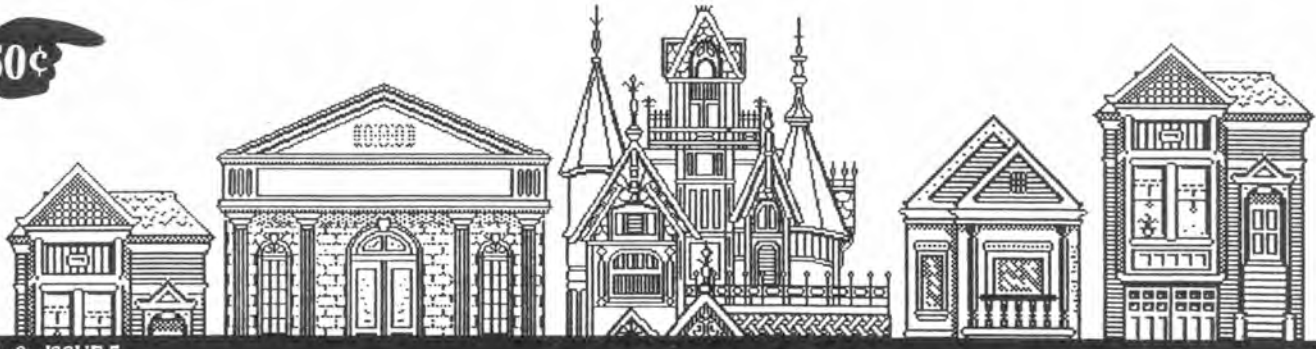


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VOL. 2 ISSUE 5

1991

Old Huntsville

A PUBLICATION FOR HUNTSVILLE

The Legend Of Monte Sano Crowder

The King Of The Snuffdippers Ball!

Stories have been written about most of the historic places in Huntsville, but one you will never see in the history books is a place that carved its own niche in this city's history for over a quarter of a century. It was a place that a lot of people will never forget - and some people would like to forget. During this time Monte Sano Crowder reigned supreme, as King of the Snuffdipper's Ball.



Monte Sano Crowder was born on the mountain that he was named for in 1914. When Monte was only six years old his mother died, leaving his father with a whole house full of kids, with very little money. Monte's father was a natural musician and often, when times were especially hard, would wrap his Sears and Roebuck fiddle in an old flour sack and "take off fiddling for a week or two, in order to keep food on the table."

Monte began fiddling when he was about ten years old. His dad kept his fiddle laying on the bed and while he was fixing supper, Monte would slip into the bedroom and saw very quietly on the fiddle. His dad came in one day and told him to "go ahead and play it, only don't break anything." From that day on, Monte was a fiddle player.

Like his father, Monte and his brothers were all natural born musicians. In 1928 Monte and his brother began playing together as the Crowder Brothers. The oldest brother A.P. was the manager of the band. A.P. Crowder later moved to Illinois where he became known as the top fiddle player in the state.

Monte recalls that back in those days people would plan barn dances sometimes a year in advance. There would be cold drinks and ice cream and the street would be roped off and sawdust spread down for people to dance on. Sometimes the dancing would go on till the wee hours of the morning. The band tried to charge \$15 a night for the entire group, three or four dollars apiece was pretty good money in those days.

"Times were gettin kind of lean back then and I was gettin tired of chopping wood, so one day I tell Leon, my brother, I say Let's go to Texas or someplace where we can make music and make a little money, too. Leon, he looked at me and laughed and said 'we can't play that good!' Well, by Golly, we can at least try, I told him. The next day we took off for Texas."

"We were hitchhiking and didn't have no money so we carried our cotton sacks with us. We figured that if we didn't make no money making music, we could still pay our way by picking cotton.

It's a good thing we had them sacks, cause when we got to Texas, they had mosquitoes as big as birds and we had to crawl into those sacks to sleep, otherwise they would have eat us alive".

"Well, we got to Texas, we started making music on the sidewalks. We would stand there and play all the tunes that we knew and if we were lucky someone would put a little spare change in the hat, and then we could eat again. We had been doing this for a couple of days when this guy with a medicine show hires us to play for his show. We would make music, people would gather around, and then this medicine man would sell his goods. We must have spent most of that summer in Dallas making music. That's when we got to thinking that we were genuine musicians.

Monte returned to Alabama, convinced that he could make a living playing the fiddle. In 1937, Slim Daniel gave Monte his first job in Huntsville. Word of the young man and his fiddle playing spread throughout the Tennessee Valley, and it wasn't long before he was in great demand.

"Those were the days when a man put his heart and his soul into his music. I remember back in 1939, or maybe '40 when some guy by the name of Hank Williams called me and wanted me to make music with him. I played with him for a while but he wanted to go to Louisiana and make some records. I told him that I didn't care nothing about being famous, I had everything I wanted right here in Huntsville."

Hank Williams went to Louisiana where he auditioned for the "Louisiana Hayride", the show that was to propel him into worldwide fame within a few years. In 1941 a man appeared at his door and asked him to take a job playing for a square dance. The man told Monte that they weren't making much money and couldn't afford to pay anything except a percentage of the gate. The square dance was commonly known as the "Snuffdipper's Ball" and Monte was to play there for the next thirty-two years.



Old Huntsville

A PUBLICATION FOR HISTORIC HUNTSVILLE

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The Snuffdipper's Ball was located upstairs at the old Temple Theatre, in a room normally used for union meetings, on Jefferson Street. The lot on which it stood is now a parking lot for the Heritage Club. Walking down the street years ago, the only evidence you would see of the ball was a narrow doorway and a long, steep set of stairs. No signs, no neon lights, you had to know what you were looking for in order to find it.

"You had to climb the steps, pay a fifty cents admission, and then you'd be in this big room. The room itself wasn't much to look at, it was just a big room with a few chairs on the side, had a place to sell potato chips and soft drinks, and yes, back in the old days it even had spittoons for people that dipped snuff or chewed tobacco."

"But it wasn't the room that made the ball, it was the people. Use to, most everyone lived out in the country and they had to work hard for a living, and Saturday night was the only night they had to have a little fun and let off a little steam. There would be people dressed in their Sunday best, their hair slicked down, and a Sunday-go-to-meeting shine on their shoes. And over there, against that wall, would be the boys that picked cotton all week, still dressed in their overalls.



Grandpa would be back in a corner holding court with all the other men while the missus would be sitting there clapping her hands to the music. There'd be so many people packed in that smoky room that it was a wonder that the old wooden floor didn't just cave in with all that stompin and dancin going on."

"Lord, if that old building was still there, and if those walls could talk, there would be a thousand ghosts in that room, and they would all be tapping their feet to the memories of all the music that was played there."

With the new fiddle player taking the lead, the Snuffdipper's Ball became an instant success, with throngs of people lining up in front of the door hours before it opened. Its success created a new entertainment district downtown. No alcohol was served on the premises of the Ball so bars began to spring up around it to cater to the thirsty crowds. An oldtimer claims

that "you could always tell when Monte took a break. When the music stopped, the people would swarm out of the Ball, like bees on honey, headed for the bars, but when Monte picked that fiddle up again, the bars would empty out and the sidewalks that were crowded with noisy people a few minutes earlier would grow silent."

By this time the Snuffdipper's Ball had acquired such a reputation that it was posted "Off Limits" to military personnel, as far away as Nashville, Tennessee. Ironically, this was one of the few places of entertainment downtown that did not serve alcohol, but a lot of people had bottles of "cough medicine" in brown paper bags, sticking out of their back pockets.

Monte recalls, "There was never no trouble inside my place. It was all outside. I would tell those boys that if they wanted to fight they could go out side and do it. I wouldn't put up with that in the Ball. Why, there was even people

that would drop their kids off with us while they took off to the bars!"

The fact that Monte was a professional wrestler, undoubtedly helped persuade some of the local rowdies to keep the peace. He first stepped in the ring in 1937 and over the next 15 years would wrestle as a professional in over 200 matches, under the name of "The Breakdown Wrestler". Asked if he was any good, Monte replied "I didn't win very much, but I made me a little money."

Earl Frazier, a retired Madison County deputy sheriff, recalls "working Jefferson Street in front of the Ball every Saturday night. We never had no trouble in the Ball itself, but whenever the band took a break we got ready. A lot of those boys would go outside and try their best to see how fast they could get drunk. Most Saturday nights, we would arrest forty, fifty or maybe sometimes even sixty people on the sidewalks in front of the Snuffdipper's Ball. It



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Monte Crowder Continued From Page 3

wasn't really as bad as it sounds, most of them were the same people every week. The sheriff's department had regular customers back then."

"One night, me and Ed Norton was working the sidewalks in front of the Ball. We had already arrested one drunk and had him in the car and we were putting the handcuffs on another one when a third drunk staggered by. When I saw the third one, knowing that we didn't have any more room in the car, I reached over and tapped him on the shoulder and told him that he was under arrest. 'Just walk on down to the jail,' I told him. 'We'll be down there directly to take care of you.' Sure enough, in about 15 minutes when we got to the jail to drop off another load of prisoners, there the guy was, sitting on the curb waiting for us to put him in jail. Something like that would never happen today."

Life was treating Monte pretty good in those days. Monte recalls, "I was married and had a son, I was

making a little money and only had to work one night a week. Somewhere around 1947 or 48 some guys come to me and ask me if I want to do a radio show. It was WHBS, and was down there where we pay our utilities at now. So I ask these guys, "What's in it for me?"

"We are going to sell twelve sponsors at \$3 apiece, and you'll get \$12 and we'll get \$24."

"That didn't sound like too bad a deal to me so I became a Radio Announcer. I'm making twelve bucks an hour for sitting there talking just like I been doing all my life for nothing. I had this show called "Crowder's Corn Crib" and I talked and played music, only thing I didn't like was doing the weather. Most of the time the weather forecast back then was wrong, so they would give me this sheet of paper with the weather on it and I would go on the air and say, 'I don't believe a word of it, but this sheet of paper says that the weather is gonna be . . .'"

"Only thing was that this job was

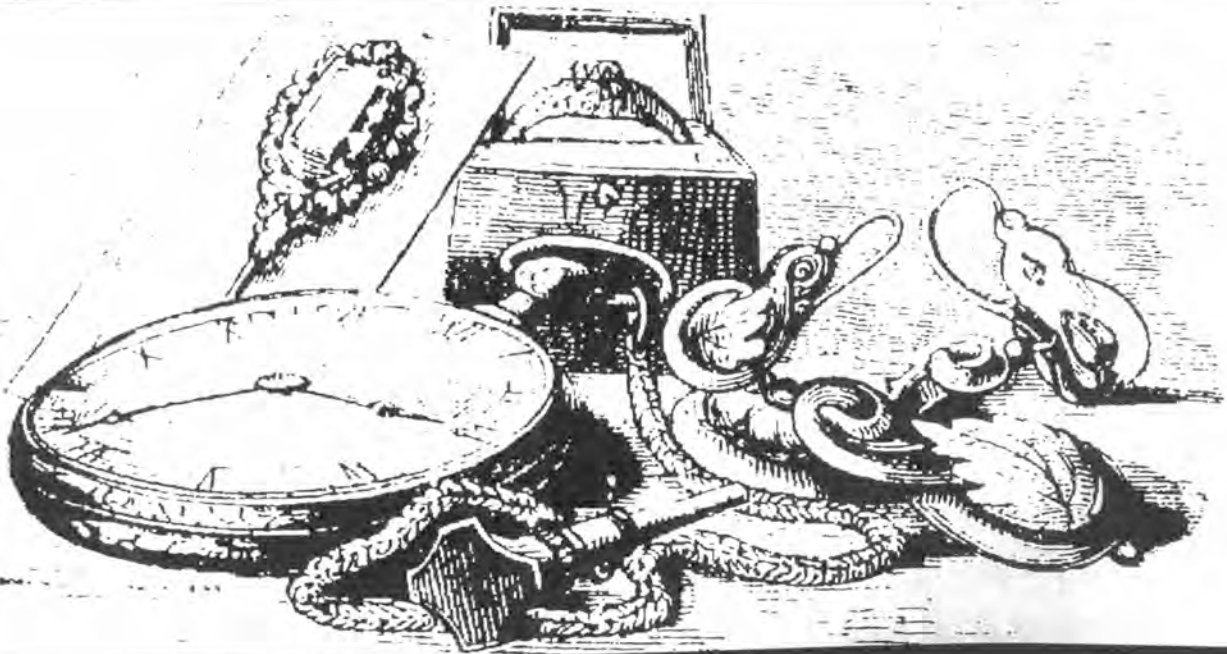
interfering with my fishing. Got to where every time they wanted me at the station, the fish would be biting. Well, anyway they call me in the office one day and tell me that I have to choose between fishing and doing radio. That was a dumb thing for them to do, cause I had my fishing rod in the car all ready to go."

In 1972 progress caught up with the Snuffdipper's Ball. Nightclubs began selling drinks over the bar, a practice not allowed until the late sixties, and most had free entertainment. People that had been going to the Ball for years slowly began to drift away, and Monte was forced to close it down.

Monte Sano Crowder, the King of the Snuffdipper's Ball, became one of the most well-known fiddle players in the Southeast, recording numerous tapes and records, with his music being used in two movies produced here in Alabama.

The man who claims to be able to play six types of music on his fiddle says that "there still ain't no music like mountain music. Most

A T R A D I T I O N I N H U N T S V I L L E



Bromberg's

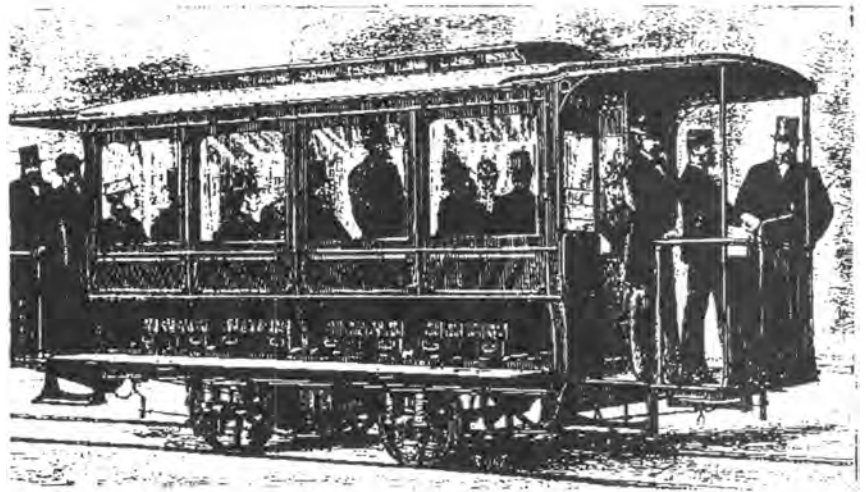
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of the young kids coming up today, they make a lot of noise but they don't make much music. You got Tony Mason, maybe one or two others that can still play good music like my Daddy taught me, but there ain't many of us left."

"When you get old there ain't much to do except sit under a shade tree and drink Double cola and remember. You try to remember all the things you've done and all the people you've met."

"And I've loved every minute of it."

If you want to buy one of Monte's records
Call 205-665-1856



Have It Out With Your Husband!

Street Cars

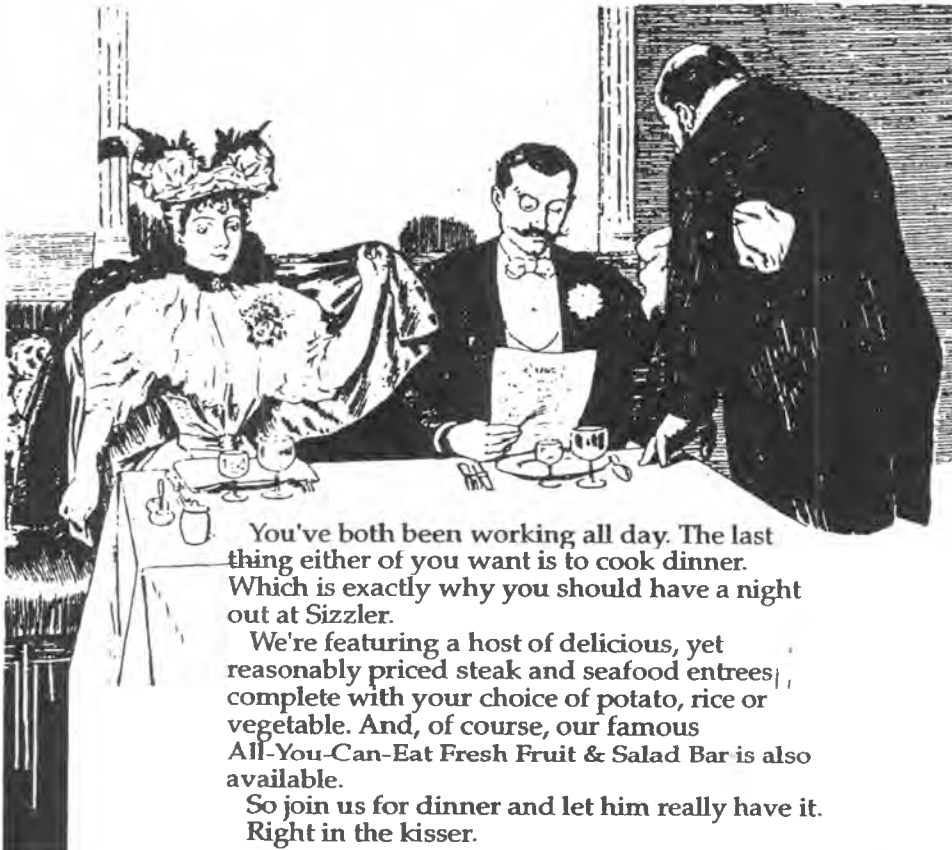
Had it not been for the street cars, transportation would have been a big problem for the early residents of the community - many of whom did not own a horse and buggy. The cars started running about four months before No. 1 mill (Merrick Mill) was completed, as evidenced by the following announcement in the March 3, 1900 issue of the "Republican."

"TAKE A RIDE: Huntsville's electric railway has at last started. The cars began running regular Wednesday morning. The first car leaves the barn at 6:00 in the a.m. and the last car at midnight".

At this time the railway company had four cars in operation. The fare was five cents.

Not only was it a great convenience for the early residents to ride the trolley, but an exciting thrill as well. The fact that the line extended within the village limits brought many town sightseers to the new community, and the Brahan Spring, close to the end of the car line, was a popular spot for citywide events, such as Fourth of July celebrations. Sometimes the electric railway offered a special rate of five cents for the round trip to those who wished to attend the day-long events at Brahan Spring.

The last street car ran on February 23, 1931.



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Buster Brown Haircut Days

I learned early that the red, white and blue barber pole in front of Rampey's Barber Shop was not the place to go for peppermint stick candy. Mama had about given up in utter exasperation about what to do with my hair when I was first led into what was strictly a man's domaine. She had tried rolling my hair up at night in rags but by the next morning they had come undone and scattered all over the bed and down on the floor.

She declared that I must move around as much in my sleep as I did during the day. Next she got some curling irons and stuck them down into the glass chinmey of an oil lamp, turned up the flame and heated it hot enough to curl my hair but by the time I got to school the curls were so limp my teacher would laugh every time she looked at me.

When the Buster Brown style became vogue Mama was convinced it was the answer to her prayers. It was then that I was first introduced to Rampey's Barber Shop. Mr. Rampey assured Mama he could greatly improve on my situation and invited me to hop up and have an elevated seat on the leather covered board he put across the arms of his antiquated chair.

He then viewed my head from the side, back and front and seemed somewhat puzzled about just where to begin the transformation. He then covered me with a white cape and grabbed my jaw with one hand that left me paralyzed from the neck up. Next, I heard the noisy clippers and looking out the corner of my eye saw my hair slowly falling down on the cape to the floor.

Goose bumps went up and down my spine as Mr. Rampey went up and down with his clippers. When he finished Mama said she was real pleased that I had kept so quiet. Little did she know that it was only because he had my jaws securely clamped together in his vise.

The next few years Mama and I made many trips to Rampeys on a regular basis to get my hair cut then one day I overheard her tell Daddy that she had no intention of putting her feet back in Rampey's again. She said that a lot of men hung out in there when they really didn't need a haircut or a shoeshine . . . it was just a downtown gossip shelter and I was hearing things I shouldn't. This ended my Buster Brown days and the problems with my hair began all over again.

Helen H. Miller
Excerpts from "To Live and Die in Dixie"



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Scott Averbuch
President - Broker

*A wise man once said that if you
look hard enough through the
rain, you can see the rainbow.
A wiser man said that if you
get the hell out of the rain, you
won't get wet.*

Mary Barksdale

A rich man's joke is always funny.

Diane Cline
Document Librarian/Boeing

*Marriage is a sharing experience.
What's his is mine, and
what's mine is mine.*

Cathey Camey
Hewlett-Packard Co.

*Sometimes when you lead a horse to
water, all you get is a smelly,
wet horse.*

John Crow, Eccentric

Digestibility of Food.

ARTICLE OF FOOD.	CONDITION.	Hours required.	ARTICLE OF FOOD.	CONDITION.	Hours required.
Eloe	Boiled	1.00	Fresh mutton	Boiled	5.00
Eggs, whipped	Raw	1.30	Soup, beans	"	3.00
Trout, salmon, fresh	Boiled	1.30	Soup, chicken	"	3.00
Apples, sweet and mellow	Raw	1.30	Apple dumpling	"	3.00
Venison steak	Broiled	1.35	Fresh oysters	Roasted	3.15
Tapioca	Boiled	2.00	Pork steak	Broiled	3.15
Barley	"	2.00	Fresh mutton	Roasted	3.15
Milk	"	2.00	Corn bread	Baked	3.15
Bullock's liver, fresh	Boiled	2.00	Carrots	Boiled	3.15
Fresh eggs	Raw	2.00	Fresh sausage	Broiled	3.20
Codfish, cured and dry	Boiled	2.00	Fresh flounder	Fried	3.30
Milk	Raw	2.15	Fresh catfish	"	3.30
Wild turkey	Roasted	2.15	Fresh oysters	Stewed	3.30
Domestic turkey	"	2.30	Butter	Melted	3.30
Goose	"	2.80	Old, strong cheese	Raw	3.30
Sucking pig	"	2.30	Mutton soup	Boiled	3.30
Fresh lamb	Broiled	2.30	Oyster soup	"	3.30
Hash, meat and vegetables	Warmed	2.30	Fresh wheat bread	Baked	3.30
Beans and pod	Boiled	2.30	Flat turnips	Boiled	3.30
Paranips	"	2.30	Irish potatoes	"	3.30
Irish potatoes	Roasted	2.30	Fresh eggs	Hard boiled	3.30
Chicken	Fricassee	2.45	"	Fried	3.30
Onstard	Baked	2.45	Green corn and beans	Boiled	3.45
Salt beef	Boiled	2.45	Beets	"	3.45
Bour and hard apples	Raw	2.50	Fresh, lean beef	Fried	4.00
Fresh oysters	"	2.55	Fresh veal	Broiled	4.00
Fresh eggs	Soft boiled	3.00	Domestic fowls	Roasted	4.00
Beef, fresh, lean and rare	Roasted	3.00	Ducks	"	4.00
Beef steak	Broiled	3.00	Beef soup, vegetables and bread	Boiled	4.00
Pork, recently salted	Stewed	3.00	Pork, recently salted	"	4.20
			Fresh veal	Fried	4.20
			Cabbage, with vinegar	"	4.20
			Pork, fat and lean	Boiled	4.20
				Roasted	5.20

Taken From Safe Counsel
An 1895 Publication

"When I was younger I used to make mistakes. Now I just "acquire experience."

*Sue Crow
Headhunter Salon*

*Don't mess with Space Station.
Bud Cramer, U.S. Congressman*

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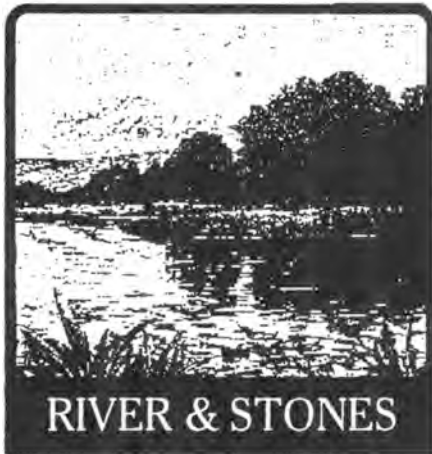
EARLENE

Remember... Cleanliness is next to Godliness.

Equal parts of vinegar and coal oil is a good mixture for cleaning varnished floors. Apply with a cloth wrapped over the broom or mop, allow to stand about ten minutes and polish with a soft cloth.

The following works very well for cleaning painted walls and woodwork. To one gallon of water add 1 cup of ammonia, 1/2 cup of vinegar and 1/4 cup baking soda. Apply with a sponge or soft cloth. It won't need rinsing. Start at bottom and work your way up.

To clean household brushes, use white soap flakes in a pan of hot water to make a good lathering solution. Add a few drops of ammonia. Rinse thoroughly and dry. For white bristles, soak in diluted hydrogen peroxide to freshen and renew their appearance. This chemical is perfectly safe and has no injurious effect on even the most delicate material.



RIVER & STONES

I like the summer river when the afternoon sloughs are quiet, and warm blankets gently rise from the still surface.

I would skip stones, not round, flat ones like you're supposed to, but ones that weren't so round or weren't so flat.

I could skip them too.

I have often wondered, why on life's rivers I keep trying to skip stones that aren't shaped right.

From Nothing to Do On Sunday,
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by John M. Crow. Reprinted by permission of the author.

Television was never like this.

Missy Ming Smith, Madison County Commissioner's office

There is nothing more instantly contagious than the boss's bad disposition.

Rita Howard, Janitorial Service

The Wonderful World Of Herbs

You often hear of "edible" plants and flowers, but maybe you aren't really sure of what can be used and eaten safely. Following is a partial list of plants that can be used either cosmetically or as food. Most of these plants can be grown indoors in pots, or in outdoor herb gardens. Have fun!

- Almond - oil and meal
- Aloe - fresh gel for burns
- Camomile - flowers; whole or powdered - fresh or dried
- Red clover - flower heads, fresh or dried
- Comfrey - the root either fresh or dried, the leaf fresh or dried
- Garlic - the cloves, use fresh
- Ginseng - the root, dried and powdered
- Honey - eaten, drunk or as a mask
- Lavender - the flower buds, fresh or dried
- Licorice - the root, dried and powdered, or pieces
- Marigold - the flower heads, fresh or dried
- Mints - the leaves of all species, but especially the Spearmint or Peppermint
- Nettle - the leaves
- Orris - the root; dried or pieces
- Pansy or Violet - the flowers or leaves, dried or fresh
- Parsley - leaves and stem
- Rose - leaves, buds or blossoms, fresh or dried
- Rosemary - leaves of flowers, fresh or dried
- Sage - the leaves or flowers, fresh or dried
- Sea plants - all types of the pods and stripes, fresh or dried
- Strawberry - the leaves and fruit
- Thyme - leaves fresh or dried
- Witch hazel - leaves or bark, fresh or dried
- Yogurt - in you and on you

Jeanne Rose
"Kitchen Cosmetics"



Courting In Early Huntsville

Have you ever wondered where folks went on dates in Huntsville back in the 1930's and 1940's, when Huntsville was still just a sleepy little cotton town? When the boundaries of the city went from Meridian and Washington Streets on the north to Huntsville Hospital on the South?

Well, I started wondering about that very thing the other day and decided to ask some long-time Huntsville residents just where they went on a date.

I called about eight folks and each had a unique version of Huntsville as a place to date years ago. Each person I talked to told me of fun times spent at the old Lyric Theater downtown and also at the Grand Theater, around the corner from the Lyric.

A few mentioned the Elks, an old opera house on the square that once had good stage shows. Also a few told about the Princess Theater on Church Street.

When asked about restaurants, one place was mentioned unanimously as having the best burgers in town. A place called Swaims,

where many took their dates. One fellow said you could smell those delicious burgers when you got within a mile of the place.

Some other favorite hangouts for kids with dates were the old Post Office Cafe downtown, the Central Cafe, Broadway's Restaurant (where Roper's florist is now located). And the Sullins Cafe. Mullins used to be on Stevens Street before moving to its present location on Andrew Jackson Way. One guy said you could get a good sized burger at Mullins at that time for a dime. Two other nice places were McKights and Adcock's.

One fellow mentioned that Huntsville had many honky tonks during this time. A few were pretty notorious and you didn't take a date there. Mostly you went drinking there with the guys. Places like the White Castle, better known as the Bloody Bucket, because of all the Saturday night fights there, were all well known. And then, of course, was the Snuffdipper's Ball on Jefferson Street.

A few other clubs mentioned were Calley's and Midway. Steadman's also was a nice place to eat and dance. It was located where the present Big B Drugs is, near Huntsville Hospital.

Almost unanimously the folks I talked to raved about the Monte Sano Tavern. It was located next to the park and picnic area on Monte Sano. Some referred to it as the Lodge.

For years I thought I was looking at the burned-out ruins of the Monte Sano Hotel in the park, but now I realize those ruins were of the Tavern. The old hotel was located on a bluff overlooking the city on what is now Old Chimney Road. You can still see the old chimney of the burned out hotel.

Everyone agreed the Tavern was a favorite place to eat, with large oak beams overhead and a huge stone fireplace at either end of the large dining room.

One gal told me that on her very first date she was taken to the old Post Office Cafe. She thought

Continued next page



To Your Health

The Doctor Sez:

Hypertension (High Blood Pressure)

Blood pressure is simply the force of blood pushing against the walls of the blood vessels. The narrower the blood vessels, the higher the pressure, and the harder the heart must work to pump the blood throughout the body. Hypertension, or high blood pressure, is a common disease throughout the world, and one of the most frequent causes of heart disease and stroke.

Some causes of high blood pressure are known. These causes include certain kidney diseases, hardening of the arteries, etc.

In most cases no real cause can be found; it does, however, have a tendency to run in families. Usually it can be treated easily without discomfort to the patient.

The problem with high blood pressure is that there are no real symptoms initially, and many people who have it don't know it. It is sometimes referred to as "The Silent Disease". It is estimated that about 60 million people in the U.S.

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and Canada are afflicted with this condition. Blacks are more prone to high blood pressure than whites. Also, it seems to affect those who smoke, those who are overweight, as well as the children of the people who are hypertensive.

Actually, anyone can develop this condition whether they are young or old. The important point is that those people who are included toward having hypertension should have it checked regularly - at least every six to twelve months. This can be done by your own doctor, or a number of other places such as the company you work for, shopping malls, clinics and a number of organizations who set up stations for checking blood pressure as a public service.

Your blood pressure is checked by an instrument which measures the pressure of the blood as it is being pumped by the heart (systolic), and the resting pressure (diastolic) when the blood flow is at rest, or not in the action of being pumped. A typical reading for an adult is 120/80 which is ideal, and pressures up to 140/90 are considered to be in the normal range. A diastolic reading (lower number) over 90 may indicate that treatment is necessary.

All hypertension, NO MATTER HOW MILD, should be treated. Treatment may involve only the losing of weight, or cutting back on the salt intake, or a daily exercise program. Other cases may require regular prescribed dosages of medication. In any case, the treatment should be determined by your family physician and it is important that whatever the treatment, it should be followed very closely.

Dr. Annelie M. Owens

Courting Continued From Page 9

she'd be adventurous so she ordered fried oysters. Never having eaten any, she had to drown them in ketchup to get them down.

If a girl didn't have lots of dates back then (before the War) something was wrong. There were lots of fellas around town and most were military guys, all waiting to be called up for the War.

Those were very uncertain times. If you were dating a guy, you were never quite sure after a few dates if you'd ever see him again. He may be called up for the War and then never come back to Huntsville. He may move back to his hometown after the War and then you'd lose track of each other.

Even with all the uncertainty though, everyone managed to have a pretty good time in small town Huntsville. Picnics were often mentioned as a fun thing to do, and also swimming. There were lots of drive in restaurants around during those days. The one mentioned by almost everyone as having the best barbeque in town was Bill's. It was located on Meridian Street near the old Lincoln School.

Everyone's favorite drug store was Tom Dark's on the square. It had little round ice cream tables where you could go with a date for ice cream and a good fountain coke. It was once on the East Side of the square but then later moved to the North Side. Mr. Dark's motto was "We've been on the square for years."

One gal said when her steady guy went off to the War, it had been decided that she would date others while he was gone. Some of her dates in his absence took her to her very favorite eating place, the Russell Erskine Hotel. She said they served wonderful homemade rolls, great watercress salad and the best homemade pies in town. Continued next page

"Those were uncertain times. If you were dating a guy, you were never quite sure after a few dates if you'd ever see him again."

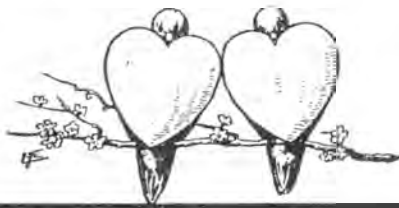
Thank You!

We would like to thank our many readers for their support. You are responsible for whatever success that we have enjoyed over the last ten months. We hope we will continue to bring you Huntsville's history in the same manner as we have in the past.

When her steady came back home and asked her to marry him, she said she'd have to think about it. She told him she wanted to get out of debt before marriage. She owed downtown Dunnivant's \$100, which was a lot of money back then. He promptly paid her Dunnivant's bill so she, running out of excuses and also being very much in love with him, married him immediately. She laughs and tells folks now that she married him because he paid off her Dunnivant's bill!

Back then, it was a more casual time. There weren't as many planned activities as now. With so little going on in town in the way of entertainment, folks going on dates had to think up things to do on their own. It sounds like they did a pretty good job of it. And it sounds like those were some pretty good times and great memories for a lot of people in early Huntsville. I kinda wish I'd been there, too!

LINDA STRANGE



An opinion is the next best thing to knowing what you are talking about.

*Bucky Howx
Retired Green Beret*

FACTS & FIGURES



RUMORS & HEARSAY

Old Huntsville Trivia

1874

Ms. Kate Fariss is appointed principal of Huntsville High School, with the grand salary of \$65 per month.

1877

Mr. Leroy Adams is fined \$5 for disturbing the peace. It seems as if his mule went on "a sit down strike" during a Mardi Gras parade, disrupting the festivities.

1877

Huntsville is excited over the news of gold being discovered in Hillsboro, a suburb of Huntsville. Unfortunately, the vein quickly petered out.

Another example of Congress looking after their own is the foresight it has shown in making Federal prisons more like resort hotels.
Glenn Brooks, Private Investigator

1883

Wes Brown is abducted from the County jail and lynched on the northwest corner of the Courthouse lawn. He had been accused of an axe murder of William Street, a Huntsville policeman.

1888

First newspaper published in New Market. One of the stories related W.F. Laxon's comment that "lightning struck my popcorn field and popped every grain of it."

1901

President William McKinley visits Huntsville, where he is given a new shittam wood walking stick. Five months later he would be assassinated.

1901

Former black soldiers organize a post of the Grand Army of the Republic, headed by J.W. Davis.

1910

The Boll Weevil, scourge of cotton farmers, makes its first appearance in Alabama.

1927

Ed McClure files for divorce from his wife. He claims his wife tricked him into marrying her by getting pregnant. Mrs. McClure appeared in court to contest charges along with their children. . . all sixteen of them.

October Breakfast

*Having to prepare breakfast alone
I discovered that a half-cooked
broken blue berry pancake
is like an October watermelon patch
at night.*

*There is no one around for miles.
It is very quiet.*

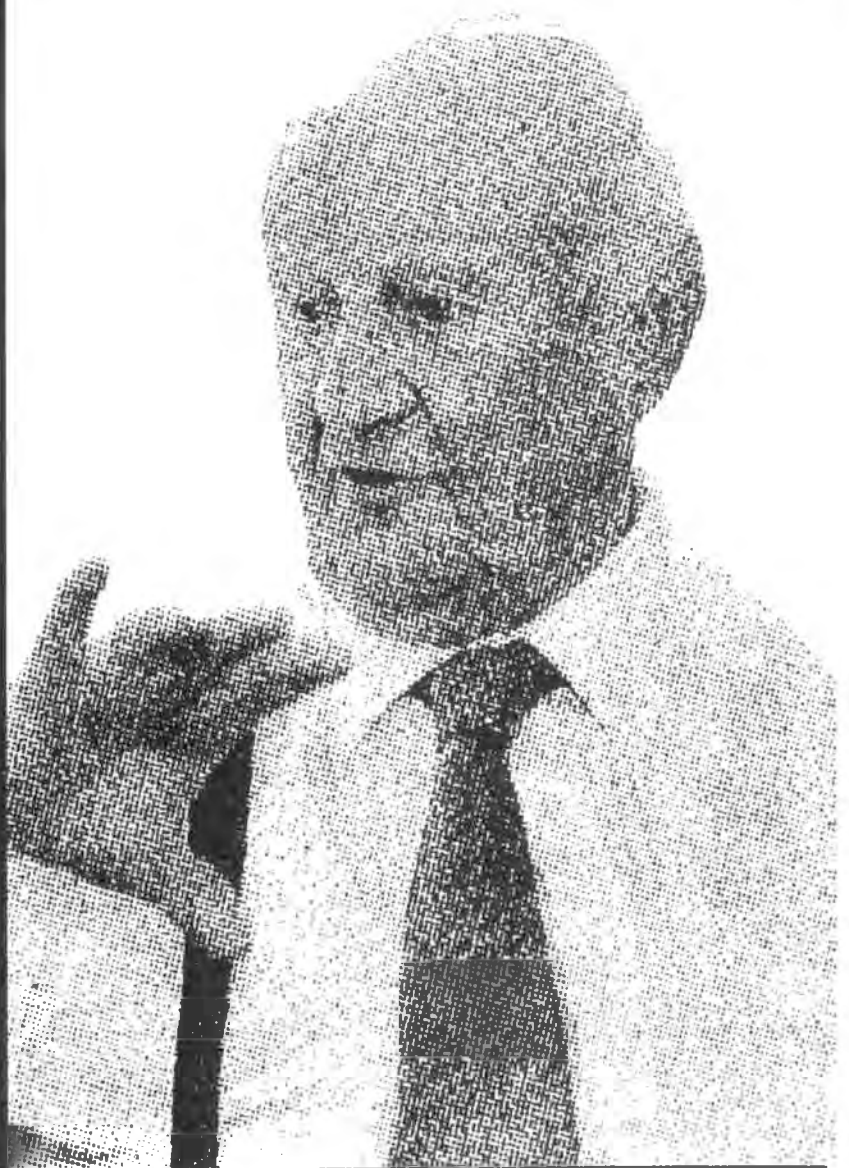
A poem by John Crow



Not In America!

The Arthur
Rudolph Story:
Nazi Criminal
Or American
Hero

By Tom Carney



One morning in 1984 Huntsvillians awoke to find astonishing headlines in their newspaper. Arthur Rudolph, a prominent member of the Von Braun German Rocket Team had been found, these many years later, to have committed war crimes during World War II and had left the country in disgrace rather than face his accusers in court. The Justice Department, anyway, was saying that this was the case.

The townsfolk were shocked. They were proud of their Germans.

They had made Huntsville what it was. From an ordinary small cotton-producing town with a Confederate soldier keeping watch over the courthouse square, it had become a bustling, cosmopolitan center of the Tennessee Valley, known across the country for its shining scientific accomplishments. To the people of Huntsville the Germans had proven themselves time and again through the decades since their arrival. They were good. Never before had there been any reason to doubt that.

Some still didn't doubt it. While others ducked their heads, being too timid to pry into so sensitive a political matter, the

Old Timers, an association of former rocket scientists and their friends, formed a defense fund and set out to determine the facts. What they and others eventually uncovered was even more startling than the original accusations against Rudolph.

Arthur Rudolph claims he was lured into a trap. The knock on the door came in September 1982. "My wife and I had been in Germany for a visit," Rudolph explained. "And while we were gone an interesting thing happened. Our daughter Marianne received a phone call and someone asked her, 'Are you the daughter of Arthur Rudolph?'"

Marianne told her mysterious, unidentified caller when her parents would return and asked the purpose of the caller's question. "Just a routine check," he answered.

The day after the Rudolphs returned, a registered letter was delivered. It was from something called the Office of Special Investigations, or OSI, the office within the Justice Department which Rudolph later learned was established for the sole purpose of prosecuting Nazi war criminals. The OSI was asking to speak to Rudolph concerning his wartime activities in Germany. Rudolph responded in a way which he later described as "dumb, dumb, dumb...dumb!"

Without consulting a lawyer he packed up his yellowing papers from four decades earlier and went for what he thought would be a harmless discussion with the OSI representatives.

He had always told the truth about who he was, where he had been during the war, and what he had done: He had grown up in a small village in Germany where his family were modest farmers. After college, made possible by selling off part of the farm, he went to work in Berlin where he became an amateur rocket experimenter. When the depression came and he was out of work he used his hobby to land a job with the German army.

At Peenemuende he worked with Wernher Von Braun and was assigned responsibility for V-2 Rocket production. When the British bombed Peenemuende the V-2 production line was moved to an underground plant where forced laborers from the Dora Concentration Camp worked alongside German civilians. At the end of the war he was captured by Americans and brought to the United States.

That was it. This was the story he told when he was captured and many times since. The story had been good enough for his captors, and at that time he was an "enemy alien."

Since those far away days he, with this same story always in view, had been given American citizenship, given a top secret

clearance, developed the Pershing Missile for the Army and the Saturn V for NASA, and had been given high awards for his outstanding work.

Rudolph said he was unconcerned. He met his questioners from the OSI, three affable young men, and repeated his story one more time. "We were too trusting," Rudolph's wife Martha later said. "The interview was so harmless and friendly, very friendly. When it was over they shook hands with Art and thanked him for coming." Then, of course, they accused him of being a war criminal.

Get a lawyer they later wrote to him, and we will discuss the evidence "amassed" against you. In the discussions that followed they assured Rudolph's lawyer that they had the goods on his client. They had eye witnesses, they had documents.

Furthermore Rudolph could expect harsh punishment. They were going to take his means of livelihood, his NASA pension, and they were perhaps going to take the citizenships of his wife and daughter. But they were offering him a choice.

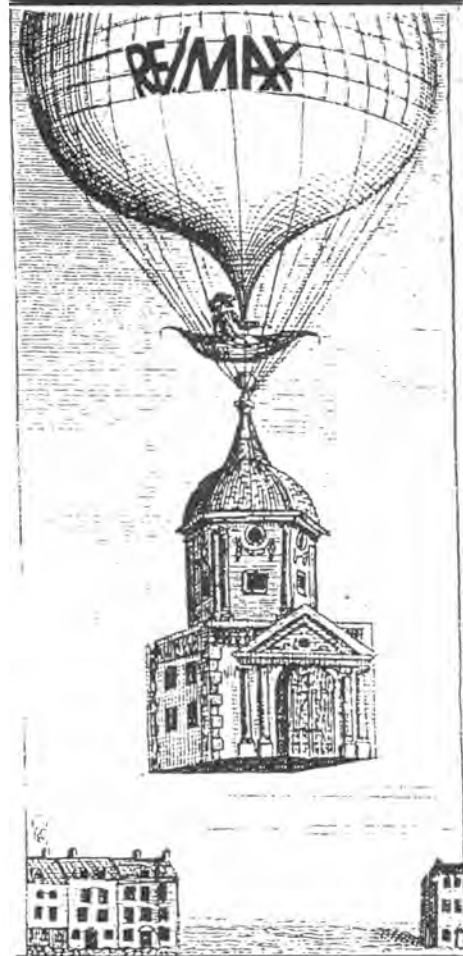
If he would agree to leave the country and renounce his own citizenship they would let him keep his pension and would not move against his family.

It would take pages to cover Rudolph's agony at this turn. Rudolph claims he was innocent and abhorred the proposed agreement. On the other hand he was in poor health, having had a heart attack, and did not have the financial wherewithal to wage what would be a very expensive legal battle whose tentacles would reach across 40 years and two continents.

Furthermore if he didn't submit to the OSI demands he put at risk his family and his livelihood. In the end he signed the agreement, went to Germany and renounced his citizenship.

It was not long before rumors of the threats and intimidations used to strip Rudolph of his citizenship began to reach Huntsville. The old timers, and especially one of their number, Walter Haeussermann, started digging deeply into the OSI's story. In a word what

Above The Crowd



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they found was that the OSI has been dishonest. They had actually doctored one document they had presented to Rudolph's attorney, making it appear to be something it wasn't. They had submitted a list of witnesses to the German government which was found to be bogus. They had said they could link Rudolph to the "sabotage reporting network." Not only could they not do that, but they could not even prove the existence of such a network.

And so it went. The OSI's case seemed to be entirely fabricated. It appeared as if the only evidence against Rudolph was the testimony that he himself had given in years past to military intelligence, the FBI and the State Department. They had all cleared him, and had even

granted him a Top Secret clearance.

Still, the OSI insisted it had evidence that would prove Rudolph guilty "in thirty seconds." Part of the so-called evidence they had refused to release until a request under the Freedom of Information Act was filed actually included an admission ticket to the Alabama Space and Rocket Center.

Another file had Werner von Braun, the father of the Space Program, listed as a security threat because of his German background. But no new evidence linked Rudolph with war crimes.

After being exiled from the United States, Rudolph was thoroughly investigated by the German government, who cleared him of all wrongdoing and found

him of good character and gave him citizenship. On a visit to Canada Rudolph was detained and required to submit to a lengthy immigration hearing. In an 18-page decision the adjudicator accepted in full Rudolph's story, which was the same as it has always been, and cleared him of charges of persecution. He ruled that Rudolph be barred from Canada based on technical grounds and the mere fact that forced labor was used on the V-2 line, a truth Rudolph has never denied. The decision is being appealed. Meanwhile the Canadian decision, in clearing Rudolph of charges of persecution, amounts to a veritable indictment of the OSI.

Meanwhile Dr. Rudolph lives in Hamburg, Germany - forbidden by the OSI to enter this country to try to clear his name.

Is Arthur Rudolph, the gentle old man who was proud to call Huntsville his home for so many years, really a war criminal? If so, why did the OSI have to fabricate a case against him?

Did our country suppress evidence in order to use Rudolph's knowledge in our pursuit of space travel, and then kick him out of the country when he was no longer useful?

If Dr. Arthur Rudolph is indeed guilty of the alleged war crimes, he should be convicted and punished to the fullest extent of the law. If innocent, he should be vindicated, and the OSI should be indicted for their mishandling of the case.

Whatever the outcome, the man deserves his day in court.

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Arthur Rudolph
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Pets

By Cathey Carney

Marilyn had been married for about five years when she and her husband divorced. It was a bitter time in both their lives, and a year dragged on until, miserable, they both decided they couldn't live with each other any more. The fight over possessions was lengthy, but finally it was over. Marilyn got most everything, even their Beagle, Rusty.

At this time Rusty was about four years old, but still acted like a puppy. He was a friendly, outgoing dog and especially loved going after anything that was thrown to

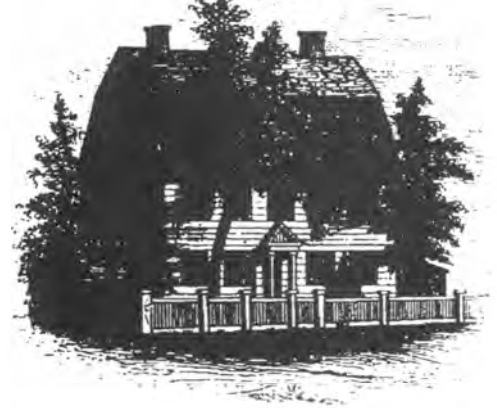
him, and bringing it back. His coat was shiny, his eyes bright and expressive. He loved both his "parents" immensely.

When Marilyn and her husband began having trouble, Rusty was sometimes caught in the middle. He was the victim of a broken glass one drunken night after an especially bad fight, and had to be taken to the vet's with cuts. He cringed at the shouting and got to where he was hiding under the bed when he heard yelling.

The divorce finally over, Marilyn got over her grief fairly quickly and began to date other men. She worked during the day, so the nights she used to spend with Rusty taking walks with him began to decrease. When he would try to jump on the couch with her and a date Marilyn would throw him off.

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In short, the time she used to spend paying attention to Rusty became very infrequent.

And Rusty began to try less and less to get her attention. He didn't run to meet her at the door anymore. He began to eat less and less and seemed listless. Marilyn noticed all of this but was so caught up in her new and exciting life that she just didn't

take the time to pay attention to him. He got to the point where he spent a lot of time just sleeping. His eyes were no longer bright, but had a dull glaze over them. His coat became dry and dull. He gave up, and in just a short while, he died.

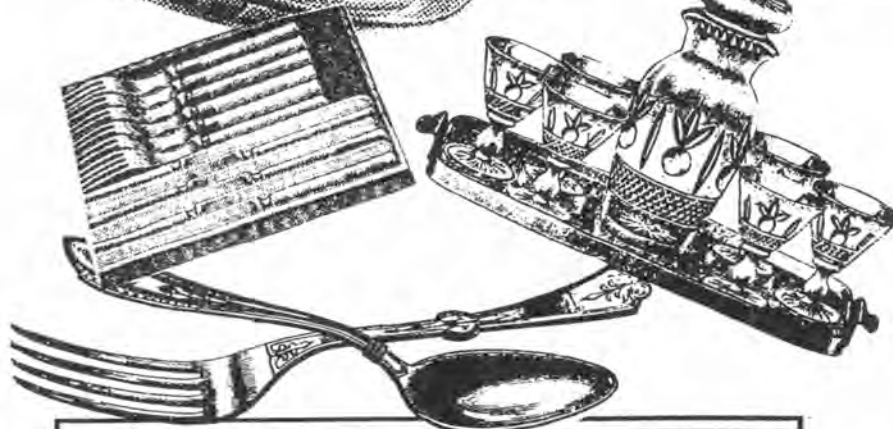
Marilyn could not forgive herself for what she had done. She realized that something was wrong,

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but didn't do anything. She couldn't bring him back. The sweet animal who had lived for his owners attention died because of the lack of it. Marilyn cried herself to sleep for days because of this. She asked me to write this story because someone out there, who may be not paying attention to their pet, may still have the chance to show it love and give it the attention it deserves.

Your cats and dogs have feelings, just like you. They love you no matter if you punish them, or yell at them. They need you to take good care of them. But most of all, they need your touch, and kind words, and your attention. Please don't make the same mistake Marilyn did. Show your pets your affection for them every day. You won't regret it.



True Legends From The Grave

A short serial thriller!

By John Crow

If you look at any tourist information on Huntsville, Alabama there almost always is reference to the beautiful Maple Hill Cemetery. The literature will usually make reference to the beauty of the dogwood trees in full spring bloom, or perhaps the fact that five former Alabama governors are buried there, or maybe tell of the section where the Confederate soldiers are laid to rest. What it won't tell you are the many legends associated with the cemetery.

Now my archaic but trustworthy Webster's dictionary defines, for our purpose anyway, a legend as being a story of some wonderful event, handed down for generations among a people and popularly believed to have a historical basis, although not verifiable: distinguished from a myth. What follows is a humble effort on my part to relate to you a few of the legends surrounding Maple Hill Cemetery, and then go one step beyond and provide the historical basis for the legend.

When the night is strangely still, and the quiet is not even broken by a cricket's chirp or a night breeze rustling, a lonely sound comes from a lonely mausoleum. It is the whispered creak, creak, of a rocking chair rocking. It is the young ghost of Mary Chambers Bibb, tragically poisoned in the full bloom of her youth, and buried upright in her rocking chair by her grief-stricken husband, where she rocks the years away,.....rocking,.....back and forth.....rocking.

In the early 1830's two pretty cousins were always at the center of the many prominent social gatherings in Huntsville. It seemed that where ever the girls were you would also find the dashing Bibb brothers, the sons of Alabama's second governor, who would come to the parties by carriage from their family estate at Belle Mina. It wasn't too long before gossip had it that the two couples were smitten and a double wedding seemed to be in the offing. This was confirmed when it was learned that the girls were having wedding gowns specially designed and made in Paris, France.

Whenever the stage coach would arrive there would be the girls, eager to check the baggage for any package addressed to them. But alas, there would be no gowns, for Paris had run out of the proper fabric. Finally, in early 1835, a parcel did arrive, but it contained only one gown. It was decided that Mary Chambers would proceed with her wedding plans to William Bibb and the wedding was then scheduled for February 26, 1835.

O gentle reader I hesitate to put to paper what follows next, for in steps a grim and sinister Fate. It seems, as is common with young people, that the excitement and anticipation of the coming event created a "pimple" situation on the young girls' complexions. Their faithful and dutiful "Mammy" had a remedy for such situations. She took from a cabinet a bottle of "salts" and Mary Chambers volunteered to take the first spoonful. After taking that tragic first swallow, Mary grasped her young throat and in gasping breath rasped out, "I've been poisoned!"

A perfect advertisement is one that makes people glad they bought.

Barb Eyestone, housewife

If you remember when a cup of coffee was a nickel. . . you might also remember that it took so long to earn a nickel you never had time to drink one.

Joe Owens, Retired and loving it in Sun City, Arizona

One thing worse than being out of step is not knowing the difference.

Lt. Col Owens, Ret.

Americans have more freedom to disagree than anybody else on earth

But that doesn't mean we have to be disagreeable to be an American.

Richard Rausch, retired

The poor Mammy had grown farsighted in her old age and had taken from the cabinet a bottle of oxalic acid instead of "salts."

The shocked, heartbroken William Bibb made the honorable and loving decision to proceed with the wedding plans. Exactly three months after the wedding, Mary Chambers passed away. The sorrowful, heartbroken

William Bibb erected for the remains of his beloved wife the city's first mausoleum.

This new structure in the cemetery was a rather startling sight for the citizens of Huntsville. They had never seen a "grave above the ground" before. There could only be one explanation. Poor melancholy William had entombed his wife in her rocking chair.

Nevertheless, I have been told by reliable personages, that on a quiet night, if you keep your ears, and if you are walking by old Maple Hill Cemetery, you can hear the creak, creak of a rocking chair rocking.....back and forth.....just rocking.

(Next episode - the secret burial place of the Gypsy Queens)

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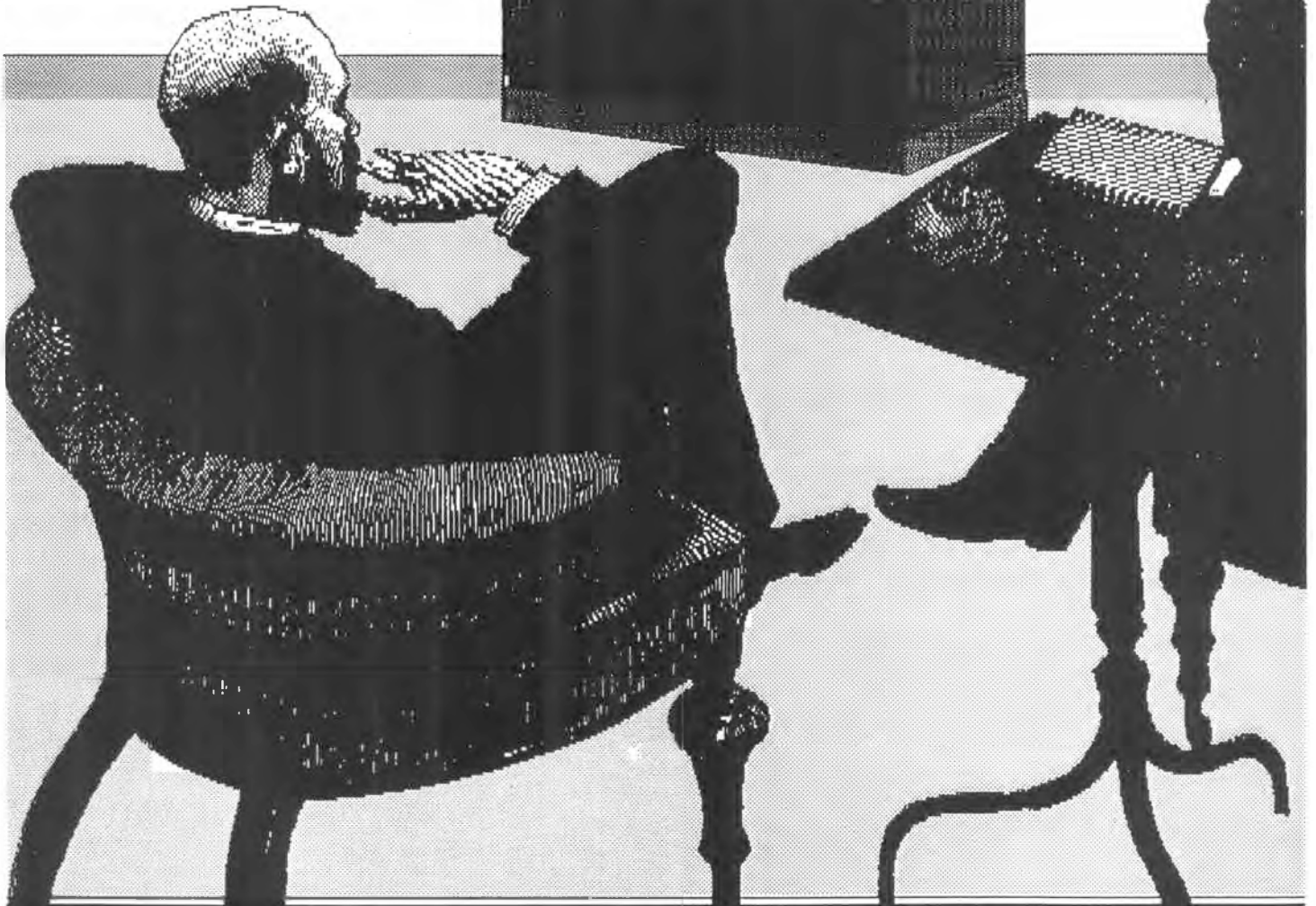
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Letters To The Editor

Dear Old Huntsville

I can't tell you how much I enjoyed your Vol.2, Issue 2, 1991 of your magazine. My nephew lives in Huntsville and brought it up in March, when he visited me. I graduated from Joe Bradley High School and was a student of Mrs. Clopton, so I was delighted to see your article about her. Another fact about this fantastic lady - she was once written about in Ripley's "Believe it or Not."
I look forward to my subscription this year.

Sincerely,
Nora Medley,
Fife Lake, Michigan

Dear Old Huntsville,

Thank you for the forbearance! Your magazine is the greatest. I especially enjoy articles from our Regional resource - James Record. I tend to become saturated with "Vision 2000" and that banal buzzword "high-tech." Your magazine is a great relief - atavism is a possibility again.
Keep it up!

David Milam

Dear Sir:

I sure do enjoy the Old Huntsville magazine. I pass it on to my friends and neighbors, also relatives - they like them also. They're always asking me when am I going to get the next one?
Thanks - keep making them if possible.

Helen Dean

p.s. I'm handicapped, and a Senior.

Dear Editors:

I have heard that you have limited back copies of "Old Huntsville" and would like to see about getting some. Would you please let me know how many you have printed, how many are available, etc.

I really enjoy this magazine - thanks for the work. I love old history and news of the 1800's.

Mary Lou Davis

Editor's Note:

Many of you have asked so here it is. The very first issue, the 12-pager that came out last June, is completely gone. There are a few of the John Harrison issue. Then there are 6 more including the latest. They are \$1 each plus .50 postage.

Thanks for your inquiry!

Dear Editor:

I have enjoyed your magazine very much. I have a suggestion. An old time Huntsvillian, Marvin Browning, told me of a funny thing that happened, maybe around 1940.

It seems that some illiterate clodhopper decided to run for sheriff of Madison County. It was such a hilarious thing that people all over the county voted for him as a joke. He was elected.

As I recall, he was in office only a few weeks, when he was impeached for cause ... I do not remember the cause, but I was told that the sheriff's office was a regular madhouse by the time they got rid of him.

Just a thought. You might look into it as a possible story of local interest.

Bill McCampbell

Editor's Note:

Does anyone out there have any information about this? If so please give us a call at "Old Huntsville" and we'll see what we can do.

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*'The truth can make you flee.
Sam Keith, SCI*

*All of us want to pay what we
think we owe.*

*Anonymous
(overheard at Jay's Lounge)*

*Respect for old age is an expected
nicety - except the first time
somebody shows respect for
yours.*

Bill Nance, Landscape Designer



Wouldn't You Really Rather Drive A Keller?

Huntsville... Automobile Capital Of The South!

It's difficult to imagine that, if history had taken a different course, automobile manufacturing could have meant more to Huntsville than the space industry.

But that's exactly what might have happened, if the Keller automobile achieved the success it could have.

The story began thousands of miles from Huntsville, in San Diego, California. As World War II was drawing to a close in 1945, many defense jobs were being phased out. John Lefield recognized that, and decided he'd better get involved in something else before he was out of a job.

Together with S. A. Williams, and Studebaker executive George Keller, he developed a fiberglass compact car called the "Bobbi" in California.

Although still in the prototype stages, the Bobbi seemed to fill a niche in the auto market for smaller cars. It weighed only 800 pounds, very light even by today's standards. After some refinements and development, they were ready to go to work on Phase Two: marketing the car.

The advertising and promo were handled by S. A. Williams, with considerable success. The media was interested and published articles harking the car's virtues and advantages. Williams also bought advertising space in newspapers and magazines to further push the wave of favorable

response. Potential investors displayed interest and the press continued to be favorable.

Things were going just fine until California officials dug up some dirt in Williams' past that threatened the entire project. Apparently he'd been involved in some questionable business dealings before, including stock swindle and counterfeiting. Not exactly the kind of reputation needed to launch a business venture. The press turned the Guns of Navarone on Williams personally, speculating that this venture was probably a scam and referred to his prison record as proof.

What the project needed was a significant geographical change. The operation was moved to Alabama when the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce contracted Keller to find civilian use for an empty aircraft manufacturing facility there. Investor Hubert Mitchell of Hartselle was impressed with the idea of the Bobbi and its potential. He joined the firm and bankrolled most of the early operation.

It didn't remain long in Birmingham; Mitchell wanted it closer to home, and Redstone Arsenal was just the place. The year was 1947, and the

Arsenal was also welcoming post war industry development. The old Betchler-McOne airplane plant was chosen as the site, and the Huntsville Chamber of Commerce was elated.

The name was changed to Keller Automobile Company. About 130 workers were employed and things geared up toward a promising future. Keller had been a respected and successful executive with Studebaker, so the name change was significant . . . and helpful for market recognition.

Plans and production forged ahead. Painstakingly, early models called the Keller Super Chief were assembled, mostly by hand, at the Redstone Plant.

The Super Chief, a subcompact station wagon, was really ahead of its time. The cabs of these cars were all wood. In addition to the station wagon, plans were in the works for convertibles with options such as front or rear mounted engines. It seated 5 people and claimed 35 MPG with engines manufactured by Hercules (known mainly for tractor engines).

Keller Automobile Company even had an engineering office in Detroit for the purpose of obtaining parts for the car while it was being developed and prototyped. The Hercules engines were contracted from the Detroit office, as well as other miscellaneous parts (the Super Chief used Buick hubcaps, for example).

The Super Chief was to have sold for about \$900. The production line on Redstone Arsenal was slated to produce 16,000 cars the first year, then 72,000 the year after that.

Continued on page 22

Interesting Personalities Of Madison County

By James Record, Sr.

Grady M. Reeves, born September 8, 1923 in Cincinnati, Ohio, was undoubtedly one of Huntsville's all-time colorful personalities of radio and television. Since his retirement from WHNT-TV channel 19 on May 31, 1991 hundreds of people have said he is sorely missed on TV and want to know more about him and his future plans. Grady attended the University of Cincinnati Broadcast School of Journalism. From a deeply religious family, he also attended Cincinnati Bible Seminary, although he states he was not studying to become a preacher, but wanted to learn more about public speaking and English. He came to Huntsville in 1948, first working for WFUN radio sports. In 1949, he began working for WBHP sports and news, having a popular "Man on the Street" program.

He then began working with WAFG-TV as news director in 1959. He then went to WHNT channel 19 as sports director in 1963. In 1966 he started his program "Morning, Folks," telecast from 6 in the morning until 7 a.m. This continued on for the next twenty-five years.

His show, "Morning, Folks" was probably the most listened to of any local TV or radio program. Grady's son, Robert, joined him on the program and they were the only father-son morning team on TV in the U.S. Following his father's retirement, Robert continues to work with Channel 19 as a sports reporter. Grady's wife, the former Jean Poole of Greenville, S.C., recently opened her own business. It is called "Pot of Gold", located in the Oakwood Shopping Center, selling herbs, health foods and other items. Grady stops by there often and may be contacted through the store. He can also be found each Saturday and Sunday at the International Trade Mart where he sells an arthritis lotion.



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A fact often overlooked about the simple life of past centuries . . . it was a lot shorter.

*James Record,
Madison County Historian*

Our democratic system reflects the thinking of the majority . . . our system is perfect. It is the thinking that needs improvement.

Butch Adcock, Stevens Ave.

Work is the same as labor - except when organized.

Lola Stutts, Sheffield

Take all the experience and judgment of men over fifty out of the world and there won't be enough left to run it.

Henry Ford



Keller Continued from page 20

George Keller used his contacts in the automotive business well to propel the project along. The car appeared in some significant auto shows in New York and Detroit, and was well received by the public.

Financial backing was positive, too: Keller successfully sold \$2.5 million of the company's \$5 million stock offerings, obtained dealer franchise commitments totaling \$450,000 from all around the country, and was one day away from hundreds of millions of dollars of additional backing . . . when he died suddenly of a heart attack in October of 1949.

At that point, the wheels fell off, so to speak. Big backers choked, stalled and backed out, convinced that that company couldn't produce without Keller.

Huntsville's Little Italy
Family Restaurant

Angelo's

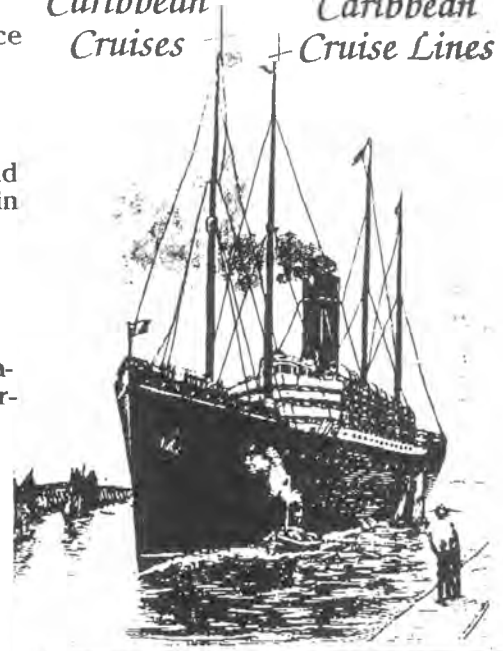
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Mitchell couldn't find an individual to replace Keller in the 90 days granted in the stock option contract; the stock was removed from sale and the company had no choice but to dissolve operations and go out of business.

Only 25-30 cars were actually produced on Redstone Arsenal during the firm's brief life span, and the dream of thousands of "Made in Huntsville" Kellers on America's roadways never materialized.

It's hard to imagine, but interesting to speculate - what if the Keller really succeeded and made it big? Would Huntsville be comparable to Detroit in auto manufacturing? And could a modern aerospace city peacefully co-exist with a successful automotive one?

Ken Owens

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FAMOUS RECIPES

WILD RICE WITH MUSHROOMS

1 cup wild rice
1 tbl. chopped parsley
4 cups water
1 tbl. pimento
1/2 pound fresh mushrooms
1/2 tsp. Italian seasoning
2 sprigs chopped celery leaves
pinch of thyme
1/2 green pepper diced
salt/pepper to taste
1 medium onion, chopped
1/2 cup chicken or beef broth

Wash rice and simmer in the salted water for 1 hour. Drain. Saute the vegetables in butter, add seasoning and broth and mix well. This is better made the day before, flavors can blend. Re-heatable.

AUNT GINNIE'S CHEESE PIE

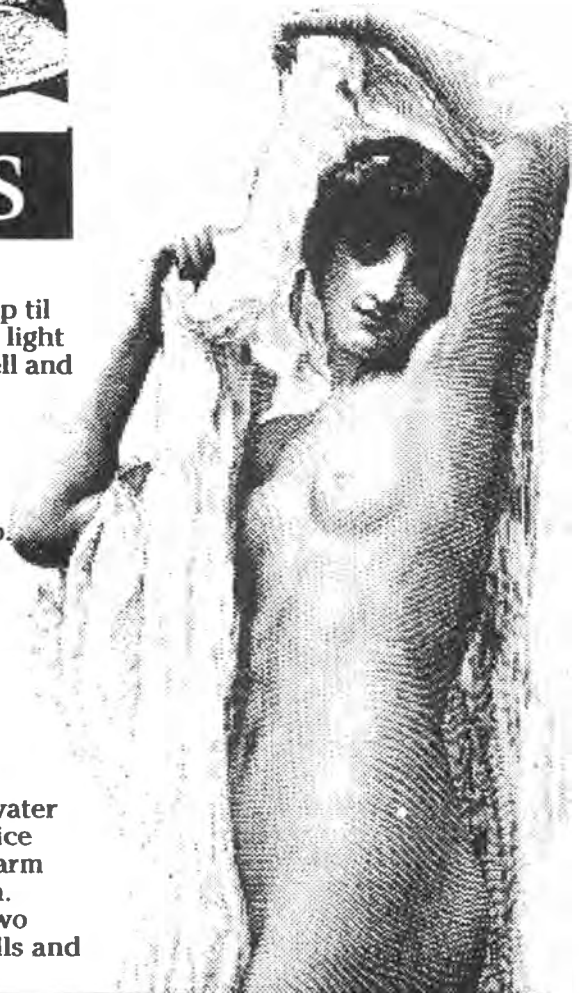
9 inch graham cracker shell
12 oz. of cream cheese, softened
1/2 cup sugar
1 1/2 tsp. vanilla
2 eggs
1 cup sour cream

Use blender to mix cream cheese, sugar and vanilla - whip til smooth. Add eggs and beat til light and creamy. Pour into pie shell and bake at 350 for 30 minutes. Sweeten sour cream slightly, spoon over pie and bake for 5 minutes longer. Cool and refrigerate. Good with cherry or strawberry pie filling on top.

CREAMY LIME SUMMER DELIGHT

1 package (3 oz) lime gelatin
1 cup boiling water
1 cup cold water
1 pint vanilla ice cream

Dissolve gelatin in boiling water and stir in cold water. Spoon ice cream into blender, pour in warm gelatin and blend until smooth. Pour into tall clear glasses. Two layers will form as dessert chills and sets.



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Joe Bradley School

In 1914, a four-room frame building was erected on Triana Pike at the present school site. The enrollment during the first year here averaged seventy-five pupils to a room, making around three hundred pupils for the four-room building. Attendance, however, was still very erratic and continued so until the passage of the compulsory education laws.

It was during the period 1907 to 1919 that the state and county first began to levy taxes to make available funds adequate for the support of a good general free education program. Through this increase in funds, it was possible for the county to engage more teachers than ever in its history. With the greatly increased enrollment and the additional teachers, the four-room school at Merrimack became entirely inadequate.

In 1919 the Merrimack Manufacturing Company, aware of the deplorable over-crowding, began the construction of a larger school building at their own expense. The original frame structure was extended and renovated, becoming part of a beautiful modern brick school building. This handsome edifice was named the "Joseph J. Bradley School" in honor of the agent of the Merrimack Manufacturing Company.

The new building was completed in 1920. Cecil V. Fain was principal then and continued through 1922. In speaking later of his years at Joe Bradley, Mr. Fain listed the following "firsts" as belonging to the community: the first high school in a suburban area of Huntsville, the first Boy Scout Troop in the county, the first camp for youth in the county, the first Girl Scout Troop, the first American Legion post, first vocational high school and first school for adults to learn to read and write.

In 1923, E. F. DuBose became principal of the school, having served as assistant principal under Mr. Fain. At that time, the school offered many high school

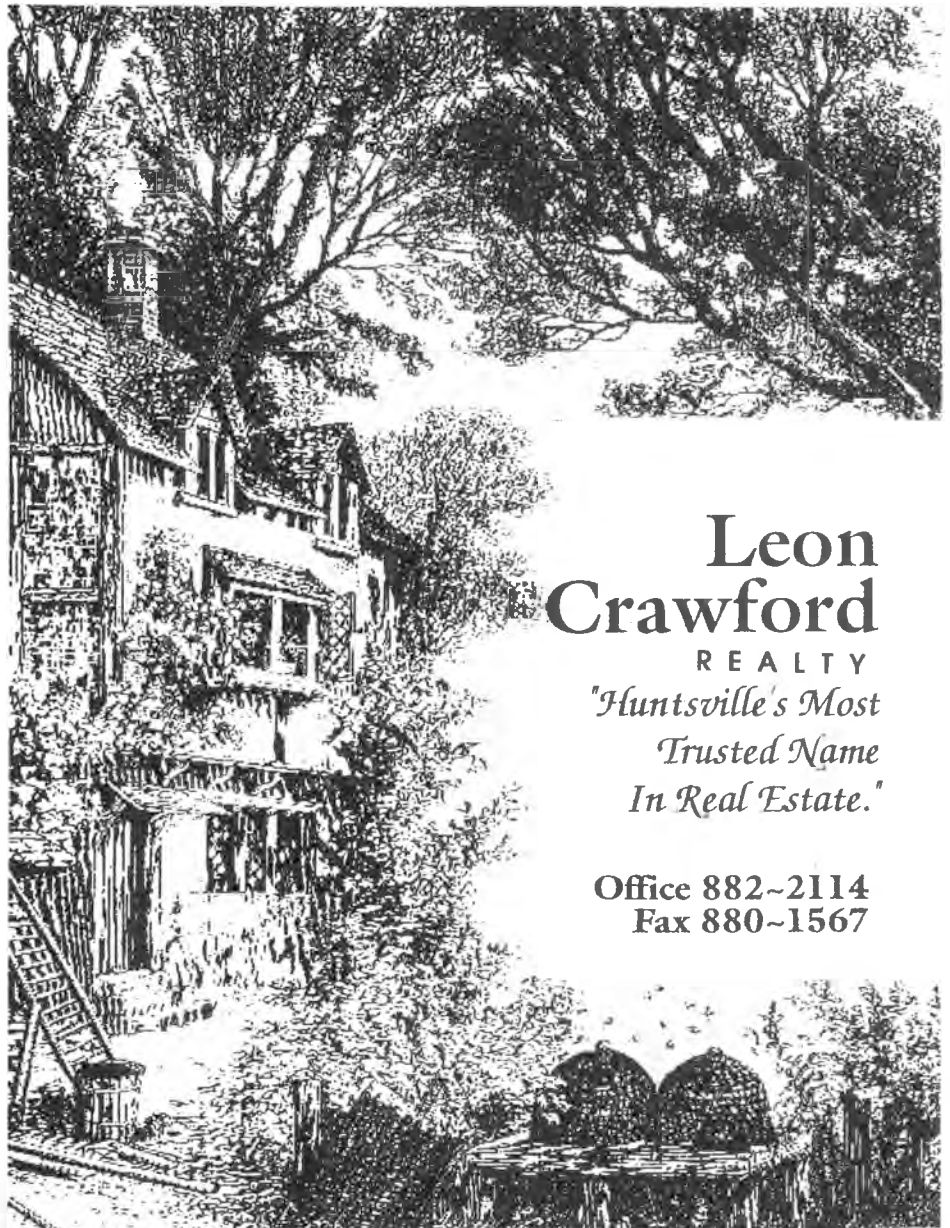
subjects, vocational studies, domestic science, school sport participation, adult training in various subjects. In 1925, the Merrimack Company enlarged the school again, providing additional rooms and a large auditorium.

In 1926, the Joe Bradley School became an accredited high school. The 1927 class, first to graduate at the school, had as their session room teacher, Mrs. J. B. Clopton (the Miss Annie Bradshaw, who had taught the first school in the community twenty-six years before). At this time, the school had a faculty of nineteen teachers and was continuing to grow. Additional rooms and a library study-hall were added in 1929.

By 1944 the Joe Bradley School stood as one of the finest accredited consolidated graded and high schools in the southeast.

It had an enrollment of 800 students, 22 teachers and offered courses in Home Economics, Shop, Commercial, Sciences, Music, etc.

In 1951, the Huntsville Manufacturing Company made a gift of the entire school property and facilities to the Madison County School System. The class of 1951 was the last to graduate from the Joe Bradley School. In 1952 high school students from the suburban areas of Huntsville began attending Butler High School, the new consolidated modern high school located in West Huntsville.



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Go Fish

A neighbor of mine in Tennessee was such an avid fisherman that each morning upon returning from working the night shift he would hook onto his boat trailer and head for Percy Priest Lake near Nashville.

On this particular morning he routinely backed down the ramp below the dam and launched his boat just as he had done hundreds of times in the past. He pulled the boat a few feet onto the shore so it wouldn't float away and then drove to the other side of the lot. As he was positioning the truck and trailer, he noticed a sudden and violent discharge of water from the dam.

He realized that they had begun to generate power which was very unusual this early in the morning.

Panic stricken, my neighbor leaped from his truck and sprinted across the parking lot as the current swept his boat away from shore.

He dove into the river and began to swim and thrash his way to the boat which was by this time more than twenty-five yards downstream.

He grabbed at the boat but was flung under by the surging waves. When he finally surfaced he watched his prized Roadway hat disappear.

The stricken man spluttered and floundered desperately trying to save his boat and tackle. He went under water again and again, frantically waving his arms and yelling for help. He spotted two men in a pick-up truck near the riverbank and finally got their attention. They both smiled and waved back at him.

Having reached the point of complete despair, the man yelped with joy when the boat caught on a tree branch and he was able to grab it with one hand while clutching the branch with the other. He then worked his way to shore, straining to drag the boat with him. As he stumbled ashore nearly exhausted one of the men in the truck rolled down his window and called out, "Are you having any luck?"

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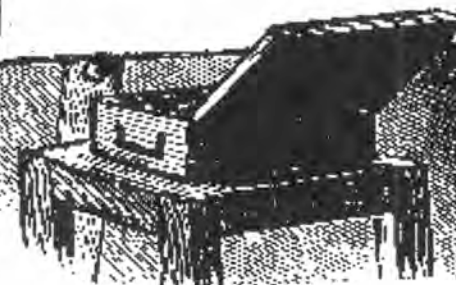
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HARD TO BELIEVE
ABSURD NEWS
WEIRD & WONDERFUL

A ninety-one year-old woman sued her 79-year-old husband of 53 years for divorce, accusing him of having had an affair with a "younger woman", age 70. According to the lawsuit, her husband admitted to having been seeing the other woman for over forty years, and she decided to leave him when he became abusive and threatened to strike her with his cane. As the moving van pulled up to the home to remove her packed belongings, all the husband could think of saying was, "Did you wash my clothes?"

An Alabama woman of forty-three married her son who was twenty-six in 1978, keeping secret for six years the fact that she was his mother because she didn't want any other woman to have him. She had given him up for adoption at age 3, then had formally adopted him (along with her ex-husband) after the marriage. The son believed that the adoption was merely a name change; he left her immediately upon learning the truth.

A U.S. Marine Corporal died after choking on glazed donuts at a speed-eating contest in North Carolina. He had eaten four donuts at breakneck speed, then two more and stuffed three into his mouth while still swallowing. He had heard an announcement that only 10 seconds remained in the contest.

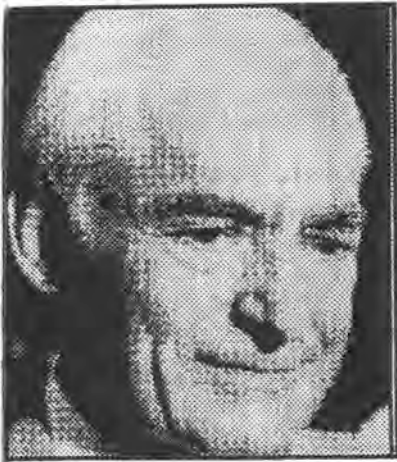
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One Man's Story

Back in 1962, this gentleman had a very simple theory. He felt that if he offered brand-name merchandise at low prices, and added friendly service to his customers, the venture would be a success. He must have had the right idea, because the Wal-Mart chain has become the most popular of the discount stores.

Sam Walton, however, takes very little of the credit for his success. "The reason for our success is our people, and the way that they're treated and the way they feel about their company. The attitude of our employees, our associates, is that things are different in our company. They deserve all the credit."

This man, who is one of the most successful businessmen in the world, has never forgotten his "associates" - the name he has given to his employees. He has traveled to the opening of most every Wal-Mart in the U.S., where he will meet and neighbor with every one of his employees. He remembers them all by name, and listens to their hopes, their ideas and dreams. Sam Walton gives these people the credit for his stores' success.

"Our goal has always been to

be the very best," he said in a recent interview. "And along with that, we believe completely that in order to do that, you've got to make a good situation for your associates, and put their interests first. If we really do that consistently, they in turn will cause your business and our business to be successful, which is what we've talked about and espoused and practiced. We fail many times to do it as well as we should, but still that is the key to what success we've had."

Beginning in 1962 with a single store in Rogers, Arkansas, Walton has seen his company expand to almost 1600 stores in 36 states. Along the way, the company has also become one of the top-rated stocks on Wall Street and racked up sales of \$32.6 billion in 1990 alone.

"Our financial base has never been stronger, our potential capacity has never been stronger. All that has happened when many other companies have gone down the tubes in bankruptcy - there has to be a reason. The reason for our success is our people, plain and simple."

"I think anyone can do what we've done because I'm not that smart. I'm not any more intelligent than anyone else, so I feel like it's not anything that can't be done by anyone. There is, of course, a price that must be paid."

Walton admits he paid the price. "It takes an immense amount of solid dedication and determination to excel and to achieve, and a driving desire and an ambition. I wouldn't change, because I've really enjoyed what I do. But it's long hours and it's a singular dedication and you have to give up somethings with your family that I would like to have had."

It all began in Kingfisher, Oklahoma, on March 29, 1918 - the day Walton was born to Thomas and Nancy Walton. His father was a banker at the time and later entered the farm mortgage business and moved to Missouri. His mother watched over the family. Sam Walton and his younger brother J.L. "Bud" Walton lived

with their parents in several towns in Missouri while their father pursued his business, struggling to keep food on the table in the depths of the Great Depression.

As he grew up, Sam Walton said he discovered early in life that he had a good bit of ambition and enjoyed working. He worked various jobs while young so that his family would have money while his father was on the road.

One accomplishment that he still recalls is becoming the youngest Eagle Scout at Shelbina Junior High School in Missouri. Deciding on a career was another matter, however.

"I really had no idea what I would be," he would say later, adding as an afterthought, "at one point in time, I thought I wanted to be President of the United States."

He studied economics at the University of Missouri, graduating in 1940. JC Penney company offered Mr. Walton a job starting at \$85 per month. He trained with that company for a year and a half. Awaiting induction into the military, he moved to Oklahoma where he met his future wife, Helen Robson, then served three years in the Army.

During his service, he married his sweetheart, and after World War II began searching for a retail business to buy with the money he had saved while in the Army.

He found that store (a Ben Franklin store) in Newport, Arkansas and was eventually joined in the operation by his brother, Bud. The future looked rosy, Walton would recall, but in 1950 fate intervened when the store landlord, whose son was due home from the Army, wanted the store for his son.

The landlord declined to renew the store's lease and Walton began looking for another town in which to locate his business. He decided on Bentonville, Arkansas.

By 1962 there were 15 Ben Franklin stores open under the name of "Walton's 5 and 10". He opened his first Wal-Mart store in Rogers, Arkansas.

In 1970, the family-owned business went public. In 1972, with 41 stores, sales of \$72 million and



less than 3,000 employees, the corporation's stock was listed on the New York Stock Exchange. Wal-mart was a success story from the beginning and the end is nowhere in sight.

Mr. Walton's company is American through and through, and he is very proud of his country. He sells products made in America, and very much believes in the free enterprise system in this country.

In a recent report, Walton looked to the future and again acknowledged the importance of the Wal-Mart employees.

"During this new year," he said, "our company expects to exceed last year's sales by almost \$5 billion. Reaching this aggressive objective will be a tribute to the

Continued on page 31



THE CONCORD DEATH BELL

With all the struggle and conflict in the world today, we sometimes forget our neighbors.

In times past, in the small communities spread across this great land, the welfare of all depended on everyone working together for the common good.

Today, in a small rural community a few miles north of Huntsville, there's a country church and cemetery called Concord. In the cemetery a bell rests upon a wooden frame.

Whenever a death occurs in the community and there's a grave to be dug, someone rings the bell.

Out across the freshly plowed fields the bell's ringing sounds. A farmer stops and listens, then heads his tractor for Concord.

Down the road at Red Bay, several oldtimers sitting around, rise to their feet and walk slowly out of the store and up the road toward Concord.

Just when the bell at Concord was erected is uncertain. But shortly after the turn of the nineteenth century, about 1830, Robert Donnell, a circuit rider for the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, began holding camp meetings at Concord.

The meetings were held at Concord because of a cool flowing spring which was located there. In those days camp meetings lasted for as long as two weeks at a time. So drinking water was an important factor in selecting a site for camp meetings.

Camp meetings continued at Concord for several years. Shortly before the Civil War a church building was erected and graveyard was begun there.

This building later burned down and was replaced by the one that stands there now.

In those days there were few if any roads, and neighbors were few and lived far apart. When there was a death in the community it would take days to notify everyone. So a small bell (a dinner bell) was hung to summon in the community when anyone died, to help dig the grave and help console the family.

Later, in 1895, because the community was growing and the small dinner bell couldn't be heard by all, George Giles and Andy Isabell, two local church members, went around the community and collected enough money to buy a new bell. They purchased the three hundred and fifty pound bell that still hangs at Concord, ever ready to ring to summon help if anyone dies in the area.

On a clear day the bell can be heard for a radius of five or six miles.

Today there are good roads throughout the Walnut Grove community, where Concord is located; most of the roads are paved. And every other house has a telephone. Television and radio antennas top the roofs of practically every home. But through custom passed down for almost a hundred years, when anyone dies at Walnut Grove, the bell is run. And during almost a hundred years each time the bell was rung someone came.

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Continued from page 30

associates who have contributed so significantly to the record results of this past year."

He believes strongly in good education and does much to help the future of young people through Wal-Mart's scholarship program. In 1989, the Wal-Mart Foundation issued over \$1.25 million in scholarships to high school seniors throughout the company's trade territory and in regional scholarships awarded to company associates who are high school seniors.

When asked what is the greatest lesson he's learned about people during his business career, Mr. Walton replied:

"Oh, I think the realization that all of us like to be recognized and appreciated and need to feel like the role we play or what we do is important. I didn't start out with that philosophy or that understanding, but I came to develop it and appreciate it. We've tried to build our business with that as one of the real cornerstones and I think that's so true that we all appreciate hearing about these things - if we do it well for it to be appreciated."

When asked how he would like to be remembered, Sam Walton stated, "I just would like to be remembered as a good friend to most everyone whose life I've touched - as their friend, as someone that's maybe meant something to them and helped them in some way. That, I guess, is so important. I have such a strong feeling for the folks in our company. They have meant so much to me. I know they respect me."

"They have affection for me and I so appreciate that and don't know that I deserve it. I don't think I really deserve it, but it's a tremendous feeling to know that you have that relationship with people throughout the company."

Editor's note:

If you've been to a Wal-Mart lately, especially in this area, you may have noticed that senior citizens are working at the front door, welcoming shoppers and guiding them to areas in the store they are looking for.

Along with believing in America, Sam Walton believes in our senior citizens.

Mr. Walton is proud of his Huntsville Wal-Mart's and in recent correspondence with "Old Huntsville" has expressed how very grateful he is to the people of Huntsville and surrounding area for the support they have shown over the years.

We are very proud of you, Mr. Walton.

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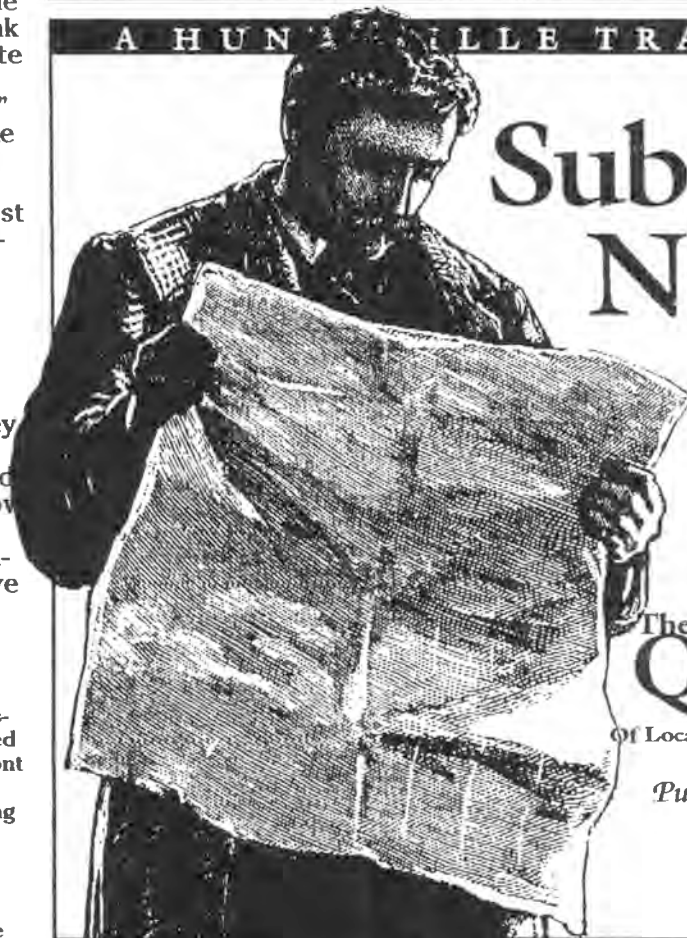
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To Cross The Hogohegee

He moved silently yet quickly through the autumn foliage. The hard wood forest of cedar, hickory, and oak formed a canopy that kept the normally thick undergrowth down and made it easier to move.

Still his senses were tuned to any noise, smell, or movement that could mean danger or death. He had come too far from Virginia to end his quest because of stupid carelessness.

The year was 1802. In Europe, Napoleon was solidifying his conquest of Italy and Beethoven and Hayden were busy composing new masterpieces. In America, Thomas Jefferson was President of the New Republic and John Ditto was looking for a place to camp on a site that would later become downtown Huntsville.

John Ditto wasn't exactly lost, he had a notion of about where he was, he just needed some time to get his bearings. He made himself a comfortable campsite consisting of a lean-to pole shack up against a bluff near a big spring. He had cool, clean water and the surrounding countryside abounded in game.

John didn't tarry long though, he had a mission. Like so many other frontiersmen of this era, John was going to carve out for himself a new life and find his fortune. And find it he did. Traveling south, he located the big bend of the Hogohegee River and at a place called Chickasaw Fields, below the lower point of an island called Chickasaw Island, John established a trading post, primarily for trade with the Indians and the burgeoning keel boat traffic from the up river settlements enroute to New Orleans.

The river was good to John. In 1807 he built a gunwhale type flatboat propelled by sweep oars that he used as a ferry to transport settlers across the Hogohegee. He



also set up a boat yard where he built shallow draught litter type boats for use over the treacherous shoals further downstream. Andrew Jackson with his small army of U.S. regulars and volunteers used the ferry in 1813, leaving Huntsville and heading south toward the Coosa to find the Creeks during the great "red stick" uprising (see Old Huntsville, Vol. 2 Issue 4).

By this time period maps showed the Hogohegee as the Tennessee River. Chickasaw Island eventually became known as Hobb's Island, and Ditto's Landing was the focal point of the town of Huntsville's transportation network. The infant town's great highway was the river and Ditto's Landing was it's port.

John Ditto was one of the forerunners of that romantic, boisterous, irreverent, dangerous, lonely, and sometimes drunken, rough and tumble period of the 19th century southern frontier movement. His contemporaries were men like Jim Bowie, Davy Crockett, and Mike Fink, "King of the River". It would be for others to build and grow the early squatter's settlement into the thriving and prosperous city of Huntsville. But they couldn't have done it without men like John Ditto and a place called Ditto's Landing.

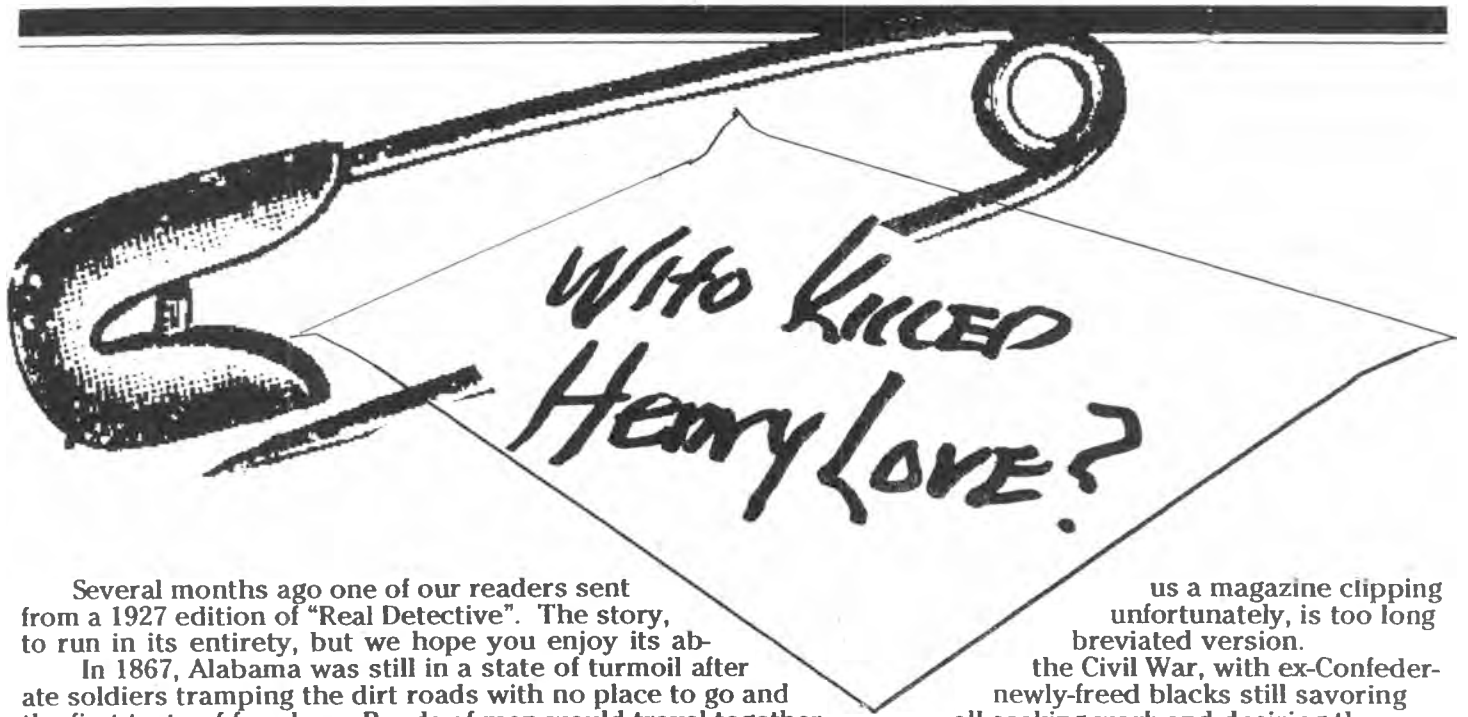
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Several months ago one of our readers sent from a 1927 edition of "Real Detective". The story, to run in its entirety, but we hope you enjoy its ab-

In 1867, Alabama was still in a state of turmoil after late soldiers tramping the dirt roads with no place to go and the first taste of freedom. Bands of men would travel together, protection of traveling companions.

One cold night in November of the same year, a band of these men had camped out just south of New Market, Alabama in what today would be called a "hobo jungle." There was an old man, his grandson, and three other men, all strangers.

It had been a long day, and sleep came easily to the tired men. But as the sun began to peek over the horizon, the men were awakened by an anguished scream. The old man was holding his grandson's head in his lap, with blood staining the front of his shirt.

Sometime during the night one of the strangers had brutally robbed and murdered the young man. It had to have been one of the three strangers. The authorities arrested all three men, but were forced to let them go as no one would admit to the crime and there was no physical evidence at all.

As the three men walked out of the jail, their way was blocked by the old man. He stood there, bent with age, and trembling as he leaned heavily on his walking stick. He spoke so quietly that the men had to strain to hear his words.

"Who killed my grandson, who killed Henry Love?" the old man asked.

The next morning authorities were again called to investigate a murder. One of the three strangers had slept in a barn the night before and his body was discovered by a farmer while feeding his livestock. The body had one bullet to the head and a note was stuck to the front of the man's shirt. The note read: "Who killed Henry Love?"

The authorities immediately questioned the old man, but were forced to call off the investigation when they discovered that he had spent the night in the parson's home. The parson swore that the old man did not leave the house the entire night.

Two years later police were called to yet another mysterious murder - this time in Nashville. Witnesses swore that they saw an older man push a stranger onto the tracks in front of a speeding train. When the police recovered the body there was a note pinned to the front of the torn shirt. The note read, "Who killed Henry Love?"

Again, police went to visit the old man, who at this time also lived in Nashville, and again they were forced to end their investigation. The old man had spent the previous days with a well known and respected businessman. It seemed as if they had just returned from a week-long hunting trip. The businessman swore that the old man never left his sight.

Six years later in Cincinnati, Ohio a man is pushed from the top floor of a nineteen story bank building. Witnesses at the scene told police of seeing a note pinned to the man's shirt when they turned his body over. This note also read, "Who killed Henry Love?"

This time the authorities knew that the old man had to be responsible. They had already received word that he had moved to Cincinnati three weeks earlier. Upon arriving at the old man's home, they were confronted by the housekeeper who told them that he had died that previous week, three days before the last murder.

Upon further questioning, the housekeeper told the police that the old man left no valuables, just a few clothes, a pocketwatch, and strangest of all - one card of safety pins with only three safety pins missing.

The woman said she thought it strange because the safety pins had been found in his breast pocket, along with the picture of a handsome young man.

us a magazine clipping unfortunately, is too long breviated version.

the Civil War, with ex-Confederately-freed blacks still savoring all seeking work and desiring the pro-

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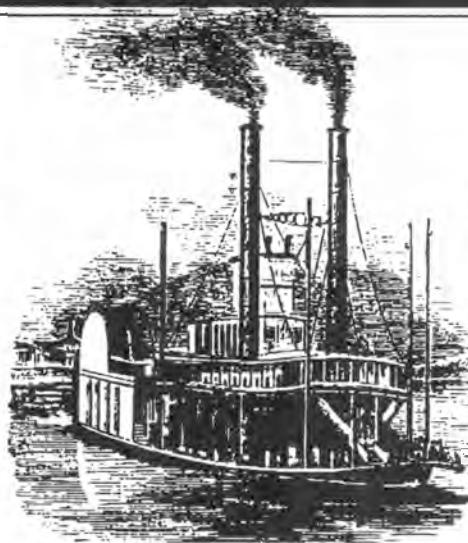
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It is not the critic who counts, the one who points out how the strong man stumbled or how the doer of deeds might have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred with sweat and dust and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs and comes short again and again; who knows the great enthusiasm, the great devotion, who spends himself in a worthy cause; who if he wins, knows the triumph of high achievement; and who if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat.

T. Roosevelt



The World's Longest Riverboat Railroad

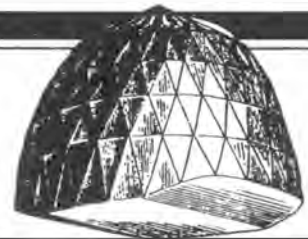
About 12 miles south of Huntsville at Hobbs Island, on the Tennessee River, the N.C. and St. L. Railroad used to operate a riverboat railroad between Hobbs Island and Guntersville, Ala. The 22 miles between Guntersville and Hobbs Island was the longest stretch of railroad ferrying in the world.

This unique means of rail-roading began back in 1893 after the N.C. and St. L. purchased the Tennessee and Coosa railroad which ended its line at Guntersville. The N.C. and St. L. line ran south from Elora, Tenn. to Hobbs Island. This left 22 miles of water between the two lines.

Rather than relocate many miles of track across several mountains in this Tennessee Valley area, and span the Tennessee River with a bridge, the N.C. and St. L.'s riverboat railroad was begun.

It took about four hours to travel to 22 miles and the scenery along the way was as pretty as any on N.C. and St. L.'s 1043 miles of track

In 1957 the railroad ceased operation of the riverboat.



A Diamond In The Rough

In 1928 a farmer named William Hones, while planting horse-radish in a field in Petersburg, West Virginia, found a greasy, shiny stone.

He brought it home as a kind of curiosity. Fifteen years later it was discovered that this "curiosity" was a 32-carat diamond, one of the largest ever found in America. The Eagle diamond, another 16-carot diamond located in Wisconsin some years ago and other large stones have been found in such states as Ohio, Illinois and Indiana. The largest diamond found to date in the U.S. weighed 40 carats and was located in a mine near Murfreesboro, Arkansas.

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GOOD FOR THE BODY

Old Fashion Remedies

GOOD FOR THE SOUL

Never marry anybody who has more problems than you - family, financial or emotional.

Christina Newburgh's Spadeus, in Italy, recommends this sesame dressing: Mix roasted sesame seed with plain yogurt. Pour over steamed broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage or use as a dip for raw vegetables.

One of the most wasteful feelings you can experience is envy. even though it seems occasions for it never cease to arise. Eliminate envy from your emotional repertoire through discipline.

If your feet are constantly hurting, something is wrong. "Shop for shoes with your feet, not your eyes," says Alan Shulman of New York City's Ambulatory Foot Care Group. "Shoes should be the LAST item you buy on a shopping trip. Feet expand as the day wears on, and shoes that fit great in the morning can be a nightmare by nine at night."

Stair climbing is a great aerobic cellulite reducer - never use the elevator when you have to time to climb!

Sunglasses can be your most important beauty accessory - look for frames that DON'T match the shape of your face.

- Round face - Look for square or rectangular frames
- Square face - Oval and round frames will soften contours
- Oblong face - Round and wide oval shapes are best
- Heart-shaped face - Geometrics, ovals, narrow and square will work
- Oval face - You're lucky - you can wear any shape!

Mash rosemary or other favorite herb into your regular hair conditioner

A diamond's brilliance is determined by the cutting. Because diamonds both reflect and refract light, artful cutting is crucial to a gem's prismatic sparkle. The only consideration in choosing one cut over another is personal preference. According to the Diamond Information Center, the most popular cut today is the round brilliant, followed by the marquise, emerald, oval and pear.

"In the best of times our days are numbered anyway. And so it would be a crime against nature for any generation to take the world crisis so solemnly that it put off enjoying those things for which we were designed in the first place -

- the opportunity to do good work
- to fall in love
- to enjoy friends
- to hit a ball
- and to bounce a baby."

Alistair Cooke

Bigness don't count... If it did, a cow could catch a rabbit!

Eziah Mathis, Scout Master

You can drink an ugly girl pretty, but you can't drink a fat girl thin.

Walter Alves

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Old Age And Apples

by Jim Harris

Lord, let me live to a ripe old age
But not like the apple forgotten.
Lord, let me live to a ripe old age
But take me between mellow and rotten.



50¢ |

Locations

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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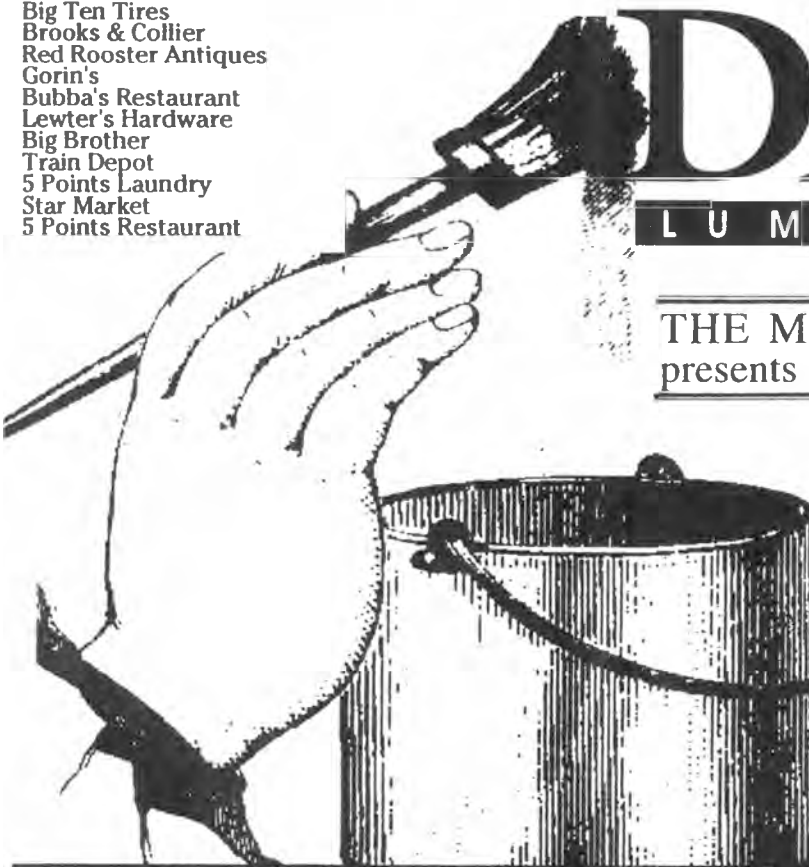
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The Teacher

Floyd Hardin figured that he was one lucky man. He had built up a good business, made more friends than one man had a right to. Yes, Huntsville had been good to Floyd.

One day, Floyd is in his barber shop, just cutting hair the way he always does, when he hears some of his customers talking about all the people that can't read or write. Now, the more Floyd got to thinking about it, the more he began to realize that he had found a way he could really do something for the community.

First thing the next morning, he starts spreading the word that he's going to start teaching reading and 'riting in the back of his barber shop. He went out, bought a bunch of desks, books, paper and pencils and it wasn't long before his barber shop started looking like a school room.

Floyd's night school was an instant success. First night, he had

almost twenty people there and he's got them all up there doing their alphabets on the blackboard. Well, almost all of them.

There was this one old codger, he came in late, pulled up a chair in the very back of the room, and never opened his mouth. He would just sit there, night after night, listening to Floyd doing his teaching.

It didn't take long before this old guy started getting on Floyd's nerves. Floyd began to take this old codger as a personal challenge on his ability to teach, so he started taking extra special pains to try and reach this old man.

Sure enough, it wasn't just a couple of weeks before the man had moved his desk up to the middle of the room. By this time you could see that the old guy was hanging on to every word that Floyd said. Come the end of the month, his desk was sitting on the very front row, not five feet from where Floyd was standing and talking.

It wasn't long after that, while Floyd was gathering up his books

after class one night, that he noticed that the old gentleman was hanging around, waiting for all the other students to leave.

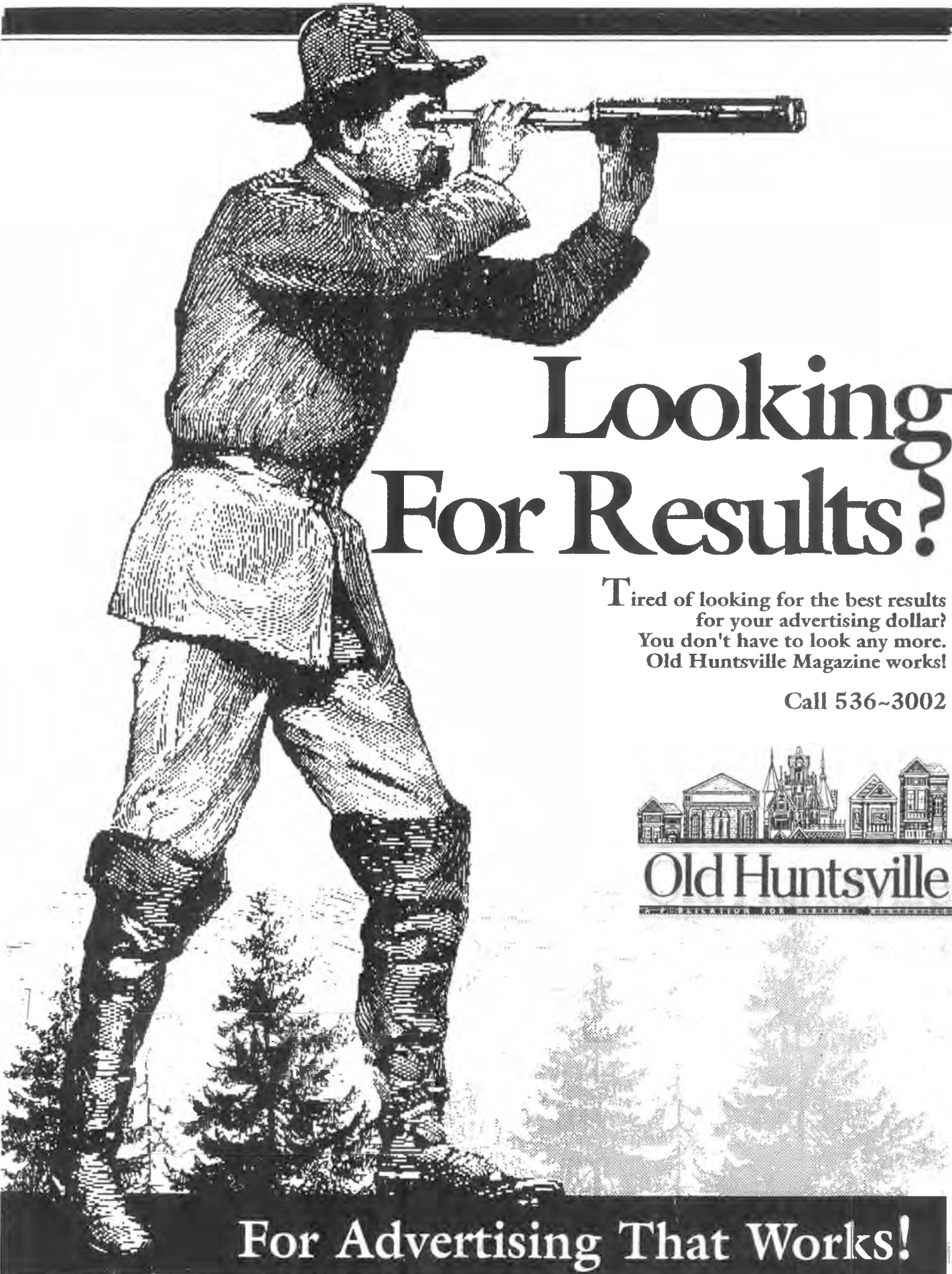
After making sure that everyone else had left, the old guy walks over to Floyd's desk, hat in hand. "Mr Floyd", he says, "I surely do want to thank you. I'll be 83 years old come this next winter, and I ain't never even been able to write nothing until you started helping me."

Now, you gotta know Floyd to know how proud he was.

He stood there, chest poked out, one hand on his suspenders, and his other arm around the old man's shoulders. He figured that he could teach, but he didn't have any idea that he was this good.

"Old Man", says Floyd, "I'm mighty proud of you. What did you write?"

"I don't know," says the old man, "I can't read yet."



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a pen or with a hand stamp, mark the letter paid 5 or paid 10 depending on the letter rate and distance it was being sent. The Postmaster would also hand stamp the city name and date on the envelope.

Some years later, during the period of the Confederacy to be more precise, the handstamp PAID would again become important to the postal history of Alabama.

An interesting but little known part of Alabama postal history deals with the establishment of a horse express, or in western jargon, Pony Express. The "Horse Express" was established on November 15, 1836 by the General government and put into inauguration out of Montgomery. Three lines were established from Montgomery; one eastward to Columbus in Georgia;

one north to Huntsville; and one south to Mobile. As a result of the establishment of the Columbus line the Post Office Department reduced the time between Montgomery and New York from eight days to five. The single letter rate from Montgomery to New York was \$1.

If there were three enclosures, weighing about an ounce, the rate was \$4.

Thus, without realizing it the Post Office Department had in operation a Pony Express twenty-four years before the celebrated "end of railroad to the Pacific Coast" pony express of the western stories.

Taken from "A Glimpse at Alabama's Postal History", by Gilbert and Patricia Penny

The First Pony Express

Huntsville was considered such an important town in the Alabama territory in 1819 that it was chosen as the Convention City and the very first State Constitution was drafted here. The site of the convention was a building located on the Corner of Franklin and Gates Streets just off the Square.

In 1825 there were about a hundred Post Offices in the State. William Atwood was the Postmaster in Huntsville.

At this point, it should be noted that although postal service existed, there were no adhesive postage stamps as we know them today. The Mississippi and Alabama Territory periods and the early Alabama State period is known as the era of "Stampless Covers" for the first U.S. adhesive postage stamp would not come into being until 1847, but the mail had and would continue to go through. For a letter prepaid the Postmaster would, either with



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Memories of Lincoln Village

Summer was a special time for kids in the Village. We played baseball in the morning, went for a bike ride, and then as the sun grew hotter found a shady spot to play marbles. We had to be creative with our spare time because no one in the village had a television, and even if they did, VCR's and video games had not been invented yet. Cowboys and Indians,

Kick the Can, Hide and Seek, Red Rover, Sand Lot Baseball and ten variations of Marbles were our entertainment back then. As the summer heat grew, the tall Johnson grass on the steep bank of the railroad track browned. A cardboard box made a wonderful summer sled that would very quickly put you in the creek at the bottom of the bank if you didn't know how to stop. It was probably the forerunner of today's Waterslide. But it was a lot more fun and cost a lot less to ride.

As darkness fell across the Village we would get up a rousing game of Kick the Can. This was a more sporting version of Hide and Seek. A favorite place to play was at the end of the street in front of the Dukemineer's house. There was not traffic to contend with. Today it would probably be called a "Cul-de-sac" but then it was just "the end of the street". We played until 8 or 8:30 P.M., then went home, took a bath in a number 3 washtub and went to sleep to the sound of the window fan humming. Today if 15 or 20 kids were gathered under a street light

or hiding by a bush someone would surely call the police.

They were simple times, but fun times when a kid was known by the dog he owned or the bike he rode. Drugs were non-existent in the Village and material things meant very little. We got "high" on having fun.

A friend or a neighbor's property was sacred.

Whatever happened to those times???

Tony Thompson

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people!*

534~1814



Aunt Essie Goes To Town

The Summer Of 1895

By Cathy Burns

We were sitting on the front porch of the house on Eustis Street, trying to escape the afternoon heat by drinking water with ice in it. I had never had water with ice in it before coming to Huntsville, but I quickly learned that during the Alabama summer just about anything is improved by the addition of ice cubes.

"When I was a girl," she reminisced, "we lived over in what everyone now calls Big Cove. Every so often we would travel into Huntsville to go shopping. Daddy would put all us children into the wagon, hook up the ox, . . ."

An OX, Aunt Essie? Not a real ox! You traveled by ox cart!" I hushed immediately when I was impaled by those pale, school-teacherish eyes.

"Yes, an ox, a real OX!" She sniffed. "Daddy had an ox to work the farm and to pull the wagon when we needed to go into town."

"We always stopped at the top of the gap and went to look out over the valley. Daddy would stand, looking in the direction of Huntsville, and always say, 'Some day there is going to be a fine road all the way from our place - all the way into Huntsville!'"

"How we laughed at that," she smiled. "We thought he was crazy." She settled back in her chair and gazed absently across the street at the crepe myrtles which had just flamed into bloom. A little bit later she turned, fixed me with a piercing look from those pale orbs which marched its way down her rather long, elegant nose; her mouth set in a ruler straight line.

"Now today, you young folks are telling me that there is going to be a way, all the way to the moon." Her eyes twinkled, and the corners of her mouth turned up ever so slightly. But she didn't laugh or say it was crazy.

A poem by Sonya

*I looked out over the city below
From my perch on Monte Sano.
The lights that twinkled in the night
brightly disguising my mountainous
height the winds carried my thoughts from
me; I watched them float as if on the sea.*

*Often I had come this far,
to sit on the side or in my car
And ponder what life was meant to be,
sitting up here within the trees.
Mountains are great and such fun,
I'm really thankful Huntsville has one!*

*It's in the valley that life's a reality
and thoughts aren't always their best.
Times like these, I roll up my sleeves,
Sighing as I look West.
In my mind I'm in my car
Driving,
Ever upward.*



BETTY DAVIS

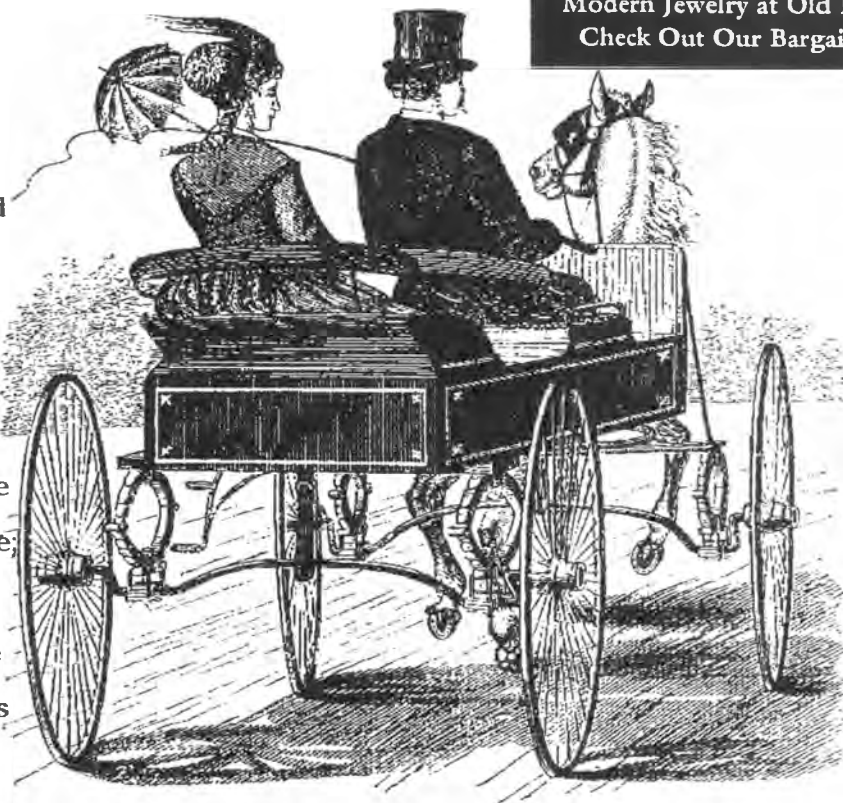
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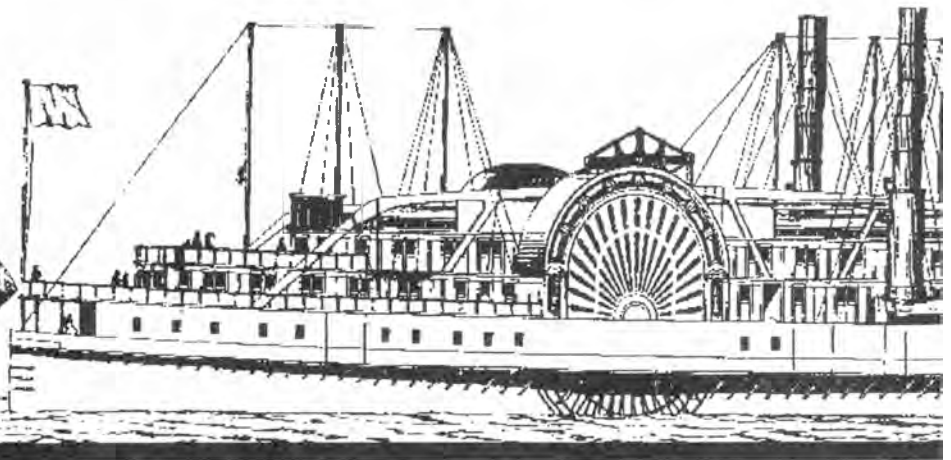
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SOUTHERLAND'S
PHOTO



STEAMBOATS

From about 1818 to 1869, some of the mail carried through Alabama was by riverboat. Indians, poor roads and problems with contract post riders caused the overland routes to be unpendable. Rivers such as the Alabama, Coosa, Tombigbee, Warrior and Tennessee made the state a natural for travel by water. Many of the early forts had been built on or close to the rivers and around these areas, towns and large plantations were established. If a letter were taken to a riverboat, for delivery at some other point on the river, the Captain would normally

stamp the envelope with the name of the boat. Each riverboat had its own postal markings and as a result the steamboat and Packet covers have become very interesting and a valuable part of Alabama's history.

During the 1818 to 1869 period there were about three hundred and thirty side wheelers operating on the rivers of Alabama. For all the glory in stories and shown in the motion pictures this was still a hard and dangerous life. This is evidenced by one hundred forty boats



5 3 9 ~ 9 6 2 7

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A formula for a longer life is offered by a University of Wisconsin research team after a study of more than 2,000 long-lived Americans:

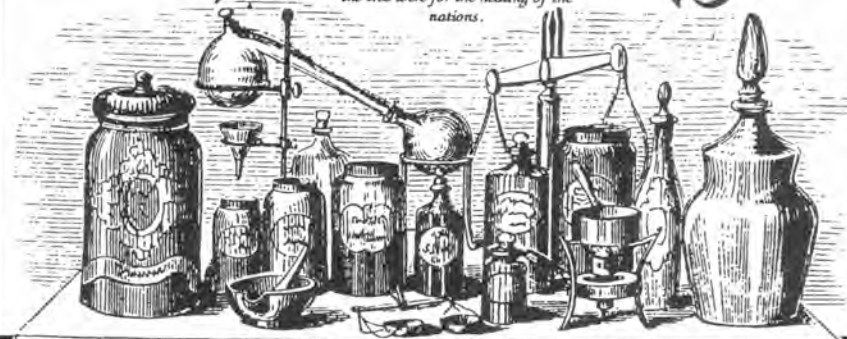
1. Accommodate yourself to all of life's challenges
2. Avoid prolonged stress
3. Develop outside interests
4. Keep working at either paid or volunteer activities
5. Eat and drink sparingly, but with enjoyment.

Finally, don't fight your enemies - out live them.

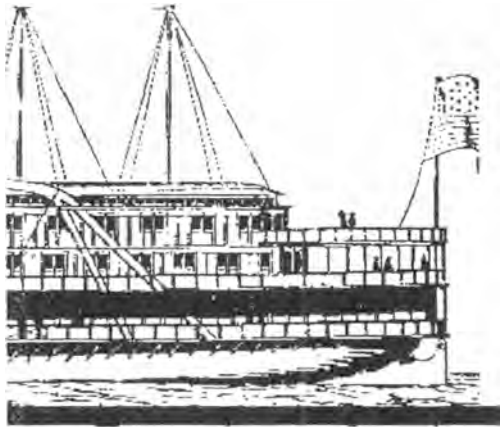
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*Ezekiel 47:12 - And the fruit thereof shall be meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine.
Revelation 22:2 - And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*



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being sunk, burned, snagged, run aground or blown up during the same period. Examples such as the North Star which exploded near Tuscaloosa with a loss of sixteen lives, or the Rapidon which snagged below Florence, or the Rachel Miller which was stranded and destroyed at Decatur, indicates that all was not sweet Magnolias, Honeysuckle and Calliope music on river travel.

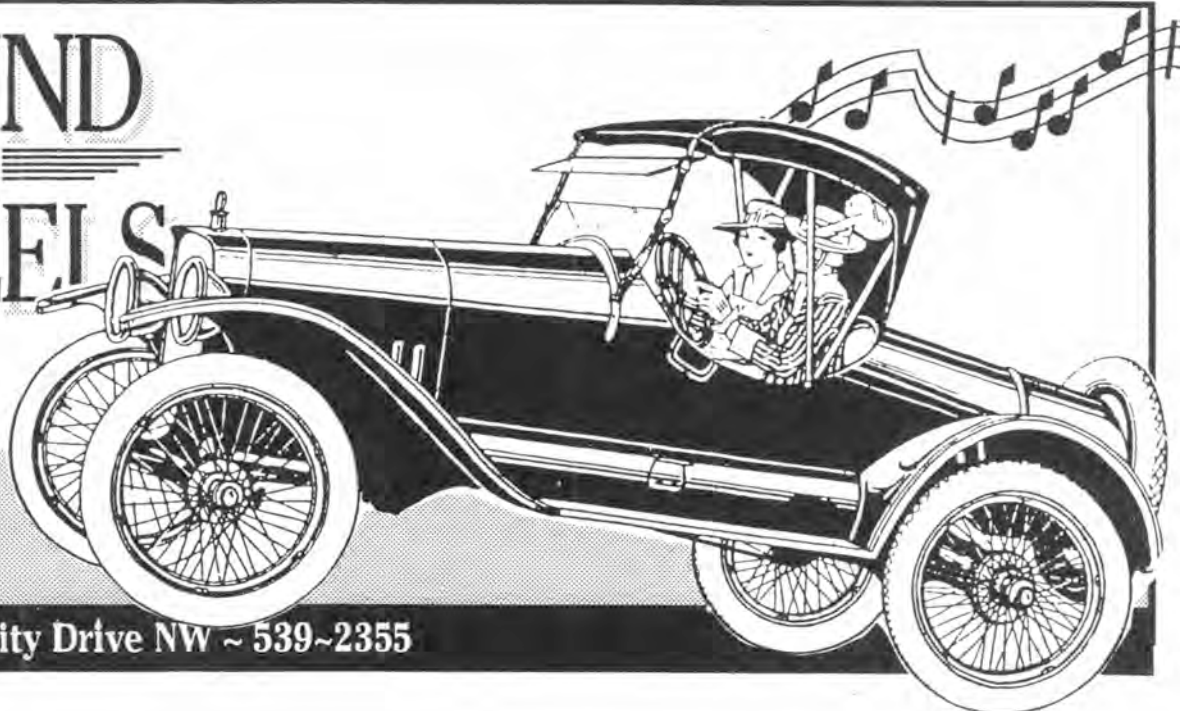
Taken from "A Glimpse at Alabama's Postal History" with permission, compiled by Gilbert and Patricia Penny



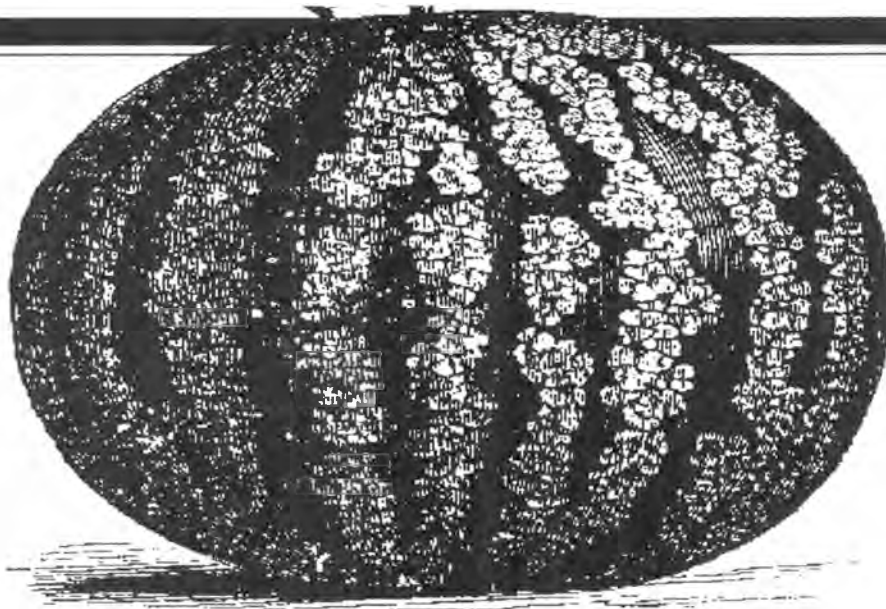
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THEFT-PROOF WATERMELONS

One summer evening, a group of boys in the Merrimack Mill Village decided to steal some watermelons from a nearby patch, as boys are apt to do. The patch was in the back yard of one of the village houses, up close to the house. As the boys sneaked into the yard, the owner of the patch was inside the house - windows open - and heard the raiders making their assault on the much desired melons. The man watched while the leader, a boy named Jack, walked into the middle of the patch. Jack spotted a particularly interesting melon and decided to test it for ripeness - because there's no sense in stealing a melon that's not ripe. Jack leaned over and thumped the smooth, green rind. Just as Jack thumped, the owner flipped on the back porch light. In a panic, Jack stood up and yelled to his partners in crime, "Run for it boys, he's got 'em wired!"

JIM HARRIS

A Stimulating Bath

USE:

1 cup peppermint leaves
1 cup comfrey leaves
1/2 cup licorice root
1/4 cup ginseng root

Mix all ingredients and store in a pretty apothecary jar in your bathroom.

When you are ready for your bath, drop a handful into the tub. Take another handful and put into a small muslin bag. Run the water as hot as you can stand it, step in and soak for about 15 minutes. Take your muslin bag and rub briskly starting with your toes and working up to your nose. Move in an upward and circular motion. Rinse in cold water if you can stand it. Wrap in a fluffy towel but don't dry yourself with the towel - instead walk or do light exercises til dry.

If you would like to stimulate digestion or if you've had too much to drink, take a teaspoon of the mixed herbs and place in a small prewarmed teapot. Add one and a half cup of boiling water and steep for 5-10 minutes. Flavor with orange pieces and honey. Strain the tea and drink.

Your herbal mixture may be used again, after your bath. Take the muslin bag and rinse out in clear water. Store in the fridge and reuse it within a day or two.

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Ron's Winding Road

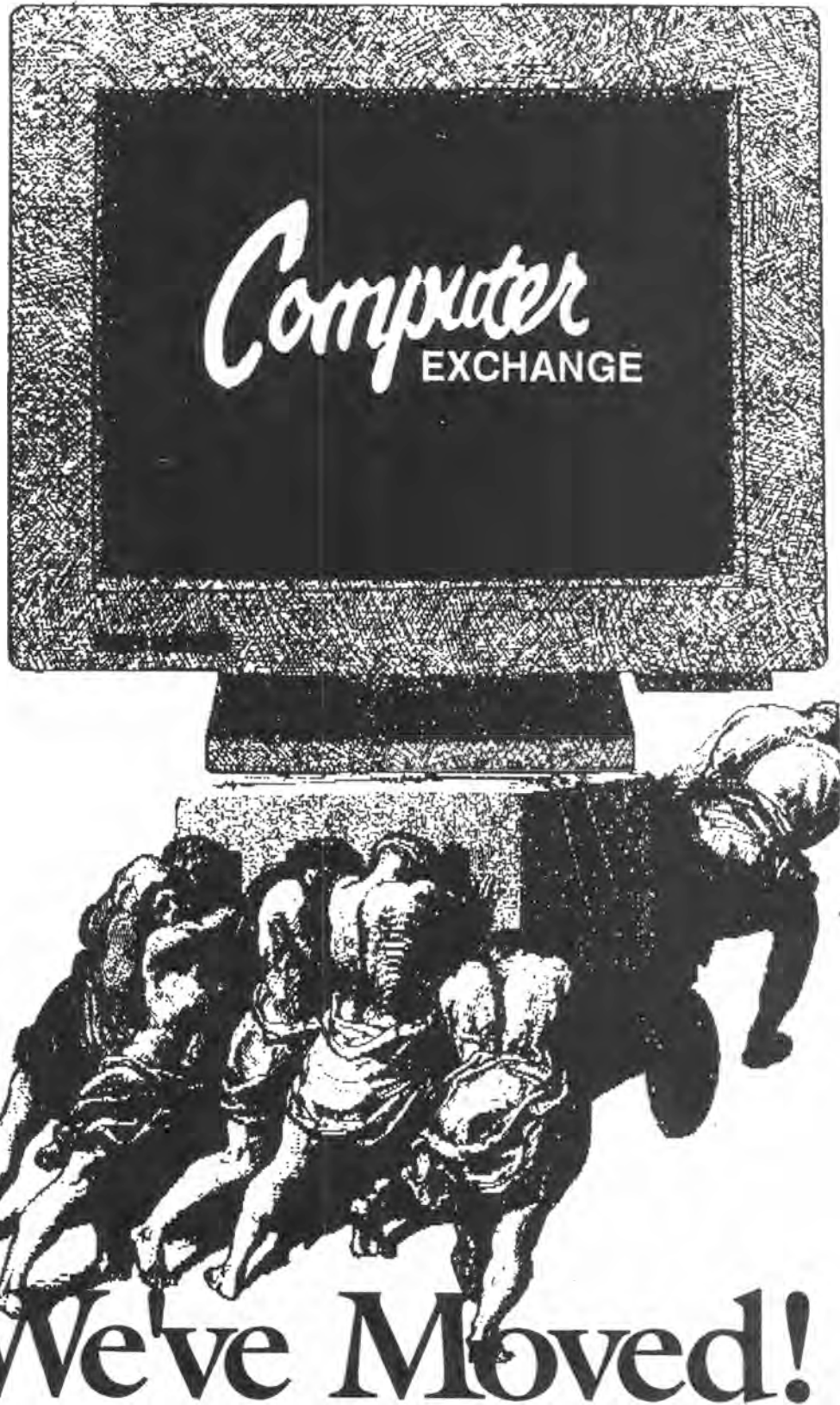
Summer is upon us and rumor has it that several springs (water type springs, that is) played a role for Huntsville back in the late 1800's. One spring, up around Lynchburg, Tennessee, was judged by a certain Mr. Daniels to contain the perfect amount of lime from its limestone source to make a palatable sipping whiskey. Another spring in Huntsville, Alabama, was found to be amenable to the wild growth of a certain kind of plant known as spring mint. It is only natural that these two fine spring products should find a way to complement each other.

Now few folks agree on how to properly prepare these wonderful ingredients for maximum human enjoyment. (It's rumored that some backwards people even used peach brandy, but I largely discount that for all who had access to these perfectly matched spring products.) In Huntsville, back around 1890, these two ingredients were combined in the following manner.

Dissolve two lumps of sugar in enough water to form a sort of thick syrup. Crush several sprigs of tender mint shoots in a glass until most of the mint flavor has been extracted. Remove the mint from the glass. (This is done so that you don't end up straining mint pieces through your teeth.) Fill the glass with cracked ice and pour in the amount of Mr. Daniel's product you desire. Let this combination sit and become thoroughly chilled. Add the heavy sugar syrup and let stand a few more moments. (Do not stir the mixture, it will blend by itself.) Place a few sprigs of fresh mint at the rim of the glass and serve immediately.

I personally do not believe the old tales that it was after several of these Mint Juleps that the cow Lily Flagg got her name.

Ron Eyestone



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During the time you are a guest, you are provided with comfortable accommodations, three excellent meals per day, and the opportunity to participate in whatever academic program the University is providing.

There are over one thousand colleges and universities participating in this program, and even include some of those overseas.

My wife and I have been to three Elderhostel programs so far. Two with the University of Arizona and one in New York City, hosted by Fordham University. We thoroughly enjoyed ourselves, and met some very interesting folks.

Our most recent experience with the program was in January of this year, at Nogales, Arizona - just over the border from Mexico. Here's how it went.

We arrived Sunday afternoon, to depart the following Saturday. Our lodgings were in the Americana Motel and we had a large room with two double beds and bath. Later that Sunday we had orientation and a get-acquainted period. This was followed by a great steak dinner.

During the week all the meals are buffet-style, the food was of very good quality. There were forty-two people in our group - fourteen couples and fourteen singles (nine ladies). Our program consisted of three subjects: Cultures/Contrasts of the Arizona/Mexico Border; Moderate

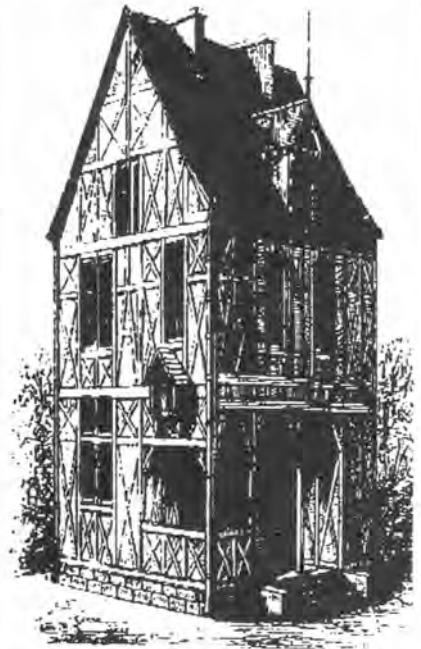
Aerobics; and Missions and Historical Sites of the Southwest. The daily sessions lasted about one and a half hours each and were conducted right there in the hotel, unless we went to visit some historical site, museum or across the border. When we went on a scheduled trip to Nogales, Mexico we enjoyed a "true" Mexican lunch at the La Fuente restaurant. Then followed a shopping spree after lunch.

There is usually a free afternoon during the week. My wife and I found the Rio Rico Golf Club with another couple. Some preferred shopping, sight-seeing or just resting. That Friday evening we had our farewell dinner. There was a talent show of sorts and there were all kinds of talent shown. We all said our good-byes and promised to keep in touch with those whom we had gotten to know in that week. The following day,

Saturday, after breakfast we loaded up and headed out. The total cost for this week was \$255 per person, and included everything. Not bad for an enjoyable, learning week and new friendships.

Submitted by Chuck Owens

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