Arsenal won the Army - Navy "E" Award four different times for their outstanding record in the production of war equipment.

The War Department formally established the Huntsville Chemical Warfare Depot on March 6, 1942. Located in the extreme southern portion of Huntsville Arsenal bordering the Tennessee River, the depot received, stored, and issued such Chemical Warfare Service materiel as munitions, bulk chemicals, decontaminating apparatuses, protective materials, and spare parts of gas masks. To avoid confusion with Huntsville Arsenal, the War Department changed the depot's name on August 10, 1943, to the Gulf Chemical Warfare Depot.

Ground breaking ceremonies for Redstone Ordnance Plant were held on October 25, 1941. Officially activated on February 5, 1942, the new installation's first production line began operation before the end of the following month. The only government-owned and operated arsenal established by the Ordnance Department during World War II, Redstone was the seventh Ordnance Corps manufacturing arsenal and the only one located south of the Mason-Dixon line.

The first commanding officer of Redstone Ordnance Plant breaking ground for the new facility, October 1941.

During the war, Redstone Arsenal produced such items as burster charges, medium and major caliber chemical artillery ammunition, rifle grenades, demolition blocks, and bombs of various weights and sizes. Between March 1942 and September 1945, over 45.2 million units of ammunition were loaded and assembled for shipment. For their outstanding services in the manufacture of munitions, Redstone employees won the aforementioned Army-Navy "E" Award five different times.

The Arsenal's World War II Architectural Legacy

The laying of paved roads and new railroad tracks were among the first construction work started on Huntsville Arsenal in September 1941. This resulted from the need for adequate transportation systems to deliver heavy equipment and supplies to various construction areas. Neighboring Redstone Arsenal experienced a similar need.

After the Ordnance plant's commanding officer shoveled the first spadeful of dirt out of a cotton field in the southeastern corner of the Army reservation in October, large bulldozers and other machinery immediately moved in to begin constructing the first road to the arsenal. About 75 miles of railroad track connecting the east and west classification yards at Huntsville Arsenal, as well as lines to the Gulf Chemical Warfare Depot and Redstone Ordnance Plant, were completed in December 1941.

The first road being constructed in area of ground breaking, October 1941

The first structures erected at Huntsville Arsenal were long, two-story frame buildings located in the northeastern corner of the reservation. Situated on land now outside the confines of the arsenal, at the corner of what is now Bob Wallace Avenue and Jordan Lane, these buildings served as temporary headquarters for the arsenal's commander and his staff. They moved into their new offices on September 14, 1941, after operating briefly from borrowed space in the Huntsville National Guard Armory and the Huntsville High School gymnasium. The Army also made use of the farm houses vacated when construction began in this part of the arsenal.

This section became the installation troop area in 1942 when arsenal headquarters moved to Squirrel Hill off of Goss Road. Most of the buildings were converted into barracks, but others served as a chapel, theater, and officers club. Some of the buildings were used for apartments to house members of the original Von Braun rocket team after they moved here in 1950 from Fort Bliss, Texas. The Army's own space and rocket museum was set up in the area in 1965, but was dismantled in May 1971. Several of the display items were subsequently loaned to the Alabama Space and Rocket Center. The last major activity to be located in the area was the Civilian Personnel Office, which moved to the south end of the arsenal in 1976. The build-

ings in this area, which became known as "Splinter Village" its final year, were demolished and sold for scrap in 1977.

One of the lesser known structures located on Huntsville Arsenal during World War II was a prisoner of war (POW) camp designed to accommodate 655 inmates. The Army Corps of Engineers built the original camp for 250 prisoners sometime in 1944, but the remainder of the facility was constructed under the supervision of the Post Engineer using POW labor. The camp was in use by the time Karl Spitzenpfeil, a former inmate, arrived in August 1944.

Prisoner labor was used for a variety of tasks, such as working as mechanics for the Motor Pool; laboring for the Engineering Services Division at the sawmill, in the limestone quarry, or on the rock crusher; and serving as cooks and kitchen help at the Huntsville Arsenal Officers Club. Approximately 1,100 captured German soldiers were imprisoned on the arsenal at one time.

According to Karl Spitzenpfeil, who returned to visit the arsenal in June 1982, "life in the Huntsville camp was not a hardship." Although the prisoners had to work hard, there was always enough to eat; there were occasional outings for swimming; and there were two cases of beer for each prisoner on his birthday. In addition, the Army paid the POWs 80 cents a day for their work and allowed the prisoners to use the money to buy things at the post commissary.

Located on what is now Dodd Road, northeast of the present gate into NASA, no traces of the arsenal's prisoner of war camp remain. The barracks and guard house were dismantled many years ago, and the tents that housed some of the prisoners no doubt were removed at the end of the war.

Another of Huntsville Arsenal's lesser known facilities was the airfield built to accommodate the planes used to test clusters of incendiary bombs and smoke grenades.

Flight testing of all incendiary bombs produced by Huntsville Arsenal as well as those "turned out by all other arsenals and 15 private concerns under contract," was carried out in a proofing area known as the South Bombing Range.

In addition, a 500-foot bombing mat and a simulated village of 50 wooden shacks known as "Little Tokyo" were built. The latter area was obliterated by February 1944, but the concrete bombing mat remains, a reminder of an all but forgotten piece of the arsenal's past. The airfield is also still in use, but it has been extensively renovated, expanded, and upgraded to accommodate modern air traffic for the Army and NASA.

Several other Huntsville Arsenal structures built in World War II also remain functional. The old headquarters building 111 on Squirrel Hill served as the main office for the Ordnance Guided Missile Center after Redstone Arsenal took over the chemical plant's land and property in June 1949. It was later used as the Officers Club until being converted into office space in 1985. Other Squirrel Hill structures, such as the old Post Hospital, also function as office buildings today.

Building 111, the old Huntsville Arsenal headquarters, after 1950.

The only World War II - era buildings in that area of the reservation still being used for the purpose for which they were originally constructed are the quarters built in 1942 for the officials of Huntsville Arsenal. Located near the headquarters building for the officers' convenience, these structures have been renovated several times but are still serving as military housing.

In addition, in what is now the Ordnance Missile and Munitions Center and School area other World War II vintage administrative, storage, and production facilities fulfill a variety of useful functions. Farther south within the arsenal reservation, storage igloos and warehouses built for the Gulf Chemical Warfare Depot continue to be used for the same purpose.

The first building on Redstone Arsenal was completed in November 1941. Designed primarily as quarters for the post's bachelor officers, the structure temporarily served as the plant's first headquarters until the permanent administration building was finished in March 1942. Building 7101, as Redstone Arsenal headquarters was most commonly known, functioned as administrative office space until the structure was finally torn down in 1986.

The Redstone Arsenal headquarters area, 1940s. The Bachelor Officers Quarters is the building to the left, while the portion of the structure on the right is building 7101. In the background is the commanding officer's house on what was known as "headquarters circle."

Although both the bachelor officers' quarters and building 7101 are gone now, the three houses constructed in 1943 for Redstone officials are currently occupied. Situated in the area behind building 7101, these three-bedroom frame residences, along with seven others like them added in 1947, made up what was known as "headquarters circle." The center of the arsenal's community life in the 1950s, this area was "for several years the most prestigious address on post." Today the modest dwellings, which once housed some of the arsenal's most well-known commanders, are home to senior noncommissioned officers and their families.

"Headquarters circle," circa late 1940s

Although several of the production and storage buildings erected on Redstone in World War II are still standing and still occupied, many of the arsenal's original structures no longer exist. One of the more interesting of these was old fire station #3 on Redstone Road. Constructed in 1942 as the fire house and jail for Redstone Ordnance Plant, the building was described in a 1983 historic properties survey report as a:

> military building with unusual pretensions to style. The two-story wood shiplap-sided building is derived from a standard World War II Army building prototype but varies from the prototype through the employment of such distinctive architectural features as a curved entry bay and a five-story watch tower.

Set on a hill near building 7101, so that it overlooked the original ordnance production lines, the fire station was used in the capacity for which it was chiefly built until January 1983. For two weeks prior to its disposal, the building served as a training aid for arsenal fire fighters who put out blazes in individual rooms. The shell of the structure was set afire for the last time on March 18, 1985, and allowed to burn to the ground. Although the architectural historians who surveyed the fire station recommended that it be preserved by finding "an adaptive use ... that will not alter its distinctive architectural character," the cost for the building's conversion and upkeep were too prohibitive.

Fire Station #3, circa late 1940s

Other Evidence of Redstone's Past

Except for the aforementioned structures which still stand as reminders of Redstone's World War II origins, at first glance there appears to be little other evidence of the arsenal's wartime roots. Most of the pre-Army dwellings and outbuildings were typical of small farm communities throughout the 1940s South. Once they ceased to be useful to the Army, the majority had no intrinsic or historic worth to justify their preservation.

Likewise, none of the structures hurriedly erected by the Army in 1941 to meet the immediate need for office space during the construction of the arsenals were worth pre-

serving once they no longer served any useful purpose. The rather volatile nature of the munitions work carried on at the arsenals is another reason why some of the original production buildings no longer exist: they were destroyed by explosions or fires. Still others were damaged by storms and flooding.

When production ceased at the arsenals after the war, some buildings were leased temporarily to private chemical manufacturing firms. One gas mask production line was even converted for use by the Kellar Motors (formerly the Dixie Motor Car) Corporation for the manufacturing, assembling, testing, and selling of automobiles and related products. The General Analine Facility, the buildings of which were constructed by the Army in 1943 for use in the production of iron compounds, has been under lease since 1949 for the same purpose.

After Huntsville Arsenal became part of neighboring Redstone Arsenal in 1949, however, most of these leases were terminated and many of the chemical munitions buildings were remodeled to accommodate the installation's new Ordnance rocket and guided missile mission. The same was true for the original Redstone Arsenal structures.

As the post's missile and rocket responsibilities have continued to expand in subsequent years, most of the old World War II buildings have been extensively renovated to extend their usefulness, primarily as office buildings. According to the 1983 historic properties survey, these buildings, which date back to 1942 and 1943, have "no specific architectural, historical, or technological significance at this time."

Despite the fact that almost all the pre-Army buildings are gone and most of the World War II-era structures no longer can be easily identified as dating from the war period, to the informed eye there is still evidence of the post's pre-missile era origins. The way in which arsenal structures are spread out within the reservation is mute testimony to the

installation's former use. Chemical munitions production buildings had to be widely separated to prevent the spread of explosions or fire from one plant to the next. The location of administrative areas and officer housing at either end of today's arsenal is indicative of the fact that once there were two installations with separate headquarters areas.

While many of the roads on post reflect Redstone's modern function as the home of the Army's rocket and guided missile programs, several of the most traveled routes were named for Chemical Warfare Service soldiers killed during World War I (e.g., Buxton Road, Goss Road, and Rideout Road) or past chiefs of the Ordnance Corps (e.g., Bomford Drive, Croxier Drive, and Hughes Drive). Hale Road, Leoffler Park, and Valim Reservoir memorialize the flight crew of an Army Air Forces plane that crashed while on a routine testing mission at Huntsville Arsenal during World War II.

Redstone Arsenal also has an active historic preservation program which protects such areas as the pre-Army cemeteries located throughout the reservation and various significant archaeological sites. In addition, the post newspaper has enhanced general awareness of the installation's history by publishing interviews with older employees who once lived in the communities that predated the Army in this area as well as other pieces on the arsenal's past.

Redstone's position on the technological cutting edge in missilery and space has not totally obscured its World War II roots. The legacy of this era is an enduring one. Today's arsenal is an interesting blend of the past and present, a mixture that can be seen easily by the interested observer.

Goddard House serves as reminder of pre-Army days ...

Pam Rogers

Article in The Redstone Rocket, October 25, 1989

It sits off to itself, slightly back from Redstone Road, surrounded by the cracked asphalt parking lots for buildings which have long since been torn down, its beauty dimmed by numerous refurbishings, face lifts and so-called "improvements."

It has a tired, faded look with its pale yellow brick exterior and white paint peeling here and there. Twin fire escape ladders leading from a balcony stuck on just for looks give it a cold, institutional appearance.

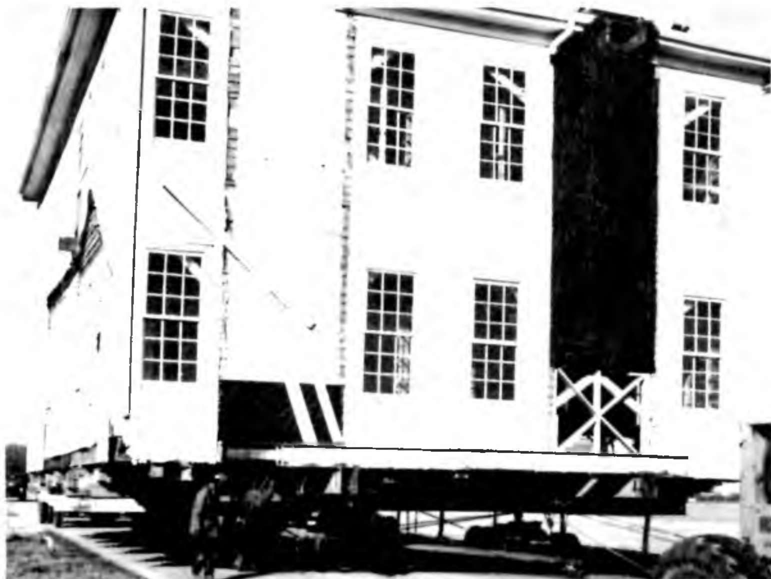
A wooden sign over the front door reads "Goddard House," a name bestowed upon it during a time when thoughts of rockets and outer space dazzled an entire nation.

Inside, a pay phone hangs on one wall in the front hall and a gilt-and-crystal chandelier dangles from the ceiling. Rooms of once-immense proportions have been cut down and partitioned off. It's hard to imagine that this building has ever been anything but a temporary place of shelter. "Home" is certainly not a word which comes to mind during a walk through the house.

But it hasn't always been this way. Although early history about it is hard to come by, it is thought that the house was built around 1835 by James Manning, who owned 2,200 acres of land in Madison County, part of which is now Redstone Arsenal. No one is sure whether Manning, described as a merchant and wealthy planter, ever lived in the house, but he owned the land at the estimated date of construction. Some of the house's original charm can still be seen in its symmetrical design, double windows, and hip

roof. You have to imagine the four identical chimneys which once graced each corner.

The house must also be imagined at another location, because it was moved to its present site in 1955.



The original clapboard siding is visible in this photo.

At least one Huntsvillian remembers the house as it once was, when it stood as a reminder of the days when the economy of the area was based on cotton, not missiles.

Nellie McAnally lived in the house for several years during the 1920s, when it was known as the Chaney house. Back then it was located near what is now the arsenal's Gate 9. Her father was the overseer of the Chaney farm, part of which was rented out to tenants who grew cotton and corn and bought their supplies from a commissary located in the old kitchen at the rear of the house.

A drive lined with cedar trees led to the front door. The house was clapboard then, and had a small porch in front and a larger, screened porch in back. Each room had its own fireplace. There was no electricity and the only running water came from a tap in the kitchen.

McAnally visited the house recently, and described to the *Rocket* the way it used to look.

"This was the living room," she said, as she walked into a bedroom on the right front of the house. "There were big folding doors between this room and the dining room at the back, so they could open them and make a ballroom. There was a fireplace over there, with columns all the way to the ceiling, and mirrors. It was beautiful. It makes you wonder why they would want to change it all," she mused.

In fact, all but one of the original fireplaces were removed, along with their massive chimneys. The only remaining original fireplace, in the front left room on the main floor, has been faced in pink marble.

As she walked through the house, she noted additional changes.

"This was our kitchen," she said, entering a bedroom at the left rear. "We had cabinets along here, and on this wall a door led out to our screened porch where we ate during warm weather. There was a water faucet in here, but no sink. That was the only running water in the whole house, and there were no bathrooms," she said.

In the back hall she pointed out where a second staircase used to be. It has been removed, along with the stairs to the attic which used to lead from the upstairs back hall.

The upstairs has been subjected to the same carving and partitioning as downstairs, with bedrooms, bathrooms, a kitchen, hallways and closets created out of what used to be four rooms and two halls.

The two rooms on the left side of the second floor hold special memories for McAnally, for they were her first home as a married woman. She beamed as she walked through them.

Not long after she and her family moved back to town, the Army came along and bought the house and the land it sat on. It sat empty until 1942, when it was completely remodeled and used as quarters for military families. In 1953 it was shut up because of water problems. It was slated for destruction, but because visitors' accommodations were at a premium, a use was found for it.

With Redstone's guided missile and rocket program taking on national importance, it was decided that dignitaries who were bound to visit needed suitable guest quarters. Huntsville, so recently yanked from its rural slumber into the frenzy of the space race, had very few accommodations.

The house was moved over 11 miles to a spot more convenient to the central operations of the post. Once again it underwent a refurbishment, with lavish treatments like the pink marble fireplace and expensive furnishings.

The first person to sign the guest book in the "new" visitors quarters was Secretary of Defense Charles Wilson, followed by Secretary of the Army Wilbur Brucker. Gone forever were the days when the house served as a reminder of a different way of life.

For McAnally, the house can still stir images of days gone by, and she retains a fondness for it, even though not all visitors today may understand. Some who have lived in the house may have even had some unpleasant experiences, she contends.

The house, according to McAnally, is haunted.

She related several instances of unearthly visitations, including strange noises in the night and ghostly apparitions.

"One morning my mother and my sister-in-law were in the kitchen. My sister-in-law was churning and my mother was washing dishes. My sister-in-law said, 'look Mrs. Russell, there's a dog.' It was standing right there, in the doorway of the kitchen, and it was soaking wet, even though the sun was shining outside. It had the body of a dog and the face of an old man. Leona (the sister-in-law) threw a stick of stove wood at it, but missed. It turned around and my mother followed it, and it just disappeared," she said.

Family members and visitors were awakened on several occasions by the sound of the huge folding doors between the living and dining rooms being slammed back, only to find them in their normal positions. When it stormed, the family could hear a baby crying outside the family room window. McAnally got so used to a ghostly hand turning the doorknob to her upstairs sitting room that she finally quit getting up to see who was there. She knew there would be no one, at least no one she could see, at the door.

M.G. Chaney, the owner of the house, used to lock himself in an upstairs back bedroom, hoping that whatever occupied the house would show itself to him, but it never did, McAnally said.

"I don't believe it comes to everybody," she said.

When the house was no longer needed for VIP quarters, it was changed to bachelor housing, and is sometimes used now for transient quarters.

At the time of McAnally's visit, SFC Frank Finchum, his wife, Angie, and their children were living there temporarily while repairs were being made to their permanent quarters.

Had they seen or heard anything mysterious? Well, there was the time Angie heard running footsteps, but no one was there, and the dog barked every time he went upstairs.

"When Angie heard the noises, she called me at work," Finchum said with a laugh. "I attribute most noises to nature. After spending two years in combat, strange noises don't bother me," he said.

There has been some wishful thinking about more work on the house — not a remodeling, but a restoration. But the cost of the tremendous amount of work required to return the house to its original appearance would probably be prohibitive.

A historical buildings survey performed in 1982 summed up the condition of the house this way: "Although this antebellum house represents pre-military land use, it retains little of its original integrity. The house has been extensively renovated and moved from its original site, and therefore possesses little architectural or historical significance."

A Hermes missile is displayed in front of the house after its move to Redstone Road. This photo was made before the application of brick.

The Memoirs of John L. McDaniel: The Army's Civil Servant at Redstone Arsenal

INTRODUCTION

Mark McDaniel

My father, "Dr. Mac," loved the army and Redstone Arsenal. My father was totally and completely dedicated to the army. He was once offered the job of Under Secretary of the Navy. He got on the plane and came home. He was an "army man." But then again, what else would you expect from a man who taught his children that the most admirable trait a person could possess was loyalty.

I have gone over this introduction with my sister, Bonnie, as she served as vice president in my father's company, and my little brother, Willy, who was my father's constant companion.

My father's story began on Friday, September 13, 1918. He was born in Marion County, Alabama. His parents, Ma Mac and Pa Mac, were very poor. Dad graduated first in his class in high school, but was not allowed to sit on the stage or give the valedictory address as he did not own a pair of shoes.

My father's feelings about life at this time can best be summarized in his own words:

> "I begged for food and worked for everything I got. I was 16 then. In terms of Maslows hierarchy of needs, I was at number one. I was hungry."

Dad walked from Twin, Alabama, in Marion County, to Berry College in Rome, Georgia. Martha Berry started Berry College so the poor people in the Appalachian Mountain region would have a college to attend. Each student was assigned a job. Dad's job was shoveling coal.

After graduating summa cum laude and valedictorian with a degree in math and physics, Dad came home to Marion County. His first day home, Pa Mac told him to hook the mules up and start plowing. Instead of hooking the mules, Dad started walking to Birmingham. He did not spend one night at home after being gone for three years. Dad always said he didn't go to college to learn a better way to hook up the mules.

In Birmingham, Dad drove a coal truck for his cousin Elmer McDaniel, until he started teaching school in LaFayette, Georgia. One day Dad read about jobs at a place near Huntsville, Alabama. In February, 1942, he came to Huntsville. He was 6 foot 5 inches tall and weighed 135 pounds.

Dad's first job at the Arsenal was putting a material on shoes which would keep the shoes from absorbing mustard gas. When he retired in 1977, he was a GS 18 and Technical Director of the United States Army Missile Research and Development Command.

Some of the most memorable stories my father liked to tell centered around the time he was the Technical Director for Dr. Wernher Von Braun. This was right before Dr. Von Braun went to NASA from the army. My father considered Dr. Von Braun the most charismatic manager he ever worked with. Dad often told us how he would sneak a chocolate bar into meetings with Dr. Von Braun, as the meeting would go into the early morning hours many times. No one was allowed to leave the meeting until the problem was solved.

Dad often stated that the two people most responsible for the Arsenal's growth and hence Huntsville's were Congressman Bob Jones and Milton Cummings.

I think from listening to Dad, that he respected Milton Cummings more than any other person. My dad came to know many powerful people in his life, from presidents to other heads of state, but no one had as much influence on him as Milton Cummings. As a child I remember Mr. Cummings coming to our house many times with a congressman or a senator to talk about getting more money for the Arsenal.

One of Dad's favorite stories was about the time he was trying to get money to build the McMorrow Laboratory. He kept being told that there just was not enough money. Dad, as he did so many times, called Congressman Jones and Milton Cummings. They went to Washington. Milton Cummings called Bobby Kennedy and said, "We need to see Jack (President Kennedy) in the morning. He owes me a few favors." The next morning President Kennedy called Mr. Cummings at the hotel and told him a meeting wasn't necessary, that the Arsenal would get the money for the lab.

As stated previously, the number one quality my Dad looked for in a man was loyalty. Dad always said when a person died, he would be real lucky to count those loyal to him on one hand. He always wanted the people he worked for to count him as one of those. You never heard Dad make any off-color remark about his boss.

Dad was very goal oriented. He would point his finger off into the distance, and remark, "Always set your sights way ahead. Shoot for the stars."

He would be quick to remind you to think positive. The thing he hated most was pouters. He always said a person that complains all the time is simply lazy. They complain because they don't want to work. He had little tolerance with a person who said he was depressed. My father was a leader. He often stated that the person in charge should never expect those that work under him to do something the boss is not willing to do himself. In this regard, he told me once that one of his supergrades, when he first came to work for Dad, asked what his working hours were. Dad told him, "If I call you in the morning and you're not there, you're late. If I call you in the afternoon and you're not there, you left early." Dad said that was leadership.

Dad was a can-do person, an action person. If he was told to get a job done, he never asked how, he did it! He, in turn, expected those that worked for him to be action people.

My dad was quick to see leadership characteristics in people. My father was introduced to Congressman Bud Cramer in the early eighties, when the Congressman was District Attorney. They talked for a while. After Mr. Cramer left, Dad told me that he reminded him of Congressman Bob Jones and that with his leadership characteristics, Mr. Cramer would be a very successful person. Dad was obviously right.

Another person that was very close to my father was General Omar Bradley. My father respected General Bradley very much. After Dad's retirement from the Arsenal, he spent a lot of time with General Bradley.

I had the opportunity to spend some time with General Bradley and my father when Dad lived in Los Angeles. Dad gave a party in honor of General Bradley and invited, among others, Karl Malden and Frank McCarthy. As you may recall, Karl Malden played General Bradley in the movie "Patton." General McCarthy was the producer of the movie.

To hear General Bradley tell about D-Day and the Battle of the Bulge will always be in my memory. It was interesting to hear him describe General George Patton. There were many, many stories and I could sit for hours and just listen to General Bradley as he told them.

On one occasion, after my father retired from the Arsenal, the job of Under Secretary of Defense came open.

General Bradley encouraged Dad to go after the position. I thought it humorous when General Bradley told Dad he would recommend him to the President. He said, "The President still pays attention to an old man like me some time." Keep in mind, this was a five star general talking.

The one thing I will always remember about people like my dad, General Bradley, Bob Jones, Milton Cummings, and Bud Cramer is that they never forget their roots. They never but never try to impress people by being something other than an ordinary person that has been blessed by God.

Two days before my father died, we had a long talk. He said that you could no longer live by one of his favorite sayings, "He who fights by rigid rules will lose." He said that in today's business environment you need a lawyer with you every time you take a step. He said that when this country was started men could go out and do their jobs because they weren't handcuffed by so many rules and regulations.

This introduction would not be complete without saying that the fire, motivation, and, to a great degree, the strength of Dad came from my mother, Helen, who, according to Dad, was the best motivator he had ever seen.

If Dad were writing this introduction, he would want to thank all those army and civilian personnel that made his life so successful and rewarding.

CHAPTER I: The Beginning

John L. McDaniel

The beginning of my thought process regarding an active involvement in war work started in a room in the high school at LaFayette, Georgia, on October 16, 1940. As a high school teacher, I was involved in registering individuals for the peacetime draft. The old gentleman that I was assisting was nervous and constantly pulled at the straps of his overalls as he tried his best to remember dates, places, and events that were required to complete this form. In order to reduce the tension, I pulled the wastepaper basket over near the desk and cut myself a chew of Apple chewing tobacco. I then handed him the knife and the plug. He cut himself a large plug and instantly became more relaxed as he began to chew. The next question was, "How many children do you have at home?" to which he answered, "seven." I looked him straight in the eye for about a minute as we each chewed on our plugs of tobacco. His face then took on a more pleasant look as he searched for the wastepaper basket. He then said, "You know, a year away from home in the military wouldn't be too bad." This was my first encounter of a one-on-one, broken field running situation with respect to war work. There would be many more. Some I would handle well. Some I would handle poorly, and some I could not handle at all.

As I completed the form for the gentleman and shook his hand, it suddenly occurred to me that I too was about to become personally involved in this peacetime draft, but I did not have the family to leave. My thoughts concerning going to war did not, at that instant, coincide with that of the gentleman with seven children. At this point, I began formulating a plan concerning my personal situation in the face of the peacetime draft. I decided to get into defense work. From my station in life as a North Georgia high school science teacher, at a salary of $70 per month, it was obvious to me that I did not have an option to plan and then

try to make circumstances fit those plans. One tries in life to make plans fit the circumstances. I think the difference between success and failure in life depends upon one's ability, or lack of it, to do just that.

I began collecting data on which to make my decision regarding how to get in defense work from three sources: the Chattanooga Newspaper, the barber shop, and the Sunday morning coffee at the local drug store. My break came from a small advertisement in the Chattanooga Newspaper, "Wanted, Chemical Plant Operators, Huntsville Arsenal, Alabama." I filled out the necessary papers at the post office in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and was notified that I had received a civil service appointment at Huntsville Arsenal, Alabama, with a reporting date of February 26, 1942.

I paused on the top of Monte Sano Mountain on the afternoon of February 24, 1942, to look down on the beehive of activity that I was to enter. There appeared to be a great deal of activity to which there was very little order. I stopped at the Yarbrough Hotel to inquire about a room and found that there were no vacancies. The same situation was found at the Twickenham Hotel and the Russel Erskine Hotel. I was told that the workers could find a bed on Clinton Street. I found a bed for one dollar a night at a large building that was full of triple decker bunks. I was counseled to watch my wallet when I went to sleep since there were a lot a strangers in town. This was particularly important to me since I had $21 in my wallet. Having selected my bunk, I drove down Clinton Street, past the creamery, to the filling station and barber shop. Here Mr. Malone, the barber, gave me a quick update on Huntsville. The Central Cafe was a good place to eat, if you could afford the price, and the bootlegger was located at a motel on the Athens Highway. Having this essential information, I inquired as to how I could get to the Arsenal. At the mention of the Arsenal, Mr. Malone refused to talk since, according to him, it was a great secret as to the location of the Arsenal. I decided that I would follow the traffic; and if

the place was secret, someone would stop me — this happened.

On February 26, 1942, I became the 344th person hired at Huntsville Arsenal. My job was to work in a plant that manufactured mustard gas. To do this work, it would be necessary for me to wear clothes impregnated with a substance to prevent the mustard gas fumes from coming in contact with the skin. The long-johns underwear were thick with the substance, as were the socks, coveralls, shoes, and hat. I have scars today on my wrists where I was careless in joining the underwear sleeves and the gloves. A gas mask completed the uniform. Sensitive skin was not a particular advantage, since the showers used kerosene to remove any mustard gas or vapor contamination from the body.

Six mustard manufacturing plants were constructed at Huntsville Arsenal. Two chlorine plants, each generating 45 tons of liquid chlorine every 24 hours for use in making mustard gas, were located nearby. Each mustard manufacturing plant consisted of a sulfur monochloride building, a building which generated ethylene from pure grain alcohol, and a mustard reactor building. Each plant produced 40 tons of Levinstein H mustard every 24 hours. The output of the manufacturing plants was piped to the filling plants and was loaded into 105-MM M60 shells, M70 bombs, M47A2 bombs, and the Navy bomb, MK42.

I received my training in the manufacture and loading of mustard gas at Edgewood Arsenal in Maryland. This training consisted of working with individuals who had kept the plant in standby for many years. I was assigned to the midnight shift and received at least one shift training on each of the major operations. All work was done with a gas mask on; this caused a severe problem around daylight each morning, as the whiskers grew out along the edge of the mask. It became very easy to identify a mustard worker when seen on the street, from the distinct imprint of the gas mask on his face. I kept telling myself there were worse places to be than on a mustard reactor at Edgewood Arsenal — Hell came to mind.

The per diem during my stay at Edgewood Arsenal was $6 a day. After paying for room and board, there was very little money left to spend for personal items or at the bootleggers. It is an old story that one way of keeping people out of trouble is to deny them the means for getting into it. During this period, personnel who could not afford to buy a Freedom Bond could buy Freedom Stamps until the value of the stamps was sufficient to trade for a bond. I was fortunate to have accumulated nine dollars worth of Freedom Stamps prior to my trip. I traded in these stamps for money to use for food and other essentials.

So, after three months of training, I was qualified to manufacture mustard gas and to supervise others in the operation. Evidence of my qualifications was obvious; eye irritations that reduced my vision to a fraction of normal, throat irritations that produced dry cough that kept me awake at night, and large blisters or second degree burns on each wrist. I am at this point doing very little broken field running, since my goal is to get through the line in one piece. I had started my new career very cheerful and confident, but now in only a few months, I had become very sober and quiet. Things were not turning out as I had expected. Nearby things did not appear as they had from Chattanooga when I had first decided to enter war work.

Upon returning to Huntsville Arsenal, I was made the foreman of an operation using the filling line, that had previously been used for filling 105-MM shells, to fill M47A2 bombs. This setup was very poor. With fatigue and forgetfulness often present, it was not long until some operators tried to drop two charges into one bomb. This dumped several gallons of mustard gas on the floor and thoroughly contaminated the conveyor rolls and adjacent equipment. Since the equipment and concrete floors were very difficult to decontaminate, the situation went from bad to worse despite all the safety devices we installed on the equipment. Consequently, the entire operation became contaminated to the point that it was always "hot." Many employees suffered from severe cases of eye and throat

irritations. Due to the three-shift, seven-days-a-week operation, many of the employees worked themselves so strenuously that a number had to be hospitalized for general debility and eye and respiratory irritations. This operation resulted in the beginning of my contacts with Brigadier General Rollo C. Ditto, the commander of Huntsville Arsenal. I recall him as being easy-going and gregarious with an uncomplicated, pragmatic management style. He asked me if there was anything right about what I was doing. Before I could answer him, he told me to eliminate all the things that were right about the operation and work on what I had left. He asked me if I had any education and I told him I had a college degree. He peered at me closely through the fogged glasses of his gas mask, turned, and walked briskly away. I decided that his actions gave me the authority to close my line for cleanup — this I did.

Following the experiences in the mustard loading and filling plants, it was discovered that the bottom parts of both my lungs were badly scarred. I was given a job in charge of the refrigeration for all the chemical operations on the Arsenal. The new job would keep me out in the open more; however, at the same time, it would subject me to different types of chemical poisons.

Lewisite was produced in four plants located on the Arsenal. Lewisite was an agent for the destruction of both internal and external tissues. A chief ingredient for use in the manufacture of Lewisite was arsenic trichloride. This plant produced around 30 tons a day, but could not meet the demands of the Lewisite plant.

Phosgene was manufactured in one plant which produced better than 40 tons a day. This gas had the very pleasant odor of freshly cut hay. In addition to the gas manufacturing plant, white phosphorus was loaded into M15 hand grenades, and M46, M47A1 and M47A3 100-pound bombs; white smoke was loaded into M4A2 pots for screening combat operations and M20 rifle grenades; tear gas was loaded into M6CN-DM grenades; and, four

different types of incendiary oil munitions were produced during the same period at Huntsville Arsenal. One of the most interesting operations was the production of colored smoke grenades. The dye used in the grenades colored the workers' clothing and stained the skin. It was not uncommon to see people of rainbow hues walking around Huntsville. Due to the health hazard associated with working in colored smoke, the workers were paid one grade higher. Fires were numerous, as many as 11 in two hours being recorded when yellow grenades were being made.

During these early days, I had learned some very valuable lessons in broken field running from a culture made up of hard-working, hard-drinking, and hard-living people. The Huntsville Arsenal reached its peak of 3,707 employees in May 1944, with 90% civilians and 10% military. Of the work force, 9% were unskilled, 48% semi-skilled, 18% skilled, and 25% administrative or graded employees. A representative sample recorded in September 1944 showed 26% white female, 11% colored female, 52% white male, and 11% colored male. For a long time, the Arsenal maintained a working ratio of white and colored employees almost equal to the population ratio.

Of all the problems which I faced as a supervisor, those pertaining to personnel were the most interesting and the most severe. These problems related to the shortage of skills, the lack of trained managers, the generally poor physical capabilities of the workers available, the converting of agricultural personnel into industrial operators and supervisors, frequent changes of personnel, and transportation difficulties that resulted in absenteeism.

My first experience in recruiting was in hiring a secretary for my operation. A very healthy looking lady from Union Grove showed up about 9:00 a.m. for the interview. I asked her why she was late and she told me that when she went out to milk the cows one of them was delivering a calf and she had to help the cow along. Her past experience consisted of picking cotton, working at a

saw mill, and doing general housework for her parents. I inquired of her about her qualifications to be a secretary, and she told me that she learned how to type in high school and had kept books for a used car dealer in Arab. Arab is a small town around thirty miles south of Huntsville. These qualifications seemed more than adequate for my requirements, so I hired her. The first person I recruited turned out to be one of the best people I ever hired, and she remained with me until I left for the Navy. From the beginning, she showed a strong determination and preserverance in carrying through our simple ideas toward the objectives we had in mind. I remember today a quotation from Mark Twain that she quoted during a particular tough time one day, "Always do right, this will gratify some people and astonish the rest." Her creative writing ability was called to task one night when an operator from the mustard plant showed up in the office. He was obviously in some slight pain and periodically pulled at his sex organs. He told me that he had failed to secure his pant legs properly around his ankles, and the mustard fumes had caused his sex organs to turn red. This was complicated by the fact that he had been married only one week. I asked my secretary to write a letter for me to sign to his new bride explaining the situation:

Dear Mrs. Jones:

Do not expect sexual intercourse for a few days. Your husband got mustard gas on the private parts of his body.

The lack of trained supervisors exhibited itself in the lack of people who understood the basic techniques of management, but it was never a problem in finding people who had the strength of character to become supervisors. We say a man has character if he sticks to his convictions, whether they derive from his own opinions, or someone else's; whether they represent principles, attitudes, sudden insights or any other mental force. Such firmness cannot show itself, of course, if a man keeps changing his mind.

The workers in this particular culture demanded consistency and fairness. They had no criteria of fair treatment other than the fact that everyone should be treated the same. Due to the lack of formal training on the part of the supervisors, their actions could never be based on anything firmer than instinct, a sensing of the truth. Most of the supervisors worked under the general principle of — "If it is not right, do not do it. If it is not true, do not say it."

The handling of intoxicated personnel, while they were performing hazardous operations, was a particularly challenging part of the job of the supervisor. Ethylene, for use in making mustard gas, was made from pure grain alcohol and each of the six plants had approximately 20,000 gallons in underground tanks adjacent to the building. Lewisite used pure grain alcohol as a coolant for the reactors and each of the six plants had approximately 100,000 gallons in above ground tanks. The alcohol was delivered to the Arsenal in trainloads of tank cars. Since Huntsville and Madison County were "dry," it did not take the workers long to find out that the Arsenal had a large supply of 200 proof moonshine. A number of ingenious methods were devised by the workers for drawing the alcohol from the tanks; and before long, each worker had a coke bottle of alcohol in his locker. By this time I had some supervisors working for me and I gave it the usual book solution. I instructed my supervisors to have the workers remove the alcohol from their lockers, and stop drinking on the job. The problem did not go away when I found that the coke bottles of alcohol had been moved from the lockers of the workers to the lockers of the supervisors. This was my first exposure to the meaning of an expression from about 100 A.D., "Sed quis custodiet ipses custodes?" (But who shall watch the watchmen?)

A series of lectures, photographers taking pictures of workers drawing alcohol from the tanks adjacent to the buildings, and an increase in disciplinary actions for those drinking on the job soon proved the maxim that trouble never travels alone. The high sheriff of Madison County

came to the Arsenal to report that large quantities of moonshine whiskey was being made on the Arsenal and was being sold in town. An inspection revealed that a variety of novel ideas were being used in removing the pure grain alcohol from the Arsenal in thermos bottles, milk bottles, and in kegs. The technique easiest to locate was the cases in which the workers drained the water from their car radiators, then filled the radiators with alcohol. The military police would allow the traffic to move very slowly out the main gate on Rideout Road. Other military police would simply walk along beside the cars and sniff out those with boiling radiators. The problem continued to grow because after entering the Navy, I was visited by an FBI agent at Great Lakes, Illinois. He was investigating the loss of a tank from the Arsenal that contained 10,000 gallons of alcohol.

The major administrative problems that plagued the Arsenal throughout its operation were the organizational structure and the lack of leadership on the part of the military. These two problems prevented broken field running on the part of the civilian supervisors, since most of the time was spent in beating your head against an inflexible line of military. The organization at Huntsville Arsenal differed basically from that of the other three chemical warfare arsenals (Edgewood, Pine Bluff, and Rocky Mountain), which were organized on the basis of separating operations according to mission, each mission being self-supporting with service elements so located that they could support the most missions.

The military officials at the Arsenal during this time believed that the ultimate in organization could not be accomplished at Huntsville Arsenal because qualified civilians capable of directing and assuming responsibility for the accomplishment of major objectives were not available. In view of the apparent scarcity of managerial personnel, the Commanding Officer felt that a very close personal control by the Commander was necessary for satisfactory administration. The policy was established to treat many situations individually, instead of formulating overall policies and requiring that these policies be administered at lower echelons. I learned very little about management during this period, since the retention of decisions made at higher echelons, even on minor matters, prevented me from getting the necessary experience that would eventually have enabled me to accept the responsibility that should have been delegated to me. The attitude of the military made the job of supervisor extremely difficult since the hands-on attitude of the military paralyzed the initiative of the workers. An expression often heard from the workers was, "I have to wait for the Captain to tell me how to screw it up." The basic lesson I learned from butting my head against this line was the importance of giving your subordinates room to operate, to make honest mistakes, and to learn through experience. I learned the importance of eliminating "nit-picking." I learned that the final authority

on what is done rests with the individual who actually does the work.

At about the turn of the century, Sir Josiah Stamp of the British Inland Revenue Department said, "The government is very keen on amassing statistics, they collect them, add them, raise them to the nth power, take the cube root, and prepare wonderful charts. But you must never forget that every one of these figures comes in the first instance from the village watchman, who puts down what he damn pleases."

I have no doubt but that the senior military personnel at Huntsville Arsenal were men of character; however, it appeared that after a while this strength of character degenerated into obstinacy. This obstinacy was not an intellectual defect, rather it seemed to come from reluctance to admit that they were wrong. The obstinacy appeared to be a fault of temperament. Some of the officers would bring very keen brains to the formidable problems, and seemed to possess the courage to accept serious responsibilities; but when faced with a difficult situation, they seemed to find themselves unable to reach a timely decision. A common expression heard by the senior civilians during this period was, "We are always raped, but never loved."

A wide variety of techniques was tried in an effort to improve the morale of the mismanaged personnel. An innovation of the post exchange was the cultivation of a truck garden — products from which were used in the cafeteria. Another venture was a pig raising project. The post exchange owned ninety hogs, fed mostly by swill from kitchens. The pigs were to provide pork for the cafeterias. A farmer was employed to care for the hogs and tend to the "victory garden." Operative during 1943 and the spring of 1944, the farm was discontinued in May 1944 as being too costly. The loss on it amounted to $576.13.

Upon my return from the Navy to Huntsville Arsenal, I sought out the personnel office and found that it

was located in the basement of Building 111, the headquarters of the Huntsville Arsenal. I was told that the Arsenal was being closed down and that I was no longer needed. However, after some discussion, I was given a job as a supervisor in a demilitarization operation. The job here was to remove the poison gases and the high explosives from the shells and bombs, and recover whatever materials, such as magnesium, that was available. This operation lasted until March 17, 1949, when the Arsenal was put up for sale. At this point, I transferred to Redstone Arsenal, an ordnance installation located adjacent to Huntsville Arsenal. Redstone Arsenal had the responsibility to fill the burster tubes of the chemically filled shells and bombs from Huntsville Arsenal with explosive materials such as TNT. During 1948, the Office Chief of Ordnance decided to designate an arsenal to research and development in the field of rocketry. On June 1, 1949, the Ordnance Department reactivated Redstone Arsenal to carry out this mission. The Redstone Arsenal also took over the real estate of the deactivated Huntsville Arsenal, giving the new arsenal a combined area of 40,000 acres. During 1949, the government contracted with the Rohm and Hass Company and the Thiokol Chemical Corporation to do research on rocket propellants. Both companies moved on the Arsenal.

With the arrival of a complement of officers and 120 former German Scientists from Fort Bliss, Texas, in April 1950, to join the approximately 1,200 personnel already on board, Redstone Arsenal entered the missile era.

Pictured above is Redstone Park as it was in 1943. On the right the Mercury-Redstone Launch as the first manned sub-orbital spaceflight lifts off in May of 1961. Aboard was Commander Alan B. Shepard. At bottom are the remains of one of the railway cars used to transport Redstone Arsenal workers to and from Redstone Park.

MERCURY-REDSTONE LAUNCH

Excerpts from — Historic Huntsville: A City of New Beginnings

(Windsor Publications, Inc., 1984)

Elise Hopkins Stephens

Red fire trucks clanged their bells with abandon as they twisted through the neighborhood streets flooding the city with Huntsville *Times* extras. The headlines blared out the tidings: "Huntsville Gets Chemical War Plant: Cost Over $40,000,000." The date was Thursday, July 3, 1941. By Monday, July 7, over 500 men had applied for site preparation and construction jobs.

The next six months of 1941 were momentous. The chemical warfare plant quickly augmented by an ammunitions arsenal awaited men, muscle, and machines. There were jobs aplenty.

The 40,000 acres that changed the course of Huntsville's history at the time the government announced its plans in 1941 were owned by a cross-section of the community. Some of the larger spreads were rented; other plots were worked on shares. But, there were many smaller cuts of land that had been in families for years, belonged to church congregations, or had been used for schoolhouses and playgrounds.

Former owners who were interviewed later remembered the hasty transactions attending government land purchases. Within six months, families were to harvest their fall crop and find a new place to live. Hugh B. Gillespie, Jr., in charge of land procurement, faced multiple problems. Many tracts had no clear title. Some families could not be found to negotiate with at all. Many others had nowhere to move and little means for removal. The Alabama Relocation Corporation was organized to assist them.

To help ease the housing shortage, the government brought in trailers and established trailer parks. Some arsenal employees had worked on construction jobs in other parts of the country and had grown adept at building instant communities in their trailer parks. Two of the parks, one on Holmes and another in the west Merrimack area, filled rapidly. A trailer was even set aside for a library. The "trailer wives," as they called themselves, were among the first to volunteer for Red Cross work and then, when war was declared, to urge that women go to work to free the men for fighting. One trailer wife turned her home over for use as a day-care center for children.

Once war was declared by Congress, working men and women at the arsenal became soldiers in overalls, some even offering the government one workday free a week. Textile workers and management also came together in order to fulfill wartime orders. Unionization took a back seat to defense of the nation. Construction at the arsenal was a top national priority, but civilian housing construction was also ticketed by the federal government for priority in Madison and Limestone counties for houses costing $6,000 or less.

The war years were busy, prosperous one for the area. By 1942, 15,000 people were gainfully employed in the country. By May 1944 manufacturing employment in Huntsville alone had risen to 17,000 and total jobs in the city had reached 30,000. A 1943 count of the mill villages and unincorporated areas put that population at 40,354. In 1945 Huntsville's three mills employed a total of 2,775 with 725 at Dallas, 850 at Merrimack, and 1,200 at Lincoln.

The main business of the area was the arsenal complex. Land and construction costs at Huntsville Arsenal and the Gulf Chemical Warfare Depot built on the Tennessee River totaled $70,000,000. The Redstone Arsenal's construction costs amounted to $11,500,000. At their peaks, the Huntsville Arsenal employed 6,707 civilians and the Redstone Arsenal 4,500.

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Telephone ________________________

Yes ___ I am interested in volunteering for a Historic Huntsville Project. Please call me.

The HISTORIC HUNTSVILLE FOUNDATION was established in 1974 to encourage the preservation of historically or architecturally significant sites and structures throughout Huntsville and Madison County and to increase public awareness of their value to the community. The FOUNDATION is the only organization in Huntsville concerned exclusively with architectural preservation and history. Other similar organizations within Huntsville are concerned either with general history or only with those buildings located within preservation districts.

Summarized, HISTORIC HUNTSVILLE FOUNDATION has two main objectives: preservation of historically or architecturally significant sites and structures throughout Huntsville and Madison County; and, educating the public on and increasing their awareness of this historical heritage.

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