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VOL. 2 ISSUE 2

1991

# Old Huntsville

A PUBLICATION FOR HISTORIC HUNTSVILLE

## The Black Widow

### Six Dead Husbands ... Murder Or Coincidence?

Tall, dark-haired and beautiful. She had a penchant for attracting husbands . . . and then burying them. This is how one local wag described the mysterious Elizabeth Flannigan, one of the most notorious ladies to ever live in Madison County, Alabama.



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### The Fascinating True Story





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The mysterious happenings that took place in a home near Hazel Green may have been accidental, or may have been violently purposeful. The only sign left of Elizabeth's six husbands was an old hat rack upon which hung six hats - one for each. For some curious reason known only to her, she kept the hat rack in the foyer of her home, in plain view, perhaps as a morbid reminder, or maybe as a warning to the next unfortunate lover.

The ante-bellum home, recently burned to the ground, was built on the site of an Indian mound about a mile east of Hazel Green. The original log cabin was erected in 1817 in the heart of a 500-acre plantation by Alexander Jeffries, an early Madison County settler. He was an older man, who met and immediately became infatuated with the young widow.

They married in 1837, and unfortunately for him, Mr. Jeffries died the same year. By this time Elizabeth had had experience in burying husbands. As a young girl she had met and married twice in short

succession. Her first husband was Mr. Gibbons. They were married for only a couple of months when he died suddenly, and mysteriously. Shortly afterwards, she set her sights on Mr. Flannigan, whom she also married. Mr. Flannigan lasted only three months before he, too, died of unexplained circumstances. He was in his grave before the neighbors were even informed of the "tragedy".

By this time the young widow was well on her way to becoming a wealthy landowner in Madison County. Not wishing to marry beneath her new-found status in life, she decided to try her hand at politics. Her next husband was Robert A. High, from Limestone County, who was a State Legislator for the state of Alabama. He probably spent much time away from home, as it was almost two years before he, too, expired suddenly and mysteriously at their home.

Having tried politics and plantation life, Elizabeth decided to next marry a merchant. Absalom Brown was a wealthy merchant

from New Market. After spending most of his fortune on his new wife, he died as well. This came as a shock to everyone, as Mr. Brown was a very healthy and virile man. The unknown malady that he was stricken with caused his body to swell so much that it was necessary to bury him immediately after his death. None of the neighbors ever saw the body.

Not believing in long spells of mourning, Miss Elizabeth Flannigan Gibbons Jeffries High Brown roused herself out of her depression long enough to marry Willis Routt, her sixth husband. He died amazingly just like the others in a short time.

At about this same time Elizabeth, or Mrs. Routt, became involved in a controversy with a neighbor, Abner Tate, over loose livestock and other matters. Tate was completely blind to her beauty, which infuriated her, and had been observing the home and its occupants for many years. He openly charged her with murder. He backed up his suspicions with the hat rack in the parlor that was in open sight, on which hung 6 old hats - the blatant proof of Tate's accusations.

Maybe Abner Tate should have been forewarned of crossing the notorious widow, for shortly afterwards he was wounded by a shotgun blast. Though proof was lacking, gossip had it that Mrs. Routt had hired one of Tate's slaves to do him in. The slave, not having the courage to do the dirty deed himself, in turn hired another man, who allegedly pulled the trigger. Mr. Tate, shortly afterwards, sold all of his slaves.

By this time Tate was furious with his neighbor and determined to see justice done. When he went to the authorities he was informed that "nothing could be done unless you can find some evidence." Maybe all of her husbands did die natural deaths. Maybe the slave DID shoot you by accident. Maybe it's just all coincidence. There's nothing we can do."

Beside himself with rage, Tate was determined that his neighbor would not get away with her dastardly deeds. He began writing a book in which he described the mysterious happenings at the

ante-bellum home. He wrote about how the succession of husbands made her prosperous and wealthy. How she would treat them all with disdain, once she had captured them. He noted how the intervals between weddings and deaths became shorter and shorter, as she acquired "more experience and practice."

When the book was published, it created a scandalous sensation in Madison County. Half of the county believed she was guilty, while the other half swore to her innocence. Regardless of opinion, the book was the major topic of discussion any place that people gathered.

Needless to say, the merry widow was not a pleasant lady to be around when she heard news of the book. She immediately drove her buggy into Huntsville where she consulted an attorney and brought charges against Abner Tate for defamation of character.

When the case finally came to trial late that fall, the courtroom was packed. The courtroom became a battleground, with plaintiff and defendant hurling insult after insult at each other. Accusations followed from each of the attorneys, while the judge rapped repeatedly for order.

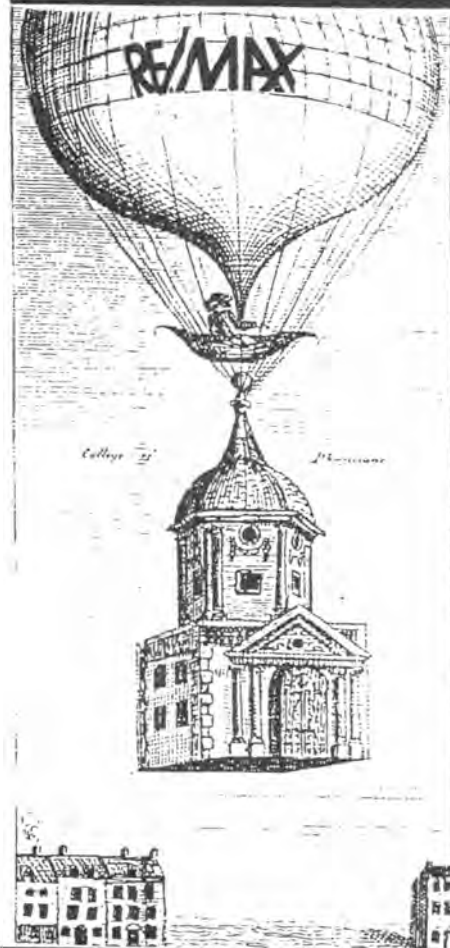
The crowd of onlookers became so large that it overflowed onto the courthouse grounds. It was said a tavern in town was taking bets as to how the trial would end.

The judge, after listening to as much as he could stand, continued the case, hoping both parties would calm down enough to be rational.

After a short while Mrs. Routt dropped the charges. Even today, the debate goes on in Madison County. Why did she drop the charges? Was it because she was tired of constantly being the topic of gossip, or was she worried about some new information that Tate's attorney had recently uncovered?

Shortly afterwards Mrs. Routt and her son moved to Mississippi. She never again returned to Madison County. No one knows why she moved, but the day of her departure, witnesses swear that they saw her in a carpenter's shop, getting a seventh peg added to her hatrack.

# Above The Crowd



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# Sunday Instructions

*Mrs. Helen Miller lives in Huntsville with her husband Tom since 1975. Prior to that they lived in Birmingham for many years*

*Several years ago her grandchildren wanted her to recount her experiences growing up and the book "To Live and Die in Dixie" is the result.*

*"Old Huntsville" will use excerpts from the book in this and upcoming issues. The first one follows:*

If you have never washed your face down in watermelon juice while eating from a half moon slice, chances are you haven't really enjoyed it. It's like eating fried chicken that you have, on occasion, had to cut with a knife and fork.

Having the preacher over for Sunday dinner was something I didn't exactly look forward to. In the first place, he always took too much time saying grace.

He thanked the Almighty for everything He had provided for us and glorified everyone in the Good book in alphabetical order from Abraham to Zacharias. Then he asked Him to give his divine blessings upon another round of characters from the twentieth century.

The last time he came I had mortified Mama by making the slang remark, "Well, I'll swanee", so this time I had specific instructions not to interrupt anyone, to keep quiet unless I was spoken to, and if I saw a string on the string bean I was not to reach over and pull it off with my fingers. I was warned not to make a pig of myself and ask for a third helping of anything - not even a pickle and did I ever love pickles.

Mama told me that after dinner I was to restrain myself from doing the cartwheel, keep my

dress pulled down and for goodness sakes when she served the watermelon later on in the afternoon I was not to humiliate her and bury my face in it! After studying the situation I decided that eating in the dining room wasn't worth the price I had to pay. Impudently I made it clear to all, that the next time the preacher came for Sunday dinner I was going to stay in the kitchen with Lizzy the cook.

*If you work for the classes, you eat with the masses. If you work for the masses, you eat with the classes*  
*Hall Bryant, H.C. Blake Co.*

*There's a difference between good sound reasons and reasons that sound good.*



# Dullsville

Billy Joe Cooley, senior editor of the Huntsville News, moved here in 1971. He had worked as a reporter for major newspapers covering presidents, crooked politicians, scandalous murder cases and all the other things one would expect in a big city. Needless to say, life was a lot different in Huntsville.

About six months after moving here Billy Joe received a call from an old colleague who worked on the editorial desk for Webster's Dictionary in New York City. After exchanging the appropriate pleasantries the friend asked how the local news was going.

"Dullsville!" replied Billy.

"The most exciting news we had last week was the school board meeting."

His friend, a stickler for proper verbiage, replied, "There ain't no such word as dullsville."

"There is if you try to cover crime news in Huntsville, Alabama," came the reply.

In about eight months a package came in the mail from his friend at the publishing company. It contained a new edition of "Webster's Ninth Collegiate Dictionary," with a note attached instructing him to look on page 388 for "dullsville":

"Dullsville, dull + sville (as in Huntsville) slang: something or some place that is dull or boring; also: boredom."

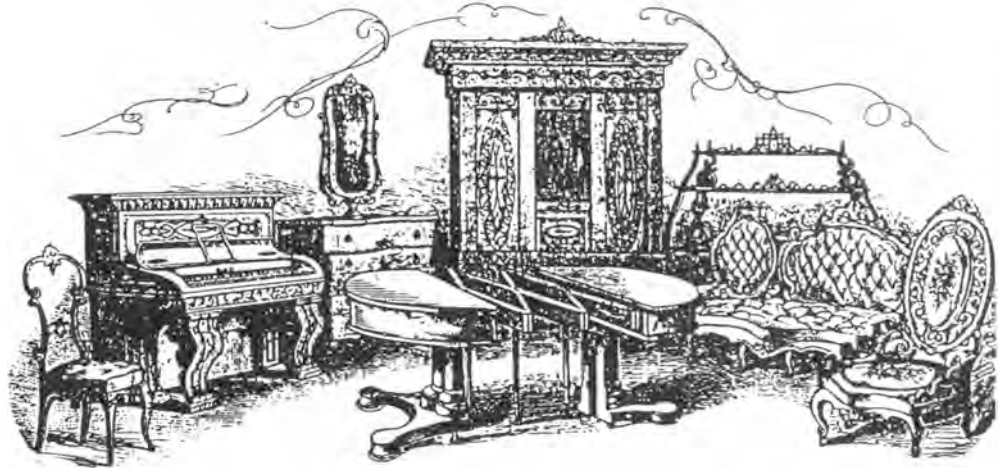
Editor's Note: Don't believe this one? Get a copy of Webster's Ninth Collegiate Dictionary, and look it up yourself.



# MARKS

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## Choices

There are a lot of things that happen to us that we have no control over. We didn't choose to lose loved ones. We didn't choose for our spouses to die or to leave us. We don't choose to have a major illness or other type of tragedy in our lives. A lot of what happens to us we have no control over. Our choices lie in how we act and feel in trying situations. Life is 10% what we make it and 90% how we take it.

We have all known people who were always on top of things and who seemed to lead a charmed existence no matter what life dealt them. And we all know life can be tough. It keeps on going and it's up to us to get up, dust ourselves off and keep up with it. And none of us are exempt from this. It's just that some people seem to be able to handle it so much better than others. As the old saying goes, life gives them lemons, and they make lemonade.

After I was diagnosed with cancer last year, I began to read everything I could get my hands on concerning cancer and other chronic diseases and listening to tapes on the subject. I talked with anybody who had cancer, was in remission, or had been cured. I began to realize how many exceptional people are out there, many more than just the occasional one I had come in contact with. This may be because in a group of people who have come face to face with their mortality, it's easier to get rid of the garbage and get down to living.

These people had learned to use their tragedy as a gift. We are all used to the idea of tragedy as punishment or a failure, but not a gift. Instead of judging the events in their lives as good and bad, right or wrong, they recognized that of itself nothing is good or bad and that everything has the poten-

Next Page



tial to help us get back on the universe's schedule.

This does not mean they liked what happened; rather that they remained open even to the uses of adversity. A tragedy may serve as a redirection or a reset button. There are two important words to remember. They are "We'll see." When you learn to live your life with a "we'll see" attitude you'll understand how it is that a tragedy can be considered a gift. You will know that's why people described their chronic illnesses as a new beginning, a challenge, a wake-up call, a beauty mark.

Does anyone have the right to tell you that your own tragedy is a gift? No. The gift is only yours if you choose to create it. Listen to the people who have lived the experience and realize you are the source of your own emotional healing.

The truth is we are all lovable and exceptional. Discovering the ways in which you are exceptional is your business on this earth. This is true whether you ever see tragedy in your life or not. It's just that the search takes on a special urgency when you realize you are mortal.

Submitted by Mary Barksdale,  
Athens, Alabama

*There are two motive for reading a book; one, that you can enjoy it; the other, that you can boast about it.*

*Bertrand Russell*

*'I would not want to be a member of any club that would have'*

*Walter Dilworth,  
Dilworth Lumber*

*In today's business climate, I've learned that a handshake means a lot, but I sleep better with a signed contract*

*David Emory, WKGL  
Station Manager*

# Blood Kin



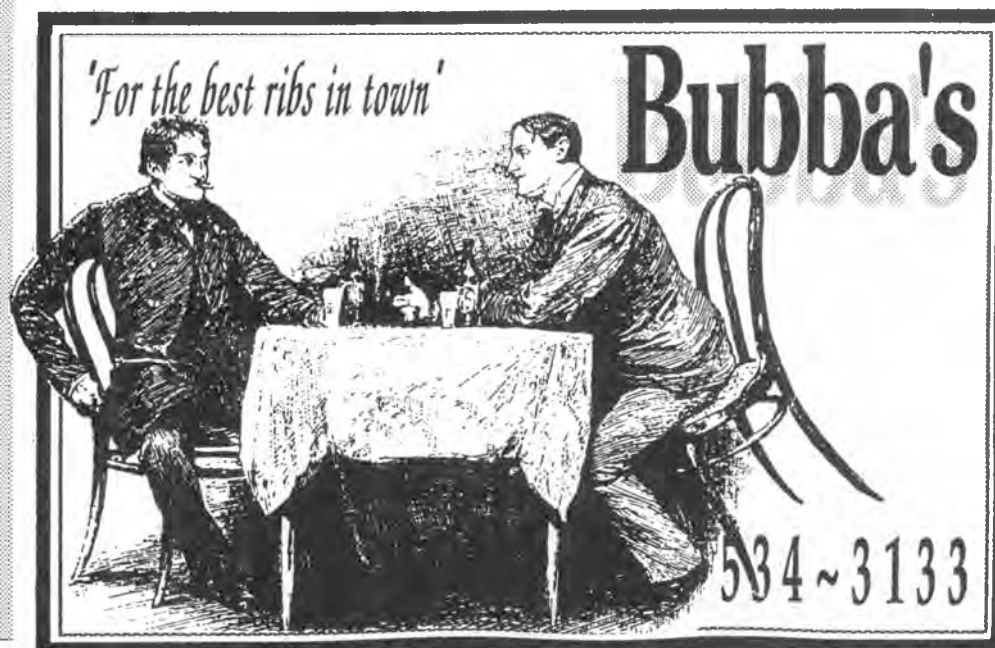
The only record of Thomas Frazier is the 1850 census. He is listed as living with his wife, Mary, and their three children. No one knows where he came from or who his parents were. There are no records of how he earned his living, when he died or even where he is buried.

Thomas Frazier left no mark on history by which he is remembered. He did not build a fine mansion for tourists to gawk at.

He was just a plain, common, ordinary man.

The only legacy he left behind were his children and their future generations. Thomas Frazier has over sixty-two thousand descendants, most of whom still live in Jackson and Madison Counties.

Some of the families with blood ties to Thomas Frazier are the Smiths, Kirkpatrick, Jones, Giles, Wilbourns, Gentles, Bradshaws, and the Carneys.





## Folk Remedy A Miracle Cure?

There is a little known folk remedy that some folks swear by. It makes for healthier babies, cools burns, speeds up sleeping at night, relieves lameness, and shrinks varicose veins. According to Dr. D. C. Jarvis, it is simply a mixture of apple cider vinegar, honey and water.

By mixing two teaspoons of honey with two teaspoons of apple cider vinegar and a glass of water, one will feel better almost immediately. It adds potassium to the system, and the blood becomes more acidic rather than alkaline. It has other benefits as well.

It has been proven that two teaspoons of honey, two teaspoons of apple cider vinegar mixed with cold water and taken twice per day, will have the following effect on the pregnant woman and her child, when the baby is born. The mixture will cause a marked decrease in morning sickness.

It adds potassium to the baby's bloodstream. The baby will have so much hair that it will appear to need a haircut the day it's born. Fingernails will be strong, in need of cutting. The infant will have a strong muscle system, and possibly be able to lift it's head off the pillow in a week.

The child will be mentally bright. And the mother will have plenty of milk, if she wishes to breastfeed the baby.

For those who aren't expecting but just experiencing some health problems, the following may be tried:

A cup of honey mixed with three teaspoons of apple cider vinegar taken before bedtime will help to enable sleep. Keep the mixture by your bed and take two teaspoonfuls of the mixture upon retiring.

For sinus inflammation try chewing honeycomb for fifteen minutes, every hour for 4-6 hours. In a day's time the symptoms should be clearing up.

To maintain, chew honeycomb once per day for a week following. Chewing honeycomb will open up a stuffy nose immediately.

For high blood pressure, he recommends: Decrease substantially the amount of red meat eaten. Eliminate salt from the diet. Increase the amount of juice taken daily to 4 glasses a day - in the form of apples, grapes or cranberries. Take a tablespoon of honey at meals twice per day.

For headaches, put equal parts of apple cider vinegar and water in a pan. As it begins to boil, lean over the fumes and breathe in 75 breaths.

The headache should stop or decrease substantially. This is especially good for migraine attacks. A tablespoon of honey ingested prior to the breathing of the mixture is also good.

If there is a problem with varicose veins, simply apply the apple cider vinegar full-strength to the veins night and morning. At the end of the month there should be a marked difference. In addition to the application, take two teaspoonfuls of the vinegar mixed in a glass of water twice daily. The pain of burns can be relieved by applying the apple cider vinegar full strength.

From 1958 publication, "Folk Medicine" by Dr. D. C. Jarvis

*(Editor's Note: While there is a lot of worth to folk remedies, the editors of "Old Huntsville" urge you to see a medical doctor when you have symptoms of health problems.)*

THE MAN WITH

33

WIVES

Fifteen of the 33 women who were married to James W. Brown since 1883, confronted him today in recorder's court.

The list included Helen Brownlee, and Annie Winters of Mobile, who with Mary Benjamin and Jennie Robertson of this city, were the only ones called to give evidence.

Five clergymen of this city certified that they had married Brown to as many different women. The case was so clear that the prosecutors left it to the jury with no argument.

During the trial Jennie Robertson's indignation could not be repressed, and she denounced Brown as a perverted wretch. The jury agreed with her evidently, for they took but four minutes to find him guilty.

Alabama newspaper 1892



## Old News Stories

A view of our Big Spring Branch, from the corner of the Square and Madison Street, as it widens its course to join the Tennessee, is a grand one. The whole scene is enchanting.

Huntsville Publication, 1891





HOUSEHOLD TIPS BY

**EARLENE**

*Remember... Cleanliness is next to Godliness.*

Leather upholstery may be cleaned by using one part vinegar to two parts boiled linseed oil, polishing with a dry cloth after cleaning.

When arranging furniture, remember to place the piano where it will be out of the drafts. Such temperature changes are injurious to the tone as well as the woodwork.

When cooking pinto beans, don't soak the beans overnight. Rather, the morning you are planning to cook them, put your hamhocks in cold water in the pot you will use to cook the beans. Let them soak a few hours, then add the dry beans and a little vinegar. Season as you normally would, cook until done. You will find that the juice is much tastier than if you had soaked the beans.

A curtain rod put near the bottom of the closet door will make a simple shoe rack that will serve the purpose.

When using candles with good linen, chill them several hours in the refrigerator before using and they will not drip so quickly.

Mix borax and pulverized sugar and scatter along the trail of cockroaches or in cupboards. You will eradicate them and not risk the lives of pets or children.



# Mass Transit

Huntsville had a mass transit system when I grew up in the thirties and forties. It was still going strong when my family moved out into the county in 1946.

Actually, the part of Lincoln Village I grew up in was still in the county in 1946. The city limits were about halfway between Oakwood Avenue and 5-Points, as I remember. We still were not more than a mile from downtown.

The transit system was probably the best public service this city has ever had. It was also affordable, even in those days. A nickel or dime is all I ever remember paying for a ride downtown. If a kid had a quarter, he could go to a movie, at least at the Elk Theatre, have a Coke, a bag of popcorn and ride the bus downtown. If a candy bar or ice cream cone was more important, he could walk. I don't remember riding the bus back home that often. It could be that I seldom saw a coin larger than a quarter. Even then, a quarter would buy only so much.

The route my bus took ran north on Meridian Street to Oakwood Avenue. Right on Oakwood

Avenue to Andrew Jackson Way (Lee Highway at the time). Then right on Andrew Jackson to downtown. The buses ran often enough that to miss one meant only a short wait until the next one. If you were in a big hurry, you could probably walk fast and beat it.

Somewhere along the way something went wrong. When the masses got scattered out around downtown as far as the eye can see, we got rid of the mass transit system. But then, we also got rid of many good reasons to go downtown. I suppose whoever was in charge of the system decided that if a bus doesn't go downtown it may as well go nowhere. That was especially true of Saturdays.

Saturday downtown was similar to First Monday in Scottsboro. It was especially important to people out in the county. Farmers usually worked six days a week but when they went to town, it was usually on a Saturday. The Square didn't play a role in my life until we moved out into the county. My folks would allow us to go off on our own, but when time came to leave, we met at the courthouse. Everything took place around the Square. You could buy, sell or trade anything. When trading something, though, the goal was not a fair or even trade, but one of the traders had to make a better deal than the other. You could ask each trader who got the best deal and each would say he did. Even things that couldn't be

*It's getting harder and harder to support the government in the style to which it has gotten accustomed*

*Bill Kling  
City Councilman*



displayed publicly were sold. I remember one man who always had a bag of something. He always hung out around the men's bathroom, and never approached kids - only men. I never did see what that guy was selling.

My favorite downtown activity took place around the Big Spring. I always admired the fish. I fished a lot after we moved out into the county, but never caught nor did I ever see anyone else catch fish as big as those in the Big Spring. The Big Spring really was the "Big Spring" back then. Big enough that workers had to go out in a rowboat to clear out milfoil and seaweed.

The area from the Spring up to the street on the East side of the Square was a grassy slope where one could enjoy a picnic or just look at the natural scenery. That place was as beautiful as any in the country. Many people enjoyed it. Now, however, most people just travel through, and then, only if it's a short cut from where they want to be and they can't find a parking space down below.

We don't need to stop progress but as beautiful as downtown Huntsville is now, the area around the Big Spring doesn't compare to the beauty that the Creator first gave it. I hate that part of progress.

I tried to come up with several reasons, other than the historical value, why one would visit downtown Huntsville these days. I came up with these:

- 1) To buy a license;
- 2) to pay taxes;
- 3) To pay a fine;
- 4) to go to court to keep from paying a fine; and
- 5) To meet your neighbor, who probably sued you, and you have no choice.

There is one other good reason to go downtown and that is to try to figure out what kind of animal is embedded in the First Alabama Bank retaining wall. To find it, stand in front of the bank facing the bank and go down to the bottom of the stairs on your right. Now go to the corner of the retaining wall on your left and look at the fourth, fifth and sixth blocks from the bottom. I'm no expert, but I think you will see the fossilized remain of the tail of some prehistoric lizard.

Submitted by Jim Harris

## Reflection

By John La Montagne

*I saw your reflection*

*On the wall of the train*

*But when the sun was blocked*

*You were no longer there*

*Then suddenly you reappeared*

*As clear as the wall*

*on which I saw you*

*But I only saw your reflection*

## The Axel Grease Feast

A gentleman who trades extensively in the market while in town the other day indulged too freely in the ardent and became as full as a tick.

Before he began his journey to his home he stopped by the store and picked up two cans of deviled ham, a box of crackers and two cans of axel grease. Before going a great distance he became terribly hungry and got out his groceries and made a square meal.

The next morning he went out to his car to get the axel grease out of the bag, with the intent of greasing his auto. To his amazement he found nothing but the two cans of deviled ham which he thought he had devoured. With horror he found out that he had eaten up his axel grease with the crackers.

From Birmingham paper 1899

## Thank You!

We would like to thank our many readers for their support. You are responsible for whatever success that we have enjoyed over the last nine months.

We hope we will continue to bring you Huntsville's history in the same manner as we have in the past.

*Where you go is where you are.*

*Thomas Rowse*

*Component Sales Engineer*

# To Your Health



## Doctor Sez:

Today more people are concerned about keeping in good health through proper dieting than ever before. One particular aspect which gets a lot of attention is cholesterol, and the effect it has on one's own personal health. A report issued by the U.S.

Surgeon General last year identified excessive fat consumption as the nation's primary dietary priority.

Cholesterol is closely allied with fats. It is a fat-like substance found in foods of animal origin and too much of it in the diet can cause a formation of plaque on the walls of arteries. Eventually the arteries get clogged, and this condition could lead to a stroke or heart attack, which kills hundreds of thousands of Americans annually.



## Barb's Kitchen

- 2 cans green beans (drained)
- 1 can water chestnuts sliced and drains
- 1 can sliced mushrooms soup
- 1 tsp. garlic powder
- salt to taste
- 1 medium onion sauteed

Mix all ingredients and put in a casserole. Top with slices of velveta cheese, cover and cook at 350° for 25 minutes. Top with Durkee fried onions, back in oven for 5 minutes to toast

This can be avoided through proper diet and being aware of the importance of keeping the cholesterol level in our bodies at an acceptable low level.

Cholesterol is found to be high in foods such as whole milk dairy products, egg yolks and meat, especially beef and pork, and the intake of such foods should be moderate at best. Cholesterol is much lower in fish and poultry. The American Heart Association recommends that our diet include generous amounts of fresh fruits and vegetables, lean meat and poultry, fish, grains and low-fat dairy products.

Periodically, we should have our cholesterol level checked, and lowered where necessary through proper diet and/or medication. Medicine combined with a low cholesterol diet can slow and even reverse the build-up of fatty deposits, thereby reducing the risk of heart disease.

The control of the level of cholesterol in the blood stream is extremely important in adults, as well as in children. Proper diet is the best assurance of maintaining such a low level. In addition to diet, regular exercise, bring weight to a normal level and abstaining from smoking will have a beneficial effect on blood cholesterol.

Submitted by Dr. Annelie Owens

*Time is precious, but truth is more precious than time*

*Benjamin Disraeli*

*One of the great labor saving devices of today is tomorrow*

*You never realize how short money is until you pay alimony*

# T H E Village S H O P P E

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## Blind Justice

There were very little doings in the courts today.

The jury in the case of Walker Vs. Langford, for \$1,000.00, awarded the plaintiff \$250.00

The judge, as is his habit, fell asleep at the beginning of the trial but awakened in time to render the verdict.

From 1901 newspaper

# Old Fashioned Remedies

## LICORICE TOOTHPASTE

Want to make your own toothpaste? Take one teaspoon of dried Irish Moss, a cup of water, 1 tsp salt and a teaspoon baking soda. Bring the moss to a slow boil and simmer for 15 minutes. Strain the gel through silk cloth into a small container. Mix the salt and soda in, add a few drops of Chlorophyll and 2 drops of oil of licorice. Blend well, and use only a small amount when you brush.

## FACTS & FIGURES



## RUMORS & HEARSAY

### Old Huntsville Trivia

1808

First whiskey distillery opens in Huntsville, located next to the Big Spring, and its products are sold by the barrel.

1809

Land containing the Big Spring is sold to Leroy Pope for \$23.50 per acre.

1820

First tin can is sold in Huntsville. L. B. Williams reports throngs of people in his store to see the novelty of "Food in a tin can."

1825

A physician, Dr. Turner, advertises cures for all ailments. They included cancer - \$10 - \$50; consumption - \$100; Syphilis - \$20; and rheumatism - \$50. His ad also claimed that if he didn't cure you, you didn't have to pay.

1835

The courthouse is sold at auction for \$419.00. Jesse Scott was the auctioneer and James Fant, a surveyor, was paid \$5 to find the exact center of the square.

1853

Citizens of Huntsville are in a uproar over the outrageous salaries paid to their public officials. The Mayor made \$300 annually, the clerk \$100, and the city Marshal made \$500.

1867

Huntsville is under Yankee occupation. Military headquarters are set up at the Calhoun House, and the Calhoun property on the East side of the square was used as a stable for Union horses.

1873

Much joy in Huntsville's police department. City officials agreed to furnish uniforms for "Huntsville's Finest."

1888

The drugstore belonging to Dr. J. D. Humphrey causes quite a sensation among the youngbloods in town by its ad about a cigar "with a hole, that you don't have to bite the end off of."

# JIM'S

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# ALLIED

PHOTOCOPY



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*There go my people, and I must follow them, for I am their leader.*

*Ken Gentle, Manager  
Sports is the toy department of human life*

*Speech is conveniently located midway between thought and action, where it often substitutes for both*

*John Andrews Holmes*

---

# On Gossamer Webs

The story of the lady who painted on webs

In 1900, Madison County Probate Judge Stewart lived on a farm southwest of Huntsville, south of where the Merrimack mill was being built. Since only a few farms occupied the area, there were no schools in the region. Farmers wishing to school their children had either to send them away to boarding schools, or hire a private teacher to instruct them at home. Judge Stewart hired a young teacher named Annie Bradshaw to come to his home each day and teach his children as well as children from surrounding farms.

The City of Huntsville, anticipating the building of the new mill, had extended the streetcar line to Spring Street, just north of the mill site. Miss Bradshaw rode the streetcar to Spring Street each morning and was picked up by one of the Stewart boys in a buggy to cover the additional distance to the farm. The school had fourteen pupils, and operated for about seven months, which was probably considered a term.

When the Joseph J. Bradley school opened in 1919, Mrs. J. B. Clopton was among the early teachers. Mrs. Clopton was the

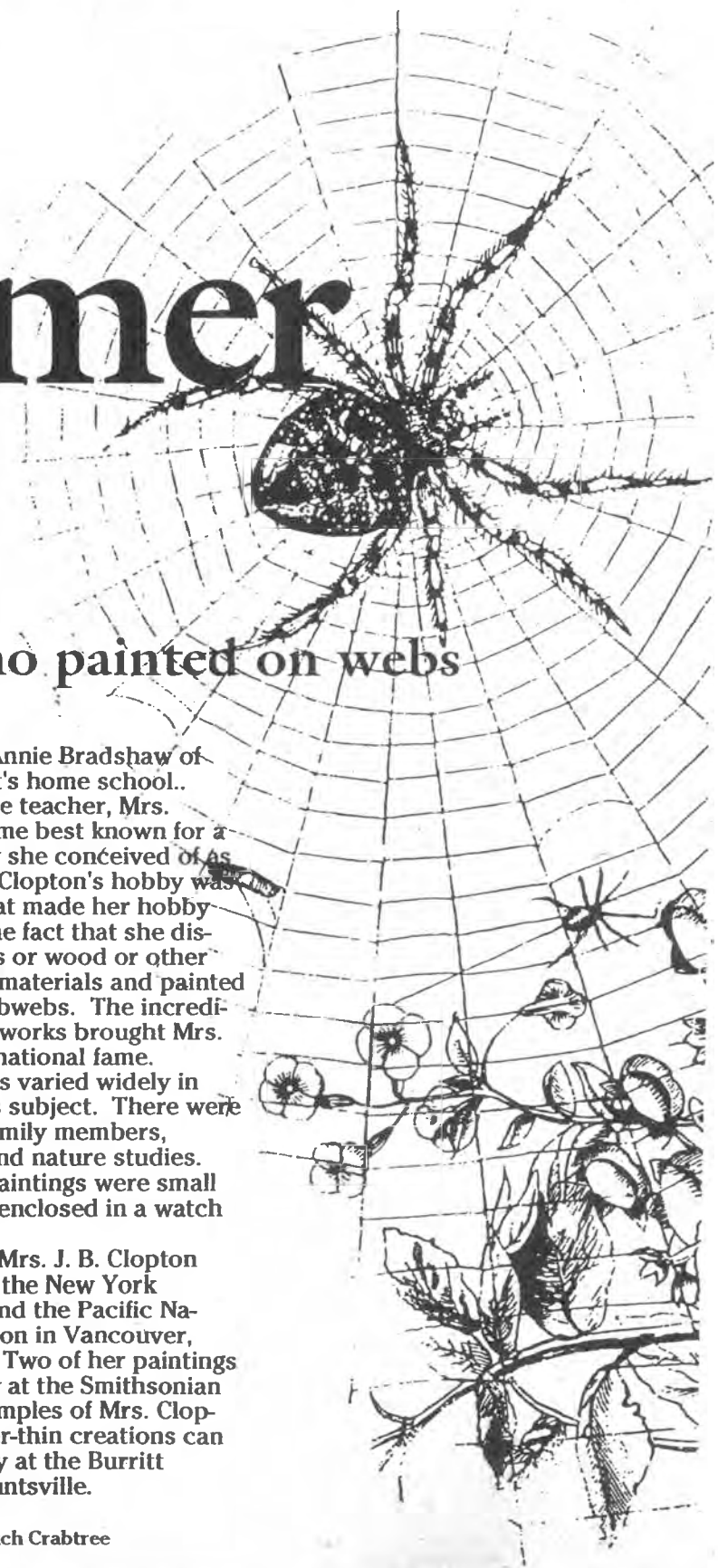
former Miss Annie Bradshaw of Judge Stewart's home school.

Though a fine teacher, Mrs. Clopton became best known for a unique hobby she conceived of as a child. Mrs. Clopton's hobby was painting. What made her hobby unique was the fact that she disdained canvas or wood or other conventional materials and painted instead on cobwebs. The incredibly beautiful works brought Mrs. Clopton international fame.

The paintings varied widely in size as well as subject. There were portraits of family members, landscapes, and nature studies. Some of the paintings were small enough to be enclosed in a watch case.

The work of Mrs. J. B. Clopton was shown at the New York World's Fair and the Pacific National Exhibition in Vancouver, B.C., Canada. Two of her paintings are on display at the Smithsonian Institute. Examples of Mrs. Clopton's gossamer-thin creations can be seen locally at the Burritt Museum in Huntsville.

Submitted by Butch Crabtree







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## Grandma's Sunday Casserole

Grandma's Sunday Casserole  
Boil 4 potatoes and whip with butter  
Chop a couple of green onions and add  
3 tbl sour cream  
Whip two eggs with a fork and add two  
cups grated cheddar cheese

Put in buttered casserole, sprinkle  
garlic powder on top, bake at 350° for  
45 minutes  
Can be Frozen



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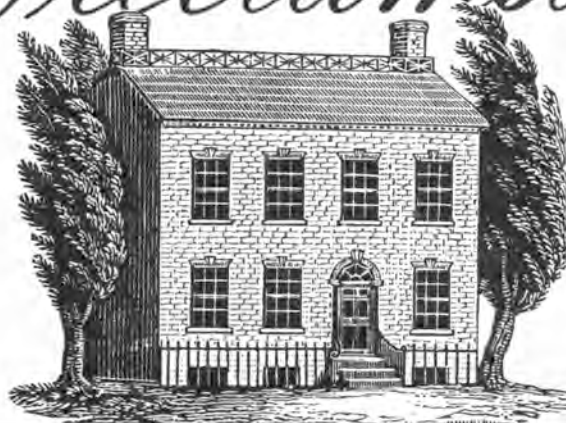
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# Huntsville's First Night Club



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## The Dancing Cave

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The old lady sat rocking on the front porch of her modest house in the Five Points district. She smiled. "It's still boarded up, you know," she said, gazing absently into the neighborhood.

I perched on the top step and wondered where she was in her mind. Could I go there with her? "What's boarded up? And why is it?" My questions broke into her reverie.

"Why, the cave, of course," she replied. "The cave where my Mama danced."

She was usually very lucid, a constant source of information for me, and I wondered if she was, at last, slipping into senility.

"Oh, don't look at me like that, she snapped. "There really WAS a dance hall in that cave over in northwest Huntsville - right there off Pulaski Pike. 'Shelta Cave' it's called."

"Really?" I asked, doubtfully.

"Tell me about it, then."

"There's not a whole lot I can tell you about the cave itself," she said, "because nobody wrote down much about it. Folks talked, of course. They always do." She settled herself more comfortably, and took a sip of her lemonade from the glass on the table beside her rocking chair. "Seems a circuit riding preacher kept a diary - in the early 1800's it was that he mentioned the cave. Someone told him that it was about five miles outside of Huntsville on a farm that would have been about five miles from where the downtown Square is now. It must have been the old Davis farm - so he rode out there. Nobody was home, but he poked around the cave, anyway, and noted it in his diary."

"How did your mama come to tell you about it?" I asked.

"When Mama was young, somewhere around 1889, a Major Fuller bought the cave and opened it as a commercial venture. The cave had once been known as McDaniels Cave, then James Cave, but Major Fuller renamed it for his daughter, Shelta. Oh, it was FINE!

He installed a generating station and put up Huntsville's first electric lights in that cave. Anybody who had electricity at that time had to have a generator - there was no public electricity. He put in a stairway and a dance floor, too. The dance floor was built on massive slabs of limestone that had fallen from the roof of the cave hundreds of years before."

"Of course, Mama was wild to go there, but her parents wouldn't hear of it. That is, they wouldn't until she was invited by Osie Herndon, one of the town's most eligible bachelors. His name was really Oliver Clifton, but everyone called him "Osie" and that became his name."

"Mama wasn't quite as taken with Osie as everyone else was, but she wanted to go to Shelta Cave, and if she had to put up with a handsome and stalwart young bachelor to get there, well, it was worth it."

"She had a new blue dress with lace at the sleeves and throat and it showed off her tiny waist. She must have been something with her blonde hair piled up on her head and her eyes as blue as her dress."

---

*If I thought I'd have lived this long, I would have taken better care of myself*

*Rick Carleton*

---

"I guess she was fairly sparking with excitement as their buggy approached the cave hill. A small wooden building stood in front of the actual cave entrance, and Mama said there was enough electric light to read the curved 'Shelta Caverns' sign over the open door. A small shed to one side housed the generator. Other horses and buggies stood around, awaiting the return of their owners. She and Osie could hear the music of the fiddles from there."

"As they entered the maw of the cave and started down the stairway, she shivered with excitement. Osie placed his arm protectively around her and said, "Are you afraid? Don't be - I'll protect you."

"Well, now, Mama had never been afraid of anything in her life, but she decided to let Osie protect her. He was pretty famous around town for the exciting way he 'protected' young ladies. Mama thought she might like to experience some of that 'protection' - on her own terms, of course"

"Was it dark in there?" I asked, "Was there water? What was it like?"

"Law, no!" she exclaimed. "Mama said it was lit up in there like a Christmas tree! The water was low, it being late summer, but she said Osie told her it came up real high in the winter. It was a great cavern and the music echoed off the 20-foot high ceiling. Anyway, they danced to the music and then would sit out for a spell holding hands, then they'd dance some more."

"During one of their sitting out spells, who should come sashaying down those steps in a bright red dress but Earline Berkson, Mama's best friend. Well, I guess old Osie's eyes could have been raked off with a stick, they bugged out so far! Earline made quite a picture."

"But Mama wasn't having a bit of it! She started having a coughing fit and then felt faint and had to lean on Osie a good bit. He had to take her back outside to the buggy. They 'protected' each other so well all the way home that Osie forgot all about Earline in her red dress. HEE-HEE," she cackled.

"What happened to the cave? What's in there now?" I couldn't believe it was all gone before my time.

"Major Fuller tried several promotional schemes to keep it going. Sometime in that year, 1889, there was a convention of newspaper editors here, and he entertained them all at his own expense over at Shelta Cave. They were impressed, and some even wrote about it. Mama said other civic and social functions were held there, but it was never financially successful and Major Fuller went into bankruptcy in 1893."

"If you recall, there used to be a railroad line up on Monte Sano,

and at one time there was a scheme afoot to build a spur line over to the cave, but nothing ever came of it."

"So what's there now?" I asked again.


"Last I heard, the dance floor was mostly rotted away and some timbers had fallen in on it. Some of the wiring and lights are still there, I think. Anyway, it's all boarded up and nobody's supposed to go there anymore. It isn't safe."

"It served a purpose for a while, though. And Mama said she really got even with Osie for the way he stared at Earline in her red dress that time." She paused. "Mama MARRIED him. HEE-HEE."

Submitted by Bernice M. Snider

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# Liars Club



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## ABSURD NEWS

WEIRD & WONDERFUL

A 45 year old man enjoys his second year as resident of Charles de Gaulle airport in Paris.

He arrived in Paris in 1988, on a two day trip but with no passport or visa. He said at the time that his Iranian passport was confiscated when he took part in an Anti-Shah demonstration in 1975, and several other travel documents were stolen from him at the time.

Employees of the airport bring him food daily as well as newspapers, and he passes the time by studying economics.

*What other people think of me is absolutely none of my business*

*Mary Barksdale  
Hewlett Packard*

*One man's courage makes a majority.*

*Andrew Jackson*

A well-known bit of historical trivia that occurred in Arab, Alabama concerned the visit of Bonnie and Clyde. It seems the infamous couple stopped for curb service and ordered sodas in the early 1930's at People's Drug Store, and were served by Earl Rice. Just about the time Earl noticed the machine gun in the couple's back seat, they inquired as to the amount of money in the local bank. Earl retorted strongly that there was little money in the bank. (A direct quote not available). Bonnie and Clyde finished their sodas, thanked him politely and went on their way. (Amount of tip not reported.)

Just across the street from this drug store was a small restaurant. The original restaurant is no longer there, but has been replaced with one that has caused as much talk as the Bonnie and Clyde incident. It is known as the L Rancho Cafe, and has been in existence for the past thirty-six years. It has been a gathering spot for locals, old-timers, politicians, and just people in general for years.

Then the unforeseen happened. The head waitress, Reba Edwards, walked up to the regulars early one day and announced, "I got some bad news for you, boys.

I'm sorry to tell you, but the place is closing at four o'clock today for good."

After a period of shocked silence, Wilbur Fowler had an idea. "Well, why don't we just buy it ourselves?"

By that afternoon 22 members of the "L Rancho Liars Coffee Drinkers Club" agreed to form the L Rancho Holding Company of Arab and buy the favorite old eating place.

The new owners had the place renovated, hired the "Best cook in Arab (Edna Stewart), and limited serving to breakfast and lunch. Six employees do the cooking and serving, but the members do all the rest, including cleanup.

Harry Black said, "We feed over 150 people at lunch. Good home cooking. The friendship generated between folks is what's behind it. We just want to serve good food at a good price." The owners say they have retained the flavor of their early morning coffee sessions, one of the main reasons for buying the L Rancho. "We just sit around and talk about the world situation - we handle all that every morning. We throw some (politicians) out and elect new ones, right here from the L Rancho."

Submitted by Bill Callaway, Sr.  
Arab, Alabama

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# Shine



## Winter City Shoreline

by John Crow

With the shock of a cold wave breaking a gust of wind rolls up the driveway then seeps back out to the street.

The rustling scrapes of three brown, curled leaves sound like scuttling crabs on a concrete beach.

"Take a couple hundred pounds of ground corn, another couple hundred pounds of sugar and dump it in a large mash tub. Add your spring water and let it sit there and work off. You can tell when it is done working off by throwing a big fiddle worm into the mash. If it sinks to the bottom, it's time to cook it off, if it swims - let it work off a little longer.

Pour the likker in the still and try not to stir up the mash. If you stir the mash it will give it a yeasty bite. Pack the joints of the still with wet flour dough to keep the steam from leaking out and start your fire.

When your warn (copper coil) gets too hot to touch the likker should be coming up fast.

If you want whiskey to drink by yourself, empty out your still, wash it, and run your liquor through again. When you get done, pour it into an old charred keg, put it up, and forget about it for a couple years. If you want to make money, just put it in an old fruit jar. People will buy it. I could sell a thousand gallons next week, if I could get it.

From conversation with old Madison County moonshiner

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# Saturday Night Social

Bubba and Millie had not been married very long and he was already missing the Saturday night socials at Bobby Bragg's store. There wasn't really such a thing as a Saturday social but it was a good excuse for all the young men to get together, sit on the tailgates of their pickup trucks, have a few drinks and tell tall tales.

Bubba, knowing that Millie was a Yankee girl, figured that she wouldn't understand him off drinking with his buddies. So he began to concoct excuses. At first he told her that he was going night fishing. That worked pretty well for a while, until the pond began to freeze over, and

then she began to question the whole business.

One Saturday night as Bubba is walking out the front door she confronts him. "Bubba, I don't see how you can fish when the pond is completely froze over."

Bubba, thinking pretty fast on his feet, replies, "Gee, honey, I ain't going fishing tonight. I'm going squirrel hunting."

Millie, being kind of slow, but not that slow, asks, "Bubba, how are you going to squirrel hunt, it's dark outside."

"Gee, Millie, thanks for reminding me, I almost forgot my flashlight!"



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*An embarrassing moment is spilling out the unopened window of a car*

*Ken Owens, AVEX*

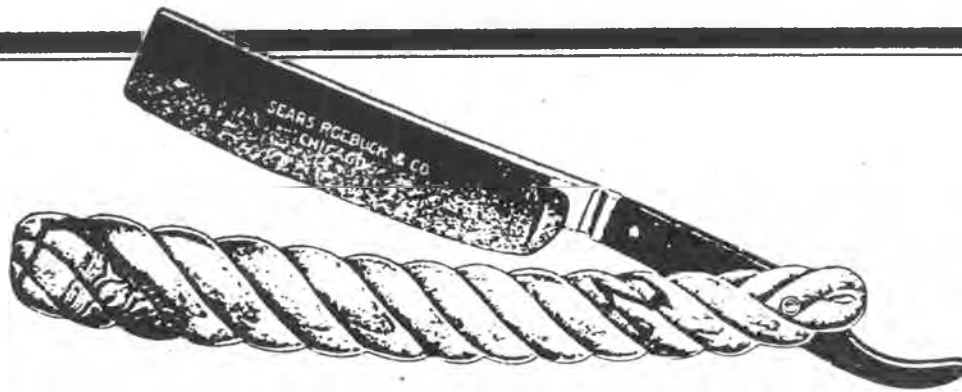
*Experience is not what happens to a man, it is what a man does with what has happened to him*

*Charles Owens, Ret Lt Col*

*Success is just a matter of failures...overcoming them*

*Butch Crabtree*





# Huntsville's First Murder Trial

In the Spring of 1812, Eli Newman traveled down the Mississippi River to New Orleans working as a deckhand on a flatboat. He was paid and set off toward home with Joseph Fetrick and a group of other men.

The men traveled North in a group through the Mississippi Territory, sleeping where night found them. When near Huntsville, but still in the Chickasaw Indian Nation, Newman found a reason to remain behind with Fetrick.

On the sixth of June, Newman, "Not having the fear of God before his eyes, but being moved and seduced by the instigation of the Devil," took his razor and cut Fetrick's throat. He took Fetrick's money and leaving the body there, he set out to catch the other members of the group.

When he came up along, the men questioned Newman about Fetrick's whereabouts but were not satisfied with his answer. They took Newman back to where Joseph was last known to be. The body was found. They quickly deduced that Newman was responsible for the killing. He was searched and the dead man's money was found on him. Newman was taken to Huntsville and turned over to Sheriff Stephen Neal who placed him in the county jail.

The grand jury met on the second Monday in November with William Thompson as foreman. A murder indictment was returned against Newman for the killing of Fetrick. An attorney, John W. Walker, the tall and slender son-in-law of Leroy Pope, agreed to represent the prisoner.

The trial would be held in a small log house which set on an ugly rocky hill to the East of the Big Spring. To the North was an unseemly and rugged hollow.

On Friday, November 13th, the case of the Territory vs. Eli Newman came on for trial before Judge Obadiah Jones. Louis Winston was the prosecutor. Newman was found guilty. The next day his attorney filed a motion for a new trial and the prosecutor was ordered to appear for a hearing, where the motion was solemnly argued for by counsel. Judge Jones ordered a new trial.

Newman next appeared in court on November 21st for his new trial, however, because of an insufficient jury count, his case was continued. To prevent Newman's case from being held over until the spring session of court, Judge Jones called a special session of his court to be held on December 1st.

Newman was retried on that date. The trial continued all day. At the end of the day, all involved consented to allow the jury to retire for the night to the house of William and Louis Winston in the custody of a sworn officer.

The next morning at nine, the trial continued with the attorneys, Walker and Winston, presenting their arguments. The Judge charged the jury and they retired to consider their verdict.

The crowd milled around the log house, which served as a courthouse, and they all waited until the jury returned. James Ishma, as foreman, delivered the verdict of the jury. "Guilty in manner and form as charged in the Bill of Indictment."

The next morning at ten, John Walker, Eli Newman and Louis Winston stood before Judge Jones for the sentencing of the prisoner. When asked if there was any reason why judgment should not be pronounced, Newman's counsel gave thirteen reasons to overturn the verdict. Among the reasons were: The grand jury and court had no jurisdiction for a crime committed outside Madison County and within the Chickasaw Nation; and Newman had been tried twice for the same crime and that the case could not be heard at a special session of the court. The Judge heard the solemn arguments of counsel but found the reasons insufficient.

The sentence of the court was that, "You, Eli Newman, be carried from hence to the place from whence you came, and that on Saturday next the fifth day of this instant between the hours of ten in the forenoon and two in the afternoon you be carried by the proper officer, to the place of public execution to be executed in or near the town of Huntsville, and there be hanged by the neck until your body be dead, and the Lord have Mercy on your soul."

For the murder of his trusting companion, amidst the wilds of the Mississippi Territory, Eli Newman was taken to the edge of town and faced the gallows. There on December 5, 1812 at about noon, he was hanged for his crime. (The hanging was where, in 1859, the residence of Mrs. William Patton was located.)

Submitted by Fred Simpson,  
Attorney-at-Law

# SELECTED SHORTS

A middle aged husband and his wife decided one day to go downtown and attend Trade Day that was being held that day.

There were many people on the square of the Old Courthouse, buyers and sellers, children and animals. Curious and serious buyers were there, and many had come in buggies for the day's event.

After milling around with the crowd for hours, and seeing several couples they knew, the husband was overheard to say to his wife, "You know, it's really strange, but the biggest idiots seem to marry the prettiest women."

His wife, with no hesitation, said, "Now, darling, you are just trying to flatter me!"

(Overheard during Political Science class at University of Alabama in Huntsville.)

"Can any one of you tell me who did the most in the 19th. century to raise the working class?"

One of the class members, "Yes! The inventor of the alarm clock!"

Many useful aprons can be made from worn house-dresses by cutting out the arm holes, refashioning the neck, finishing with braid or tape and putting on ties. Sometimes both the front and back of a dress can be used in this manner.

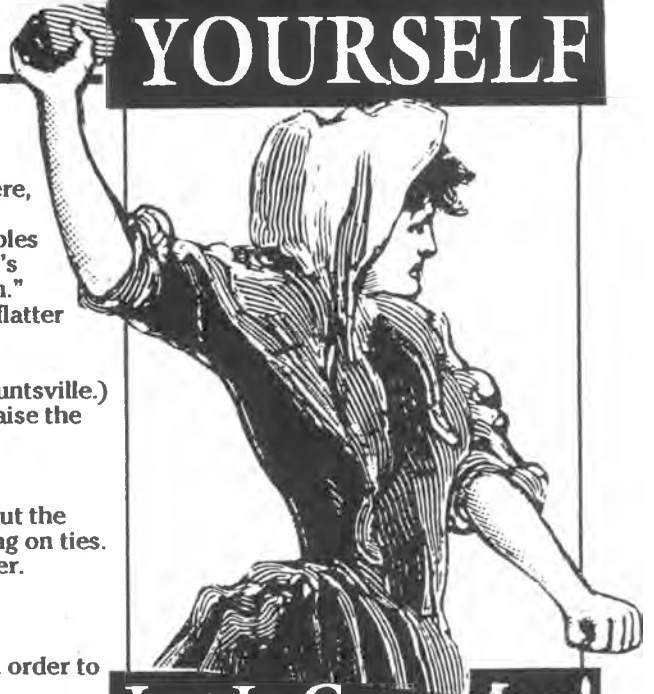
Taken from old Huntsville newsletter

A customer had stopped in one of Huntsville's local beverage shops in order to purchase some wine.

Being rather a talkative person, the customer inquired of the cashier, "What would you do if a person started away, forgetting his change?"

Replied the cashier, very sincerely, "Why, that's easy. I would tap sharply on the counter with a dollar bill!"

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# To Von Braun's Credit

Dr. Werhner Von Braun moved to Huntsville in 1950 to take command of the missile program. He had previously worked for the U.S. Army at White Sands, New Mexico and before that, at Penemunde, Germany where he was in charge of that country's missile program during the second world war.

As Dr. Von Braun settled down in Huntsville he began to acquire "American" habits. Among these habits was the desire for credit cards.

After applying at several stores and being turned down he sought the credit manager of a local department store to see what was wrong. Marked on his file were the words "Previous credit history not verifiable".

The credit bureau containing his records had been destroyed during WWII by his employers.

*Marriages may be made in Heaven, but people are responsible for the maintenance work*

*Margaret Tucker  
Housewife*

*Every advantage is a disadvantage.*

*To expect common sense of people proves you're lacking it yourself*



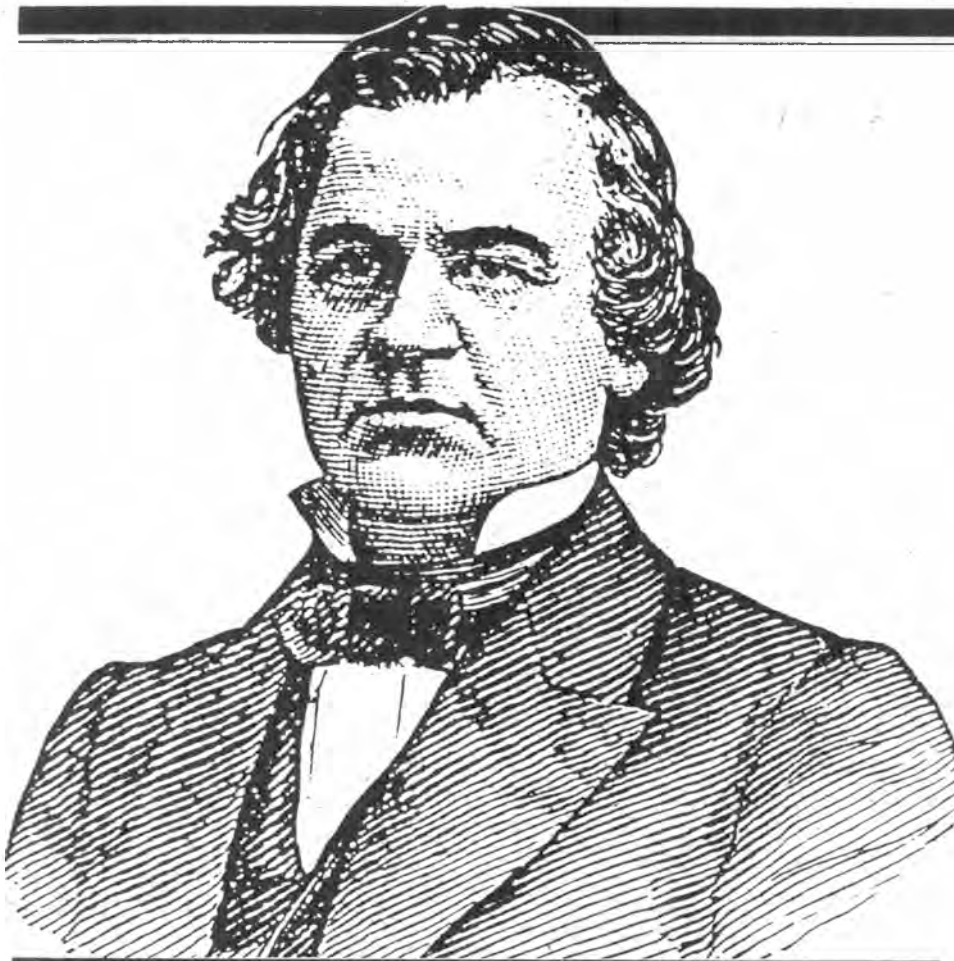
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Sloss was extremely adept at cutting the "Prince Albert" style frock suit for gentlemen. One day in the early 1830's, a young tailor's apprentice named Andrew called at the shop for Mr. Sloss. Andrew had come with the purpose of learning the art of cutting this stylish garment. He was a good student and even managed to sell some of the suits he made in the village. In a few weeks he had mastered the desired skill and was gone. This incident would not be worth mention except for some notoriety this young man received before arriving in Mooresville, and some he would receive later in his life.

Andrew, originally from Raleigh, North Carolina, ran away from his home for fear of being arrested after throwing rocks at a neighbor's house. He fled through South Carolina, and in 1826, came to Greenville, Tennessee, a town he would call home for the remainder of his life. In Greenville he worked in a tailor shop, eventually opening a shop of his own. Shortly thereafter, he sought Mr. Sloss in Mooresville.

A few days after Andrew left North Carolina, the following article against harboring or employing said apprentices, on pain of being prosecuted was published by James J Selby"

#### TEN DOLLAR REWARD

"Ran away from the subscriber, on the night of the 15th instant, 2 apprentice boys, legally bound named William and Andrew Johnson. The former is of a dark complexion, black hair, eyes and habits. They are much of a height, about 5 feet, 4 or 5 inches. The latter is very fleshy, freckled faced, light hair and fair complexion. They went with two other apprentices, addressed by Messers Wm. and Charles Fowler. When they went away, they were well clad-blue pants light colored homespun coats, and new hats, the makers name in the crown of the hats is Theodore Clark. I will pay the above reward (\$10) to any person who will give the above reward to Andrew Jonhson alone. All persons are cautioned against harboring or employing said apprentices, on pain of being prosecuted. James J. Selby"

# Mooresville: Village To Presidents

In the early 1800's, the Tennessee valley was beginning to see the establishment of villages and towns, complete with merchants and tradesmen to cater to the needs of the populace. Limestone County, Alabama was no exception. In November of 1818

two towns were incorporated in Limestone County. One of these towns was Athens, the present county seat. The other, incorporated three days before Athens, was the village of Mooresville.

Mooresville was home to an excellent tailor by the name of Sloss. Mr.



Perhaps Mr. Selby would have upped the ante had he known that one of those rock-throwing, black-habited escapees for whom he was advertising was to become the seventeenth president of the United States.

For a village the size of Mooresville to be able to boast a future President as a resident, even for a short period of time, is a source of pride. But Andrew Johnson's leave-taking did not mark the end of this extraordinary burg's flirtation with future presidents.

Approximately thirty years after Andrew Johnson received the tutelage of Mr. Sloss, Abraham Lincoln was President, Andrew Johnson, Vice-President, and the nation was embroiled in civil war. Following the fall of Nashville, North Alabama was occupied by Union forces. In the summer of 1863, the 42nd Ohio Volunteers were camped at Bibb's Spring, a short distance behind the Bibb residence at Mooresville. One of the officers of the regiment was James A. Garfield.

Garfield, a native of frontier Ohio, was reared by his mother and older brother after the death of his father. Though young James had to work to help the family, his mother and brother provided for him a good education. He attended Geauga Seminary in Ohio, and worked his way through Williams College, graduating with honors. After graduation, Garfield returned to his home in Hiram, Ohio where he obtained a post as a school teacher. In addition to his duties as teacher, he sometimes preached at the local church and made political speeches. When war came, he received a commission in the U.S. Army and served his country with distinction.

Some of the villagers at Mooresville learned of Garfield's presence and invited him to preach at the Christian Church. General Garfield, in writing to his wife, mentioned the invitation. "There is a church in the village of Mooresville near by and they have sent up inviting me to speak to them on Sunday. If I am not too unwell I have a notion to speak to

them." Apparently the General was not "too unwell" because he delivered several sermons in the Mooresville Church.

General Garfield left Mooresville with his unit to fight at Chicamauga. Following the battle, the General resigned his commission to enter Congress. In 1880, Mr. Garfield was elected the twentieth President of the United States.

The building in which Mr. Garfield delivered his sermons is still used for worship every

Sunday morning. It is now known as the Mooresville Church of Christ. When General Garfield left Mooresville, he left his Bible in the church building. The Bible remained on display in the building for many years. To ensure its safety it was moved to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Hagan in Mooresville where it remains today, tucked safely away in a bureau drawer in a front room.

It has been a century and a quarter since Johnson and Garfield walked the streets of



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## DO YOU REMEMBER?

The old Carnegie Library was an imposing stone building, almost frightening from a second-grader's view. I would ride my Schwinn bicycle over there . . . I took a "long way" down Bannister alley, Cruse Alley and up Franklin to avoid the pump up McClung hill.

I don't really remember a lot of details; like whether it was hot or cold inside, or the people who worked there. But the memories of the Children's Room down in the basement fit my image of a library dark, floor to ceiling books, some sort of bright decorations to make it less fearsome.

Sometimes I would "sneak" up to the Main Floor, always assuming seven-year olds were not allowed there. The books were thicker, heavier, with almost none of the cheery pictures I was accustomed to. I pulled a tiny, thin book out of a shelf once and got my first exposure to poetry - it didn't rhyme and made no sense.

The opening of the library on Fountain Row (now a City Court building) just didn't seem right. Here was this well-lit building with an ELEVATOR and bathrooms on every floor and it was nothing like what I was used to! Except all those BOOKS. . . .

Submitted by Penn Dilworth

Fred Simpson has been an attorney in Huntsville for twelve years and is now currently researching information for a book he is writing about old murder cases and lynchings that occurred in Madison County.

He would welcome any information from our readers concerning this, and would especially like to get information on Mrs. William Patton, and the whereabouts of her residence in 1859.

Also, if anyone has any information about the Judge Lawler murder case, please contact Fred Simpson at his office.

## THE BOND

*From the years  
A sweet mystery emerges.*

*Strongly built  
From shared heartaches and joys  
It nourishes the now  
And inspires the future*

*In humble thanks  
I praise its source*

*My wife, I love you.*

*Submitted by John Crow,  
for his wife, Sue*

*People will buy anything that is  
one to a customer*

*Sinclair Lewis*

*If it looks to good to be true it  
probably is.*



## Old Huntsville Sweat-Shirts

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We are all familiar with the advertisements some airlines have promoting "Gourmet" dinners. Here are some price tags (approximate) provided by the Travel Advisor as gathered from the Civil Aeronautics Board on about how much each airline averages per person for one meal:

Eastern (last year)	\$1.82
Delta airlines	1.92
Braniff airlines	2.36
Continental	2.96
TWA	3.12
United	3.23
Northwest	3.90
Pan Am	3.97







## The Science Of Happiness

No scientist has ever been able to provide succinct directions on exactly how to be happy. After 30 years of research and 57 major surveys, however, researchers have identified life circumstances that seem most correlated with happiness: marriage, meaningful activity, being older, an upbeat attitude, the ability to use time productively, health and a diverse life.

## BLUE MONDAYS

Feeling down on Monday mornings is perfectly normal, according to psychologists. On Sunday, they explain, most people eat, work, and sleep according to a schedule sharply different from their weekday one. This throws a person slightly out of gear, and the mild disorder that results is to blame for the "blah" feeling the next day. It's easier to cope with the Monday morning blues, both in yourself and in others, if you keep in mind that the depressed feelings are a normal reaction to the weekend.

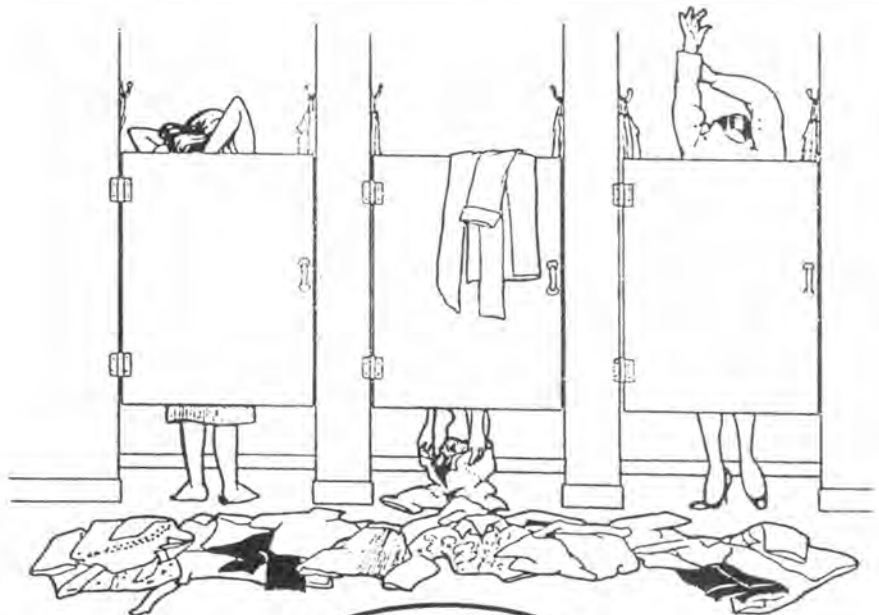
Taken from "Industrial Supervisor"

*The greatest remedy for anger is delay.*

*Appetizers are little things you keep eating until you lose your appetite.*

*It's attitude, not aptitude, that determines altitude.*

# It's Time For A Change!

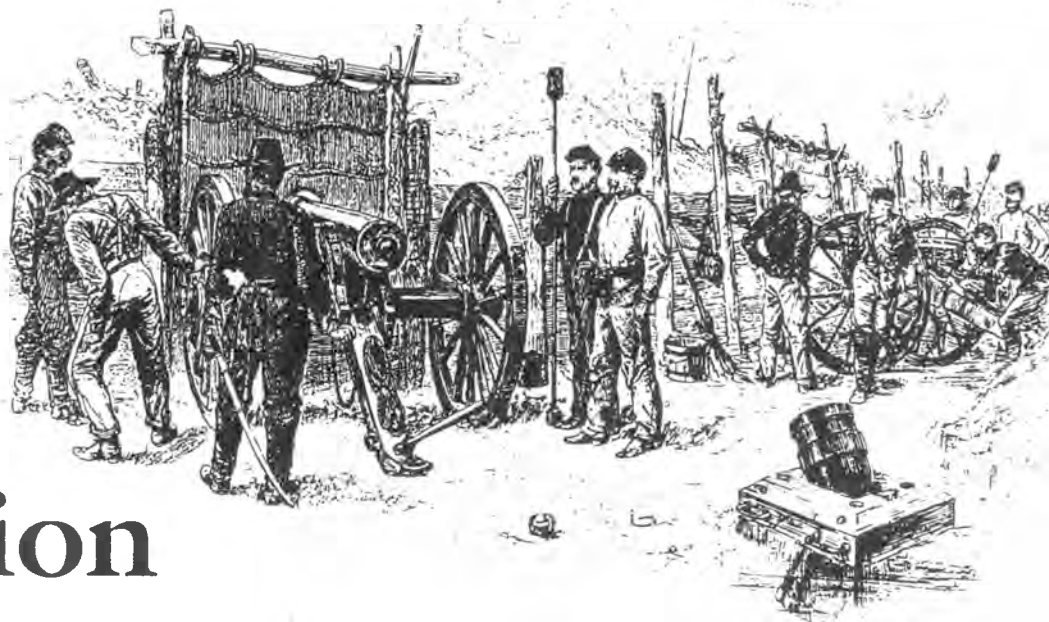


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# Echos From A Great Rebellion



By now I'm sure that most readers have either heard of or seen the acclaimed PBS documentary on the American Civil War by Ken Burns. This series has sparked a tremendous resurgence of interest in that vital period of American history that so shaped our national character.

I believe that the primary success of this series was its use of actual period photographs and writings from the participants. The words intimately echo down to today's generations and give us a sense of the pathos and fire of that agonizing time. What follows are some additional but perhaps lesser known quotes from that period.

While a divided nation held its breath, negotiations for a peaceful surrender of Fort Sumter ended as Union Major Robert Anderson refused the Confederate terms. As he escorted the Confederate emissary, Colonel James Chestnut and his party back to the boat, he shook hands with each one of them and said, "If we never meet in this world again, God grant that we may meet in the next."

A peculiarly American expression was used by the soldiers of both North and South to describe the first time they experienced the savagery of combat.

In more peaceful times the farm boys that would attend the traveling circus would always come back and speak in utter awe of "seeing the elephant." Thus to experience battle for the first time was to "see the elephant."

The first major battle of the war in the East was at Bull Run (Manassas), Virginia. As the battle raged, the Union commander Irwin McDowell, upon seeing part of the Confederate Army retire up the slope of Henry House Hill jubilantly shouted, "Victory! Victory! The day is ours!" A little premature perhaps, as the battle ended in complete disaster for the Union Army.

Another tragic premature statement was made by Union General John Sedgwick outside the Confederate defenses around Cold Harbor, Virginia. "They couldn't hit an elephant at this distance!" The poor General then fell dead, shot through the head by a Confederate sharpshooter.

On the first day of the terrible battle of Shiloh, the bulk of Grant's army was shattered by the fierce onslaught of the Confederate Army. Thousands of stragglers huddled under the bluffs of Pittsburgh's Landing on the Tennessee River.

In desperation the Union officers tried to rally their men. The following exchange was recorded.

"Men, for God's sake, for your country's sake, for your own sake, come up here, form a line and make one more stand." (Capt. D. Putman, USV)

"That man talks well, don't he?" (Unidentified private's reply to Capt. Putman)

Major General Bedford Forrest's (CSA) Cavalry Corps was the scourge of the Union Army in the West. A superior Union force under Maj. Gen. Samuel Sturgis was dispatched from Memphis, Tennessee to finish Forrest once and for all. He met up with Forrest at Brice's Crossroads, Mississippi.

"For God's sake, General, don't let us give it up so!" (Union Col. Edward Bouton)

"Dammit, Sir, if Mr. Forrest will let me alone, I will let him alone!" (General Samuel Sturgis)

Needless to say, Sturgis was soundly thrashed and sent packing back to Memphis.

Speaking of "Git thar fustest with the mostest" Forrest, most historians agree, had an interesting way of manipulating the King's English. The following is an excerpt from a letter



written to a friend in Memphis in 1862.

"... I had a small brush with the enemy on yesterday I succeeded in gaining their rear and got in their entrenchments 8 miles from Hamburg and 5 behind Farmington and burned a portion of their camp at that place they was not looking for me and I taken them by surprise they run like Suns of Biches . . ."

When the Union Army occupied Huntsville, Alabama they quickly dispatched search parties to the home of Leroy Pope Walker on Adams Avenue and McClung Street. As Confederate Secretary of War, it was Walker who gave the order to fire on Fort Sumter. The Federal soldiers were rather zealous in their search to capture such a prize and a friend who had to endure one of the search parties reported: "I remember distinctly seeing them look into preserve jars and cut-glass decanters, until my mother's risibles no longer could be repressed. "You don't expect to find General Walker in that brandy bottle, do you?" she asked."

There were fierce little pockets of independence in Tennessee and North Alabama. Good folk that were for neither side but just wanted to be left alone. One such old lady stood defiantly on the porch of her shack as a Federal forage party approached. "Are you Union or Secesh?" the cavalryman inquired. "I'm Baptist," the woman proudly retorted.

Submitted by John Crow

*The trouble with growing older is that it gets progressively tougher to find a famous historical figure who didn't amount to much when he was your age.*

*Bill Vaughn*



## Foot Relief

For those of you who have been plagued by Athletes Foot and the nagging pain from it, there is a sure-fire cure that very few people know about.

A practical nurse told me about this many years ago, and it sure worked with me. I had had it for five years with no relief - often times the medicine was more painful than the actual condition.

She told me this: wash the feet with warm soapy water, rinse and dry well. Take a teaspoonful of

Fuller's Earth, a powder available most everywhere, and drop it into each sock where your toes go. Put on shoes as usual. Do this everyday until the condition clears up. It is amazing how this works, and for me, cured my feet over thirty five years ago.

It's amazing how the most effective treatments are the ones that people used years ago.

Submitted by A. P. Hayes,  
Hickory Hill Lane

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# Chocolate Pie

My children would eat anything. They were healthy, but not fat, so, mostly, I let them eat whatever they wanted.

I had made a chocolate pie the night before, and there was some left over - so, naturally, the children were having it for

breakfast. We were all having a good time, laughing and joking. My son, who was in fifth grade, said, "Mom, I want to stay home today. I don't want to go to school."

"I don't, either," chimed in the third-grade daughter, seeing an

Continued on Page 33

# Rugby's



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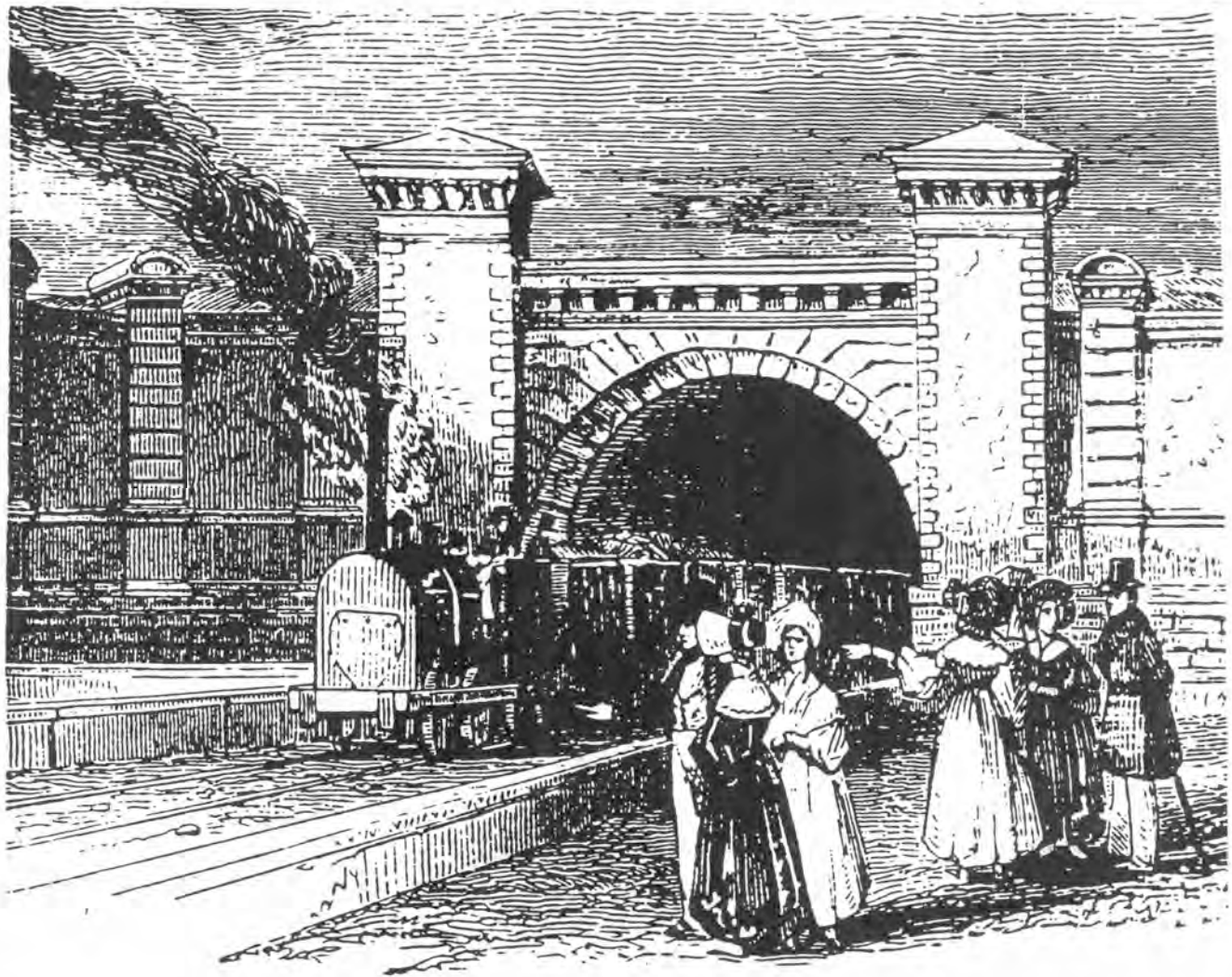
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# Walking Charlie

If you are a native Huntsvillian, chances are you remember Walking Charlie. He lived downtown. Charlie walked everywhere, down the middle of the road, near the white lines. He had a stick that he would wave in the air when children followed him when school was out. The children would pull and tug at his old black coat, laughing and screaming Charlie, Charlie. Some throwing rocks, as if the blind couldn't see. He felt those rocks.

Every day before sunset, Charlie walked down to the liquor store by the railroad tracks on Meridian Street. He went inside and would guzzle down the water provided by the men behind the counter,



free of charge. He tapped his stick on the floor until he reached the door, then held the hands of the children who whispered now at the railroad tracks after looking both ways. He crossed the tracks home to his mother.

Early one morning, Walking Charlie's mother died. He cried and cried. A man named Billy came by the house and said Charlie, it's time to go. Charlie was huddled in the corner, crying like a baby. The man named Billy picked him up by the arms of his old black coat and said it'll be OK, Charlie, and they left.

No one was there except the preacher, and an old lady. The sun was shining sharp into Walking Charlie's eyes. He picked up his stick and waved it at the sun, back and forth in the air, fast, while tears streamed down his face. He fell to his knees and couldn't stop crying, his face pressed to the ground. The preacher and the old lady let him be.

As the preacher read his words, Walking Charlie still cried, waving his stick into the air as if he could really see the sun. Its sharp rays cut through him like glass.

Walking Charlie's heart was broken.

One day Charlie guzzled down his water, as usual. He took the hands of children who said, don't go Charlie. Not now.

Charlie dropped their hands, moved to the middle of the tracks, and just stopped.

This time the whole town turned out. They came in hoards, and said he was an institution. A few women dabbed their eyes as the preacher read about salvation.

The man named Billy stood way back behind a tree. He pressed his face to an old tree at Maple Hill cemetery, until it hurt. He was crying when he said, Charlie, why couldn't you see the train?

Submitted by Kathleen Broyles, Managing Editor of RoundTable Magazine, a publication of the National Children's Advocacy Center, located here in Huntsville



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Mooresville, The face of the Tennessee Valley has changed from an agrarian society to a modern metropolitan area. Through all the changes which have come to the area, Mooresville has remained remarkably the same. The village is still lovely respite from the dizzying pace of modern society.

No one remains who saw Mr. Johnson and Mr. Garfield in Mooresville; it happened too long ago. Yet on certain evenings, when the air is clear and the village is peaceful, as it was before the highway came, one can almost believe that time has been rolled back. There are those who believe that if one listens closely, the squeak of Johnson's scissors and the tones of Garfield's sermons can still be heard. Of course any intelligent, thinking person knows that such a thing is not possible. But there are many who have experienced the charm of this beautiful place, who still listen.

Submitted by Butch Crabtree



## Homemade Hair Spray

There is a natural hair spray that can be made from ingredients in most anyone's kitchen.

It works well with hair that is very fine. It takes one lemon and 2 cups of water. You do it this way:

Chop up the lemon in a wooden bowl, add it to the water in the top of a double broiler. Simmer the mixture until only half remains. Strain through cheesecloth and pour into a pump sprayer.

This works great for children's hair, and if your hair is dry, use an orange instead of a lemon. Keep in fridge, and make fresh every few days.

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*A tree never hits a car except in the case of self defense*

*When your average your as close to the bottom as you are to the top*

*Strange the period when traffic hardly move is called rush hour*



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opportunity.

"Me, too," said the youngest, not yet in school.

I laughed. "What am I going to do? Write you all notes? Tell them you all had a bad case of chocolate pie?"

"Yes!" they shouted. "Sure!" "Let's do!" they all laughed, agreeing.

We were having such a good time. It really WAS a good idea. We kept laughing and joking and talking - and it got too late for them to go to school.

We had a wonderful day together. I wrote them notes - not "bad case of chocolate pie" notes, but some the school officials would find credible. Even the youngest wanted a note.

From that time on, each child was allowed one "chocolate pie day" per school term, if grades were good and no tests were

scheduled. I'd spend the day with the chocolate pie child, doing whatever he or she chose, within reason and budget. They did not usually choose days together, each one opting to be an "only child" for a day. We'd go to lunch, take a short trip, whatever they had planned. They looked forward to their chocolate pie days and planned meticulously, cunningly, joyously and endlessly. I enjoyed it as much as they did. (School officials, please forgive me.) No sooner was one chocolate pie day enjoyed, than they'd start planning the next.

The children are grown now, and moved away, but they still reminisce about their chocolate pie days. Occasionally, they will call and say they need one. I do, too. Sometimes, if we're lucky, we get to spend it together.

Perhaps we'd all be the better for a chocolate pie day with our children now and then. They make wonderful memories.

Submitted by Bernice N. Snider

## Love, Promises, and Freedom

a poem by Matt Crow

Dust rising, the distant hills  
Slowing, the distant hills  
The village awakens, Mothers and children  
Children anxious, Mothers silent  
First man, Flag Bearer, tops the hill  
Slow walk to trot, pace quickens  
Many men follow, but they are spaced by empty saddles  
From some wives, a heart wrench, then a gasp  
Then composure regained, a strong silent pose  
The other wives hope  
Grim bandaged riders, a few had been crying  
They cover their faces  
At the stables the warriors stop  
Women and children, in long line now follow  
Some wives now touching, the worn empty saddles  
Some wives now crying  
They think of past good times of love and of promise  
And where is this freedom that husbands do die for?



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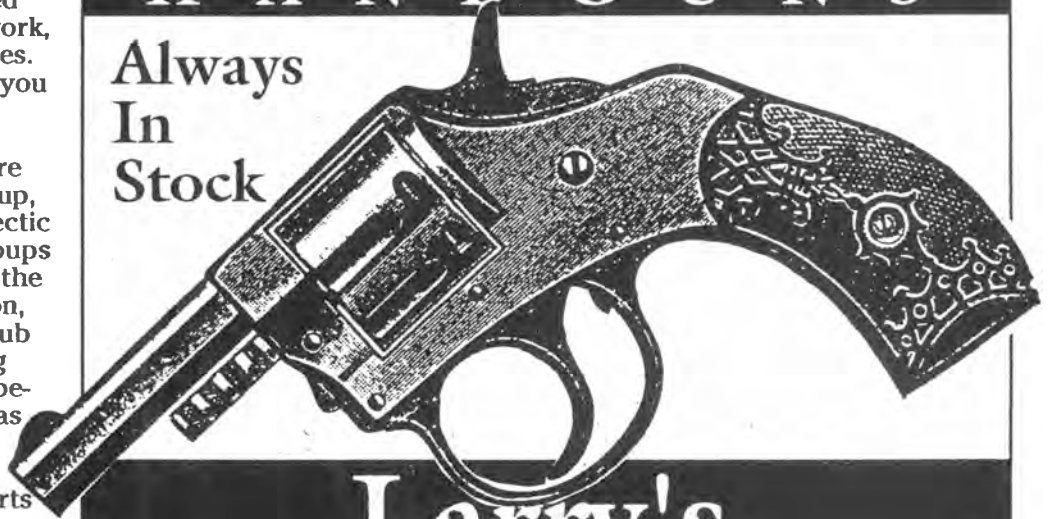
Writers, tell us your stories of the good old days; of nostalgia; of Huntsville, the little town that grew up to be our city. "Old Huntsville" encourages our many talented local authors to send us your work, your suggestions, your critiques. We'll be glad to hear from you. you are a necessary part of our publication

Some articles in the issue were submitted by The Writers Group, an informal and supportive eclectic group of area writers. Other groups helpful to aspiring authors are the Huntsville Literary Association, Huntsville Creative Writers Club (882-2348), Creative Writing Course at UAH, and various specialized writing groups such as romance writers and science-fiction writers. We do appreciate all your efforts and are looking forward to many more interesting stories in the future.

# 1000

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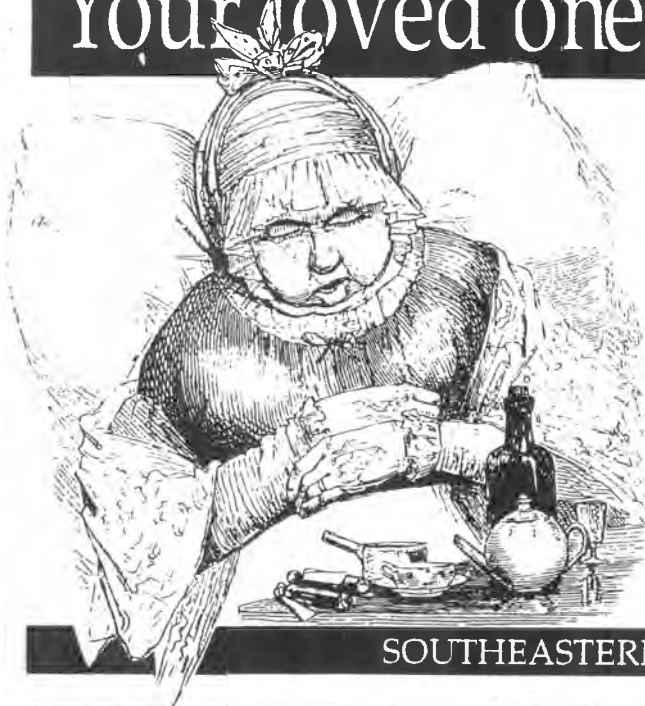
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Many of you have inquired as to where you may pick up copies of "Old Huntsville." Due to space limitations we cannot list all of the distribution points, but the following is a partial listing. If you are looking for past editions, please check with our advertisers you see in the magazine. Some of them may still have back issues which they will give to customers

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## Tippecanoe & Tyler Too!

A kindly gentleman by the name of William Henry Harrison visited Alabama in 1840 and left an impression that the residents would never forget.

At that time, the Whigs were determined to get their representative into the White House, and this man was Harrison. He was projected as the frontier hero of Tippecanoe, and the campaign was complete with coonskin caps, log cabins and cider barrels.

Harrison, then 68 and with his health failing, came to Montgomery by way of a tiny log cabin mounted on a wagon pulled by oxen. The log cabin was a symbol, that the election would be decided by the "common folk" and not by the "aristocratic gentry in the fine mansions." His slogan was "Tippecanoe and Tyler Too." The rigors of the tough campaign and his rudimentary means of travel took its toll on Harrison.

A doctor by the name of Thomas Brown, who owned a plantation a few miles east of Montgomery, gave the President-to-be some much needed medical attention. Regaining some of his lost strength, Harrison was driven to Montgomery in Dr. Brown's carriage, and made a few appearances and talks. Harrison would never forget the gentle attention of the Brown family.

As a token of his affection, William Harrison promised Dr. Brown's little daughter, Mary Eliza, that his log cabin on wheels would be ideal for a playhouse. With twinkling eyes, he had the cabin fitted out in just the right size furnishings and gave it to the delighted youngster.

For many years, the traveling log cabin stood at the plantation, a lasting reminder of the campaign of "Tippecanoe and Tyler too."

Within five weeks of his inauguration, Harrison was dead. The rugged campaign, the tough traveling over hundreds of miles, had proven to be too much for the aging gentleman. John Tyler, Vice President, succeeded to the Presidency.

In Huntsville, sorrowful citizens poured out their hearts to the wry,

personable Harrison who had, in effect, knowingly given his life for a change in the White House. For years afterwards, citizens would meet at the courthouse to witness cannons fired by the Alabama Militia booming to salute the fallen President, and church bells would ring out on the anniversary of Harrison's death - a sorrowful tribute to the kindly old gentleman who won the hearts of so many citizens of Alabama.

Submitted by James Record, Sr.

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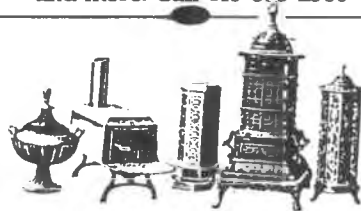


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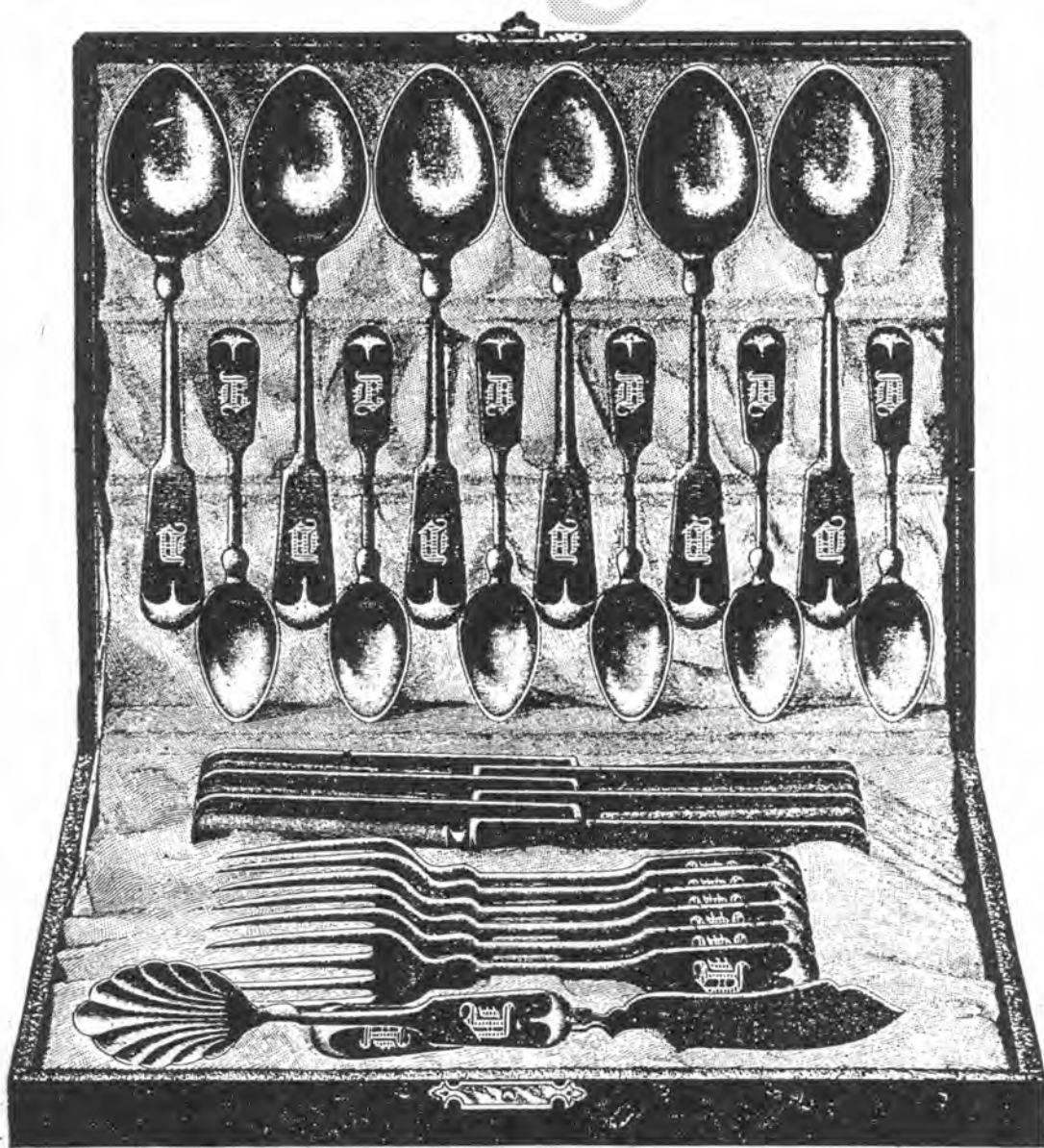
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