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Old Huntsville

A PUBLICATION FOR HISTORIC HUNTSVILLE

A FORGOTTEN HERO



The True Story
Of A Huntsville
Patriot

IN THIS ISSUE

Page 38 ~ Make Me A Promise, Mayoral Candidate's



A Forgotten Hero.

For Peter Daniels it was just another day. An ex-slave who had purchased his freedom, Daniels had built up a good business in a little shop off the courthouse square where he worked as a barber. Though quiet spoken, he was well respected by both the black and white community.

He was probably cutting hair, or maybe sweeping up his shop when he first noticed the excitement outside. Quickly finishing his chores, he made his way to the square to see what was happening.

A large crowd had gathered. Word had just been received of the massacre at the Alamo in a far off place called Texas. A pall seemed to settle over the crowd as the news began to sink in. All the defenders had been slaughtered. Even Davy Crockett, who had visited Huntsville so many times in the past, was dead.

As is true with all major events of this nature, once the horrible news was absorbed, the citizens began to get angry. Immediately, talk began to circulate of forming a company to go to Texas and avenge the fallen dead.

One young man in the crowd, with a loud whoop, yelled, "All for Texas!"

The cheer was taken up by all the other young men in the crowd and

within minutes it seemed as if the whole population of Huntsville was about to march on Santa Anna. Fortunately, cooler heads prevailed.

Several old-timers, who had seen service in the war of 1812 and in the Indian wars with Andy Jackson convinced a local businessman by the name of Peyton White to organize a military company. White had experience in the military and he was also fairly prosperous, a major qualification for anyone who wanted to raise a company. In those days, the officers were expected to contribute to the expense of supplies, clothing, weapons and a thousand other things.

Peter Daniels, like everyone else that day, must have felt a surge of pride as young men flocked to enlist. But what could he do? He was black, and lived in a society that condemned men to perpetual servitude for the color of their skin.

Slowly he made his way back to his shop. It was probably best to just put it out of his mind. Besides, there were a lot of other things to think about. It seemed as if everything in the world was happening right here in Huntsville.

"They're erecting a bank building on the square; people say the marble came all the way from Nashville. James Bierny is running for president on the abolition ticket; he used to live right here in Huntsville, and they got government troops over in Guntersville. People say they're gathering up all the Indians over there and sending them out west ... and beside's, I've got my fife."

Daniels was known far and wide for his ability to play the fife, a flute like instrument. Probably self taught, he was an attraction where ever a crowd gathered in Huntsville. On muster days or when ever the local militia would practice marching in Huntsville's dusty streets, Peter was often seen at their head urging them on with his fife. People claimed that he had a God given gift with the fife, and though many people tried, no one could ever produce the stirring martial music the way Daniels could.

Over the next few weeks, Huntsville was a flurry of activity as men prepared to embark for Texas. Women and children both were kept busy making the Lindsay hunting shirts that the men preferred to wear. William Wilson was kept busy drilling the new recruits while Peyton White was



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huddled with the shop keepers every day, trying to raise the necessary supplies. Daniels, like everyone else, must have been caught up in the patriotic fever that had engulfed Huntsville.

Today it is impossible to know how Peter Daniels became part of the company. Possibly some of the troops saw him sitting outside his barber shop, playing the fife, and approached him. Or maybe he spent so much time playing the fife for the troops as they drilled that people just automatically accepted him.

We do know for a fact that he did not enlist as a regular soldier, as blacks were not allowed to carry guns or enlist in service. The most they could

hope for was a job as a servant, or a teamster, or maybe, as in Daniels case, a job that no one else could do.

Regardless of how or why, when Captain Peyton White and his small band of volunteers marched out of Huntsville early one morning in the spring of 1836, Peter Daniels was at the head of the company, blowing mightily on his fife.

From Huntsville the troops marched to Ditto landing where they boarded a boat that carried them to Muscle Shoals. There they were transported around the dangerous shoals by a horse drawn railway that had just been completed, saving the soldiers from a long hot march.

After boarding another boat at the foot of the shoals, life for the volunteers must have settled down to an every day routine of boredom. It was a long trip and as the flatboats slowly drifted down the Tennessee, to where it met with the Ohio River and then over to the Mississippi, there wasn't much for the men to do.

The men would occupy their time by cleaning their rifles, sharpening their Bowie knives, and of course, telling tall tales. Most likely, Daniels was not afforded the privilege of having much spare time. Even though he was the fife player, he was still black, and blacks were the people that did the chores.

Occasionally they might meet with another flatboat carrying more volunteers to Texas. When this happened it was a time of rejoicing and bragging, with each boat load trying to out do the other with their boasts and achievements.

And finally, as always, after the men had exhausted every excuse for a conversation, someone would call for Daniels and his fife. It's easy to imagine now, over a hundred and fifty years later, how it must have sounded as the boats floated slowly in the current down the river with both banks covered by lush foliage. Men silently laying about the deck, lost in thoughts of home, or maybe, the approaching battles.

By the time the group reached New Orleans, word of Peter Daniels musical ability had preceded him. Fife players were rare and every self respecting military company was expected to have one. One musician, Justin Jeffies of Mobile, was actually kidnapped by members of another unit. When the members of his company realized what happened, they armed themselves and went after the kidnapers with a vengeance, resulting in a near riot.

Daniels was recognized as one of the best and he was besieged by generous offers from many companies. But, Peter Daniels was not for sale to the highest bidder, and accordingly, when the small band of Huntsville volunteers marched out of New Orleans, Peter Daniels, with his fife, was again at their head.

The war in Texas was entering a terrible period. Santa Anna, faced with ever increasing swarms of American volunteers, hoisted the black flag. At the Alamo, Goliad, and countless other places there would be no surrender. If the volunteers failed in battle, they would be massacred to the last man.

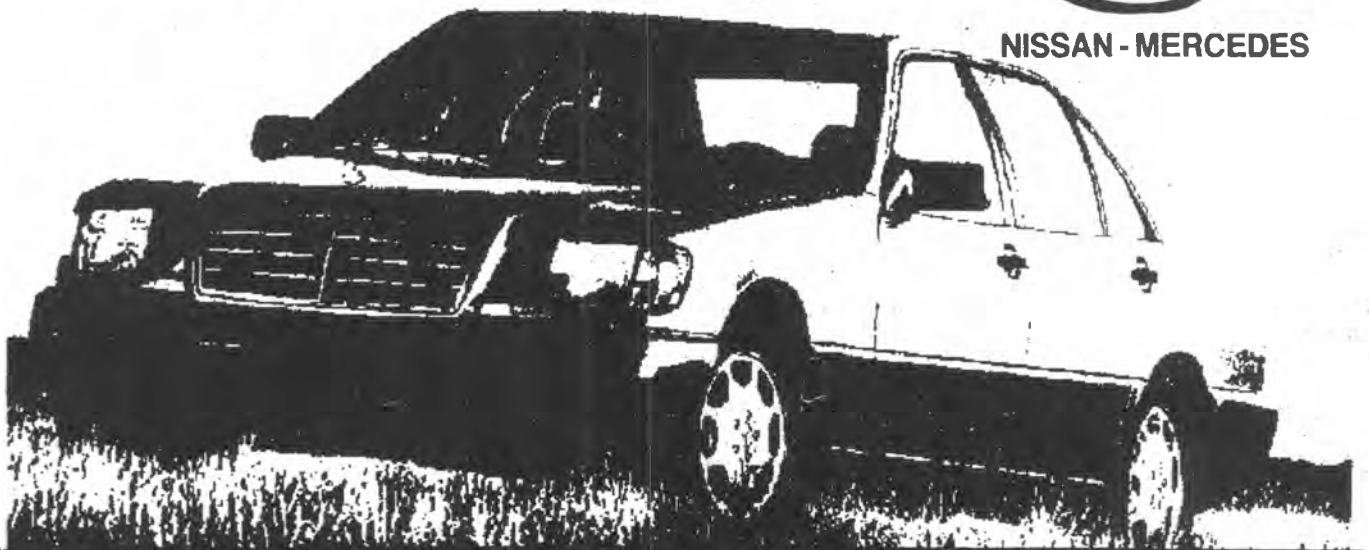
It is hard to imagine what must have been going through Daniel's mind as he marched across the barren plains of Texas with the Huntsville Volunteers. Every day brought fresh reports of atrocities committed by the Mexican troops, and yet, they kept marching bravely on.

The war consisted mostly of small skirmishes; small bands of men constantly harassing their opponents. Hit and run; hide for a while and then hit again. With few men, and fewer supplies, this was the only military tactic the Americans could employ.

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It was during one of these skirmishes somewhere in the deserts of Texas, the exact location has been forgotten for over a hundred years, that Daniels was taken prisoner. We know that he was not carrying a gun so he was probably taking care of the horses and supplies when captured.

The Mexicans immediately recognized Daniels as the wonderful fife player they had heard so much about. The Mexican army was renowned for its military bands, so any prisoner with musical ability instantly became a topic of discussion at headquarters.

Santa Anna believed men fought better when inspired by music. Months earlier, at the Alamo, four regimental bands played constantly throughout the final battle, and even during the massacre that followed.

Daniels was taken before the Mexican officers, who after confirming his identity, offered him a position in their regimental band.

"No," replied Daniels. "I can't do that."

The Mexican soldiers explained to him that the only other alternative

was death before the firing squad. Still, Peter Daniels refused.

The soldiers must have been impressed by Daniels' courage, for instead of ordering his immediate execution, they placed him under guard for the night. Likely, they were hoping that after having time to reflect about the matter, Daniels would change his mind.

Many books have been written about courage and heroic deeds, but in no book about Huntsville, Alabama will a student ever find a more shining example.



GREEN HILLS

~ g r i l l e ~

"A Taste of the Southwest"



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A thousand thoughts must have played on his mind during that long dark night. Thoughts of home and family and friends. Thoughts of the injustices that he had known. Thoughts of Huntsville that now seemed so far away.

And yet, he never wavered. His loyalty was not for sale ... not even for his life.

As the sun began its slow climb over the bleak desert floor, the Mexican officers sent for him. Standing before them, likely with his life in hand, Daniels was once again offered the choice. Join the Mexican band, or refuse and die.

And like the men, whose likenesses are carved in stone all across our nation, had also chosen, Peter Daniels resolved to die as an American....

Peyton White and the rest of the volunteers returned to Huntsville at the end of the conflict. Daniels was the only casualty of the Huntsville company.

For a while, whenever men would gather, they would talk about Daniels and his heroic choice. Yet, as the years went on, people began to forget and within the span of a hundred years he had become just a footnote in an old, dusty book locked away in the archives of the public library.

Today, visitors in Huntsville are shown the fine ante-bellum homes of yesterday and they learn of the hardy pioneers that built them. They are told tales of the trial of Frank James, and numerous other accounts of Huntsville's legendary figures, but not a word is ever mentioned about Peter Daniels....

No one remembers.

Last Kiss

An Atlanta man who had only been acquainted with his girl two nights attempted to kiss her at the gate. In his dying deposition he told the doctors just as he kissed her the earth slid from under his feet, and his soul went out of his mouth, while his head touched the stars. Later dispatches show that what really ailed him was the old man's boot.

From 1850 Newspaper

The illustration depicts a classic tennis court scene from the late 19th or early 20th century. A woman in a long, light-colored dress and a wide-brimmed hat stands in the foreground, holding a tennis racket. In the background, other figures are visible on the court, including a man in a suit and another woman. The scene is framed by a decorative border with the text 'SERVE & VOLLEY SHOPPE' at the top and 'LAWN TENNIS' below it. A circular callout in the lower right corner of the illustration contains the text: 'Mention This Ad & Receive 5% OFF!'.

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A Short Letter

In our research we come across all types of letters. Our all time favorite is one written in 1918 by a man identified only as "Howie."

Howie, a native of Madison, had been drafted and was serving in France when he wrote the following letter:

Dear Ma,
I am well. Hope you are well. Please send me some your biscuits. This army bread is killing me.

Your Dutiful Son,
Howie

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The Old Huntsville- Madison County Fair

By Evelyn Haden Hodge

The old Huntsville-Madison County fair ground was located on the northwest corner of Church Street and Wheeler Avenue. The fair was held in the fall, usually in September and ran from Monday morning until Saturday at midnight.

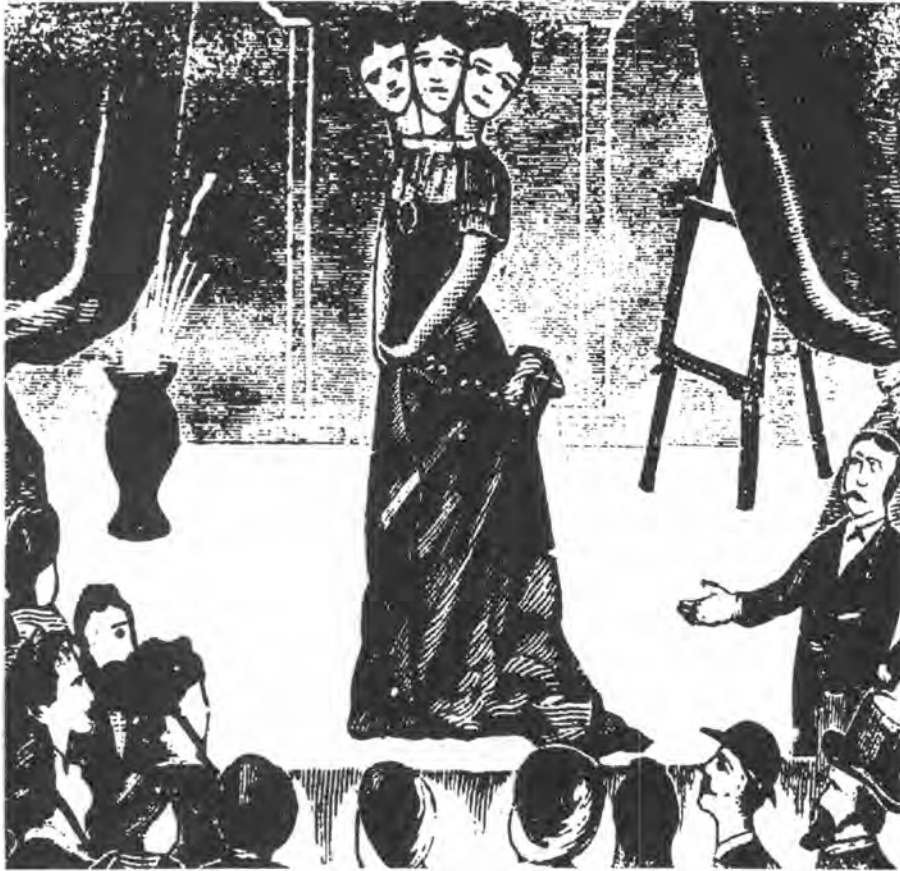
When entering the fair grounds, the livestock barn could be seen to the left. In the barn were dairy cattle, beef cattle, hogs, sheep, and rabbits. There was also poultry, including chickens, ducks, geese, and turkeys. First, second, and third prizes were given for the best of each breed.

The grandstand was a huge building with booths underneath for farm, school and other exhibits. Friday was School Day and all the schools declared a holiday so the pupils could attend the fair.

The pupils participated in all sorts of competitive events such as races, jumping, etc. There was a Mr. Moore, who owned a jewelry store in town and also fitted eyeglasses. His slogan was, "See Moore and See Better," and he wrote a song of the same title. During the fair he gave a trophy to the school group who was judged as singing it the best. Then each group sang a song of its own selection, and that winner also received a trophy.

One of the exhibition booths was for the schools to show the work of their students. Blue, red and white ribbons were given for outstanding academics, art, writing, etc.

Some of the larger farmers would have individual booths to display the fruits of their labors. The booths were attractively arranged with corn, cotton, wheat, hay, sweet and Irish potatoes, pumpkins, gourds, sorghum molasses, honey, and other produce.



Health Shorts

By Dr. Annelie M. Owens

Lyme disease is a bacterial infection transmitted to humans by an infected tick, mostly the deer tick, which is very small, about half the size of the common dog tick. It is a relatively new disease and first came to be known in the seaside community of Lyme, Connecticut in 1975, hence its name.

Usually Lyme disease has three stages: the first stage is characterized by the bulls-eye rash which develops around the tick bite, although 30 percent of the victims do not develop this rash. The second stage is marked by an inflammation of the heart muscles or the nervous system. The third stage of Lyme disease may develop weeks, months or as long as two years after the person is infected. This stage is characterized primarily by the inflammation of the joints and the onset of arthritis which mostly affects the large joints of the body such as the knees.

The greatest incidence of Lyme disease is in three areas in the U.S.: Northeast, Midwest and the Pacific Coast, but the Public Health Service reported recently that cases of Lyme disease have been recorded in 49 states.

Those who work or play outdoors should be especially cautious. Tick repellent should be used and protective clothing worn. Upon returning indoors, they should carefully inspect their bodies for the tiny dark ticks and if found, remove them promptly and carefully with tweezers. Known tick-infested areas during the months of June, July and August should be avoided.

The further the disease has progressed, the more difficult it is to diagnose and treat. Some drugs that effectively fight the disease in its early stages, such as tetracycline, are not effective in later stages. The key is early diagnosis and treatment.

The farmer's wife would add home-canned vegetables and fruits, jellies, preserves, pickles, crafts, and baked goods, such as breads, cakes, etc.

Another booth was for the women to display their handmade quilts and vie for the prizes that were given. There was also a booth for home-canned foods. There would be cans of vegetables and fruits, jellies, pickles of every variety. There were also cans of home-butchered meats. Ribbons were given for the best of each category.

Also under the grandstand were eating concessions which were leased to Parent Teacher Associations (PTA's). They would earn money for their schools by cooking and serving meals mostly to the carnival personnel and other workers at the fair.

Across the race track in front of the grandstand was a large stage. Each afternoon and evening there would be free shows such as trapeze, high wire, slight of hand, acrobatics, and trained dog acts.

Every afternoon there would be several harness races. The handsome, well-trained horses would pull those two-wheeled carts and the drivers around the track in double time. There was a midway with sideshows of all sorts and rides of every kind.

Back in its heyday, the old Huntsville-Madison County fair was the largest fair between Nashville and Birmingham. The carnival which served the Huntsville-Madison County fair would fold up here on Saturday night, move on to Birmingham, and be ready to open Monday morning for the Alabama State fair.

After many years, the old fair closed down in the early 1950's.





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So Would I

Mr. Bacon, of Montgomery, was courting a lady in Alabama. She had refused him frequently and he often repeated his suit. At one interview she became exceedingly annoyed at his importunity, and told him that she could not marry him; that their tastes, opinions, likes and dislikes were totally different.

"In fact," she said, "Mr. Bacon, I don't think there is one subject on earth upon which we would agree."

"I assure you, madam, that you are mistaken and I can prove it."

"If you can mention one thing about which we agree I will marry you."

"Well," said he, "I will do it. Suppose, now, you and I were traveling together. We arrive at a hotel, and there are only two beds for us, in one there is a man, and the other a woman; which bed would you select to sleep in?"

She arose indignantly, and replied, "With the woman, of course, sir!"

"Well, there you are," he earnestly replied. "So would I!"

From 1850 Newspaper

Teeth in and Teeth Out

by Walt Terry

I used to watch my grandfather take out his teeth at night and put them in a glass of water. I asked him how he could do that, and he said it was a secret he would reveal to me some day. But I was impatient. I kept trying to get my teeth out.

One day to my amazement, a tooth actually did come out when I pulled on it. There was blood on it, and I got scared. I couldn't get the tooth back in, so I ran to my grandfather with it.

He then revealed the secret about his teeth and told me to wait fifty or sixty years before I worried about mine. I also learned about the tooth fairy and that teeth had a value beyond mere chewing.

Thank You!

We would like to thank our many readers for your support. You are responsible for whatever success that we have enjoyed over the last two years.

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

However our success depends on our advertisers. Please support them and put in a good word for us!



HOUSEHOLD TIPS BY

EARLENE

Remember... Cleanliness is next to Godliness.

Dispose of all your aluminum pans and replace with stainless steel. The aluminum will leach out during cooking, into your food.

Remove cobwebs when they are new. Once covered with grease and dust they are much more difficult to remove.

Don't use metal waste cans in the bathroom. They will quickly rust.

To freshen the toilet bowl, pour three cups of white vinegar in and let stand for an hour before flushing.

If you have an old wooden clock, if cracks appear get them sealed by a jeweler or clock repairman to keep dust out of the works.

For old oil paintings, cleaning is simple. Just use a dry cloth or brush and wipe. Don't use water or moisture of any type. You may finish up by applying a very thin layer of cream furniture polish to brighten it up.

If you spill alcohol on a piece of wooden furniture, wipe up the liquid immediately, and rub the area with your hand. The oil from your skin will help restore some of that taken out of the wood by the spill.

Stretching Shoes to Fit

The Boston Globe once printed a story about Roald Dahl. It seems that Dahl wrote the Times of London that he had recently purchased a pair of gym shoes and they pinched his toes. Remembering that 10 volumes of water at zero degrees centigrade expand to 11 volumes at freezing point, he pushed a plastic bag into each shoe and filled them completely with water. He then placed the shoes in the freezer and closed the door. The next morning he pulled his shoes out of the freezer, discovering that they had expanded in all directions by 10 percent. They fit perfectly.



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THE WAR IN NORTH ALABAMA

Headquarters Third Division,
Huntsville, Alabama
April 11, 1862.

Capt. J.B. Fry,
Assistant Adjutant-General.

Sir: After a forced march of incredible difficulty, leaving Fayetteville yesterday at 12 M., my advanced guard, consisting of Turchin's brigade, Kennett's cavalry, and Simonson's battery, entered Huntsville this morning at 6 o'clock. (John B. Turchin's Eighth Brigade of Illinois, Indiana and Ohio troops, John Kennett's Fourth Ohio Cavalry, and Peter Simonson's Fifth Indiana Battery.)

The city was taken completely by surprise, no one having considered the march practicable in the time. (A Union correspondent with Mitchel wrote: "His movement was almost as sudden and luminous as the meteors which he so often followed through the skies.") We have captured about 200 prisoners, 15 locomotives, a large amount of passenger, box, and platform cars, the telegraphic apparatus and offices, and two Southern mails. We have at length succeeded in cutting the great artery of railway intercommunication between the Southern States.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

O.M. Mitchel,
Brigadier General, Commanding

Headquarters Third Division,
Huntsville, Alabama
April 11, 1862.

Gen. D.C. Buell
Official Records, 1st Ser., X, Pt. 1, 641-42.

The work so happily commenced on yesterday has been completed today upon a train of cars captured from the enemy at Huntsville. A heavy force of the Ninth Brigade (Ohio and Wisconsin troops), under command of (Joshua W.) Sill, was ordered to drive the enemy from Stevenson in the east, while an equal force from the Eighth Brigade, upon captured cars, was directed to seize Decatur upon the west. Both expeditions proved eminently successful. I accompanied the most difficult one to Stevenson in person, from which place 2,000 of the enemy fled as usual at our approach without firing a gun, leaving behind five locomotives and a large amount of rolling stock.

To prevent the enemy from penetrating toward Nashville, I ordered the destruction of a small bridge between Stevenson and Bridgeport, which we can replace, if necessary, in a single day. The expedition from the Eighth Brigade, under the immediate command of Colonel Turchin, proved eminently successful. To arrest his advance the enemy fired a bridge on the farther side of the Tennessee River, but our troops reached it in time to extinguish the flames. A small force of the enemy fled from the town, leaving their tents standing and their camp equipage behind them.

Thus in a single day we have taken and now hold a hundred miles of the great railway line of the rebel Confederacy. We have nothing more to do in this region, having fully accomplished all that was ordered. We have saved the great bridge across the Tennessee (at Decatur), and are ready to strike the enemy; if so directed, upon his right flank and rear at Corinth.

Respectfully,

O.M. Mitchel,
Brigadier-General.



Headquarters Third Division,
Huntsville, Alabama May 4, 1862.

Hon. E.M. Stanton:

I have this day written you fully, embracing three topics of great importance — the absolute necessity of protecting slaves who furnish us valuable information, the fact that I am left without command of my line of communications, and the importance of holding Alabama north of the Tennessee. I have promised protection to the slaves who have given me valuable assistance and information. My river front is 120 miles long, and if the Government disapprove what I have done, I must receive heavy re-enforcements or abandon my position. With the aid of the negroes in watching the river I feel myself sufficiently strong to defy the enemy.

O.M. Mitchel,
Major-General, Commanding 3rd Div

Major-General Mitchel,
Huntsville, Ala.:

Your telegrams of the 3d and 4th have been received. No general in the field has deserved better of his country than yourself, and the Department rejoices to award credit to one who merits it so well. The Department is advised of nothing that you have done but what is approved. The assistance of slaves is an element of military strength which, under proper regulations, you are fully justified in employing for your security and the success of your operations. It has been freely employed by the enemy, and to abstain from its judicious use when it can be employed with military advantage would be a failure to employ means to suppress the rebellion and restore the authority of the Government. Protection to those who furnish information or other assistance is a high duty.

Edwin M. Stanton,
Secretary of War.

Continued on page 13



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 Madison Square Mall
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 Krogers - Drake Avenue
 Winn Dixie - Triana
 Winn Dixie - Oakwood Avenue
 The Village Inn - downtown
 Harrison Brothers - downtown
 David Gibson Barbeque - Jordan Lane
 Little Farm Grocery - Whitesburg
 Great American Car Wash - University Drive
 Cafe III - University Drive
 Sanders Cleaners - Jordan Lane
 Great Spirits - South Parkway
 Classic Cafe - University Drive
 Dunkin donuts - Wynn Drive and University
 Wings - University Drive
 Wings - Pratt Avenue
 J. Gregory's pizza - Jordan Lane
 Allied Photocopy - Pratt Avenue
 El Mejicano Restaurant - Jordan lane
 El Palacio Restaurant - South Parkway
 Mullin's Restaurant - Andrew Jackson Way
 Sam's Wholesale Warehouse - North Parkway
 Chevron - Pratt Avenue
 Shell Food Mart - University near Research Park
 PX - on Redstone Arsenal
 Commissary - on Redstone Arsenal
 Kettle - both University locations
 Olive Garden - University Drive
 Papa Jack's - Bob Wallace Avenue
 A&W Drive In - Drake Avenue
 Holiday Foods - Jordan Lane
 Food World - Holmes near Madison Square
 Fret Shop - Pratt
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 NTW Tires
 Great Spirits



Headquarters Third Division
Huntsville, Alabama May 5, 1862.

Hon. E.M. Stanton,
Secretary of War.

The occupation of Huntsville and this railway line by my troops seems to have produced among rebels the bitterest feeling. Armed citizens fire into the trains, cut the telegraph wires, attack the guards of bridges, cut off and destroy my couriers, while guerrilla bands of cavalry attack whenever there is the slightest chance of success. I have arrested some prominent citizens along the line of the railway and in this city. I hold some prisoners (citizens) against whom the negroes will prove charges of unauthorized war. Am I to convict on the testimony of the blacks? Have I your authority to send notorious rebels to a Northern prison? May I offer the protection of the Government to the negroes who give valuable information? Is it not possible to give me re-enforcements to cross the Osage at Grates' Ferry and march against Rome? That entire region is now comparatively unprotected and very much alarmed.

O.M. Mitchel,
Major-General, Commanding 3rd Div

Hon. E.M. Stanton,
Secretary of War.

No answer has been received to my request for authority to send two or three notorious rebels to a Northern prison. Judge (George W.) Lane and Senator (Jeremiah) Clemens believe it necessary. Would it avail anything for General Clemens to appear in Washington as the representative of the citizens of northern Alabama, his object being to learn unofficially in what way the existing controversy might be ended? He will come if you approve it. Since the driving out of the regular troops, guerrilla warfare has been commenced, and advocated by the very men I wish to send to a Northern prison. The failure to occupy Tuscumbia, I fear, is to become a frightful source of trouble. (John Hunt) Morgan is said to have crossed below Florence, and it is now said other cavalry, and even (Sterling) Price's infantry, are now crossing. I have not heard from General Buell or General Halleck in two weeks. No re-enforcements have reached me. If guerrilla warfare is to be waged, I must have a large force of cavalry. Am I to expect soon any addition to my command?

O.M. Mitchel,
Major-General, Commanding.

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Headquarters Third Division
Camp Taylor,
May 19, 1862.

Hon. E.M. Stanton,
Secretary of War.

My line of posts extend more than 400 miles. My own personal attention cannot be given to all the troops under my command.

The most terrible outrages — robberies, rapes, arsons, and plundering — are being committed by lawless brigands and vagabonds connected with the army, and I desire authority to punish all those found guilty of perpetrating these crimes with death by hanging.

Wherever I am present in person all is quiet and orderly, but in some instances, in regiments remote from headquarters, I hear the most deplorable accounts of excesses committed by soldiers.

I beg authority to control these plunderers by visiting upon their crimes the punishment of death.

O.M. Mitchel,
Major-General.

General George S. Hunter and others, *Committee, Athens:*

Gentlemen: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your report, dated Athens, May 3, 1862, presenting the affidavits of 45 individuals, who claim to have suffered by the depredations committed by the officers and men of the Eighth Brigade, now under the command of Col. J.B. Turchin.

You report the aggregate losses of these 45 individuals to amount to the very large sum of \$54,689.80.

I greatly fear, gentlemen, you are laboring under a very serious misapprehension. I sincerely hope that no remarks of mine could have led you to imagine that the Government of the United States would pay individuals for robberies suffered at the hands of

individuals, acting not only without orders, but contrary to the most positive and repeated orders. Whenever provisions or forage have been taken, and the accounts, properly made out, are certified by the proper officer, these accounts will be paid promptly by the quartermaster. All other articles have been taken without a shadow of authority, and those who are guilty are but robbers and plunderers, and must be treated as such.

I cannot arraign before a court, civil or military, a brigade, and I most deeply regret that a portion at least of your time had not been occupied in searching for the testimony which would have fixed the charge of pillage and plunder upon some individual officer or soldier under my command. To this, the most important matter connected with this unfortunate affair, you do not appear thus far to have given the slightest attention.

Trusting that a finished report from you may furnish the evidence which may convict before a court-martial those guilty of robbery and pillage, I remain, gentlemen, your very obedient servant,

O.M. Mitchel,
Major-General, Commanding U.S. Troops in North Alabama and Middle Tennessee

Washington, July 19, 1862.
Hon. E.M. Stanton:
Secretary of War:

Sir: In my note of July 18 I made a distinct denial of the charges made against me before the Military Committee of having failed to do my duty in repressing pillaging and plundering by the troops under my command.

I now desire to lay before you positive evidence of having done my duty in this particular in the most earnest and energetic manner.

First. I send you copies of the orders issued by me against all irregularities of every kind.

Second. The record will show that, notwithstanding the fact that my troops

were perpetually in motion and almost daily engaged in repelling the attacks of the enemy, I managed to keep a division court-martial in session during the whole time that I had command in middle Tennessee and northern Alabama; and that offenders, wherever they could be found, were brought before the court, tried, convicted, sentenced, and punished.

Third. In the special cases of the excesses committed by the soldiers of the Eighth Brigade on the recapture of Athens, I visited the town, addressed the citizens, induced them to organize a committee to hear indirectly, one particle of personal pecuniary advantage from any of the transactions in cotton.

I trust that my former character is a sufficient guarantee to yourself and my countrymen that I am perfectly incapable of doing anything to the injury of the Government and to my private advantage.

The positions in which I have been placed and the duties which have devolved upon me as a commanding officer have been responsible and arduous, but never for a moment have I halted or hesitated. I have done my very utmost to discharge my duties faithfully and honestly, and it is with proud satisfaction that I now declare that since I have been in the service of the United States my head has never rested at night upon my pillow with one solitary particle of the day's duty unperformed. Each day brought its new duties and responsibilities, but no fragments of those of the former day remained to be gathered up. I have assurances that I have heretofore enjoyed the confidence of yourself, of the President, and of my countrymen.

I am guiltless of anything which should in the smallest degree diminish that confidence, and here I rest my case.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

O.M. Mitchel,
Major-General, U.S. Army

Boob Brasfield

by Walter S. Terry

A Penitentiary Romance

Innocent Incest

There is now in the state penitentiary, an aged couple who are serving out a term for the crime of incest, they being brother and sister. The story is this: At the age of twelve years, the male left his father's house to seek his fortune and no more return. He, in time, came West, grew to manhood and married, raised a family of children, and in time he died. His sister grew to womanhood and was married, and with her husband came West, and then to Iowa. Her husband died, and in time she received an offer of marriage from a man who was a widower. She accepted the offer and they were married.

Her husband was wealthy, and after a time one of his sons wished to have the father give him some property, but the father refused to accede to his demands. The son, one day, while looking over the family record of the stepmother, which had been laid aside and forgotten, discovered that there was a kinship between the families, and further investigation proved that his father and stepmother were very own brother and sister.

To avenge himself for his father's refusal to give him the bulk of his property, he brought suit against them both for incest. They were tried and convicted and sent to the penitentiary for one year. They are both over sixty years of age, and as innocent of intent to commit crime as the new born babe.

From 1873 Newspaper

It's probably not common knowledge these days that in the 1930's Huntsville entertainment included burlesque shows - pitifully tame by today's standards, but burlesque nevertheless. "Boob Brasfield" and his troupe held forth at the Grand Theatre on Jefferson Street and the stage of the old Elks Building on Eustis. As I remember him, Boob was the stereotype country bumpkin with painted-on freckles, a broom straw between his teeth and wearing baggy overalls with a polka dot shirt. The jokes were hayseed but daringly risque for the times.

However, for young sprouts like Wendal Payne and me, just beginning to feel their sap rising, the indisputable main attraction was Boob's daughter Bonnie. Bonnie was a bubbly, bouncy blonde with two beautiful Brasfields who danced and sang and squirmed around on the stage in an unforgettable fashion.

I fondly recall Bonnie as one of my first objects of lust, second only to some of my more luscious female classmates, who were closer at hand, (but no less inaccessible).

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FAMOUS RECIPES

FROM THE PAST

Advice to Cooks in 1879 How to bake the Best White Cake

Before commencing to make cake, be sure that you have all the ingredients in the house, and all the implements at hand, such as trays, bowls, large dishes, large strong iron spoons, egg, beaters, etc.

Use none but the best family flour in making cake. It is a good plan to sift it before weighing or measuring it, and to let it air and sun several hours before using it; as this makes it much lighter.

It is a great mistake to set aside rancid or indifferent butter for cake making. The butter used for the purpose should be good and fresh.

Always use granulated sugar or else powdered loaf or cut sugar; as pulverized sugar is apt to have plaster of Paris or other foreign elements in it. Never use brown or even clarified sugar in cake-making, unless it be for gingerbread.

Do not attempt to make cake without fresh eggs. Cream of tartar, soda and yeast powders are poor substitutes for these.

A fresh egg placed in cold water will sink to the bottom.

In breaking eggs, do not break them over the vessels in which they are to be beaten. Break them, one by one, over a saucer, so that if you come across a defective one, you will not spoil the rest by mixing it with them; whereas, if it is a good one, it will be easy to pour the white from the saucer into the bowl with the rest of the whites, and to add the yolk which you will retain in the egg-shell to the other yolks.

The Dover egg-beater saves much time and trouble in beating eggs and will beat the yolks into as stiff a froth as the whites. It is well to have two egg-beaters, one for the yolks and one for the whites. Eggs well beaten ought to be as stiff as batter. Cool the dishes that you are to use in beating eggs. In summer, keep the eggs on ice before using them, and always try to make the cake before breakfast, or as early in the morning as possible.

Some of the best housewives think it advisable to cream the butter and flour together, and add the sugar to the yolks when these are whipped to a stiff froth, as it produces yellow specks when you add the sugar sooner. The whites must always be added last.

In making fruit cake, prepare the fruit the day before. In winter time, this may be easily and pleasantly done after tea. It requires a longer time to bake fruit cake, than plain. Every housekeeper should have a close cake-box in which to put cake after cooling it and wrapping it in a thick napkin.

Here are some recipes for white cake.

White cake

The whites of 20 eggs
1 pound of flour
1 pound of butter
1 pound of almonds
Use a little more flour, if the almonds are omitted.

Mrs. Dr. S.

Heavenly White Cake

1 cup of butter
3 cups of sugar
1 cup of sweet milk
the whites of 5 eggs
3 cups of flour
3 teaspoonfuls cream of tartar
1 teaspoonful of soda

Mrs. D.C.K.

Superior White Cake

1 pound of sugar
The whites of 10 eggs
3/4 pound butter
1 pound of flour
Flavor with lemon or rose-water,
and bake in a moderate oven.
Mrs. F.W.C.

Leighton Cake

1 pint butter
1 pint cream
2 pints sugar
4 pints flour
2 teaspoonfuls essence of almonds
The whites of 12 eggs
2 teaspoonfuls yeast powder,
mixed in flour
Mrs. N.

Silver Cake

1 pound powdered sugar
3/4 pound flour
1/2 pound butter
Whites of 11 eggs
1 teaspoonful essence of bitter almond
Cream the butter; gradually rub in the flour, then the sugar; add the flavoring; last of all, stir in the whites of the eggs beaten to a stiff froth. Flavor the icing with vanilla or bitter almonds.
Mrs. S.T.

Mountain Cake

1 cup of butter
3 cups of sugar, creamed together
1 cup of sweet cream
1 teaspoonful cream of tartar and
1/2 teaspoon of soda, sprinkled
in 3 1/2 cups of sifted flour.
Whites of 10 eggs.
Bake in thin cakes as for jelly cakes.
Ice and sprinkle each layer with grated cocoanut.
Take the whites of three eggs for the icing, and grate one cocoanut.
Mrs. C.M.A.

Taken From "Housekeeping in Old Virginia" Printed 1879

Some Old Cabbage Recipes from Old Virginia in 1879

To Boil Cabbage with Bacon

Quarter a head of hard white cabbage, examine for insects, lay in salt and water several hours. An hour before dinner, drain and put in a pot in which bacon has been boiling - a pod of red pepper boiled with it will make it more wholesome and improve the flavor of both bacon and cabbage.

Cabbage without Bacon

Prepare exactly as directed in foregoing recipe. Boil an hour in a large pot of boiling water. Drain, chop fine, add a tablespoon of butter, the same of cream, the same of pepper-vinegar, and salt and pepper to your taste.

Cabbage Pudding

Boil nice, hard, white cabbage with good bacon. When thoroughly done, chop fine and add a large lump of butter, one teacup rich milk, three eggs beaten light, two teaspoonfuls mixed mustard; pepper and salt to the taste. Pour in a buttered deep dish; put on top dusted pepper, bits of fresh butter, and grated cracker or stale bread.

Bake a light brown.

Warm Slaw

Cut the cabbage very fine and sprinkle over it a tablespoonful flour. Put a piece of butter, the size of an egg, in the oven to melt. Salt and pepper the

cabbage and put it in the oven with the butter. Mix half a teacup of cream with the same quantity of vinegar, pout it over the cabbage and heat through.

Fried Cabbage

Reserve some cabbage from dinner. Set it away til next morning. Chop fine, season with pepper and salt, and fry brown with a slice of fat bacon.

This Month's Recipe Page Brought To You by

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billy joe cooley

EVERY YEAR some 10,000 people from across the southland gather here for a weekend of relaxing under the stars and listening to old-time music played by many championship musicians. It's the Cahaba Bluegrass and Fiddling Convention in Cahaba Grove, corner Pulaski Pike and Winchester Road (near Johnson High School). Even those who don't favor bluegrass

music come in order to kick their shoes off and let their minds dwell a bit on their heritage. See you there. As usual, I'll get to emcee the event, as I have since its inception in 1976. A great honor. The funds are used to support Children's Hospitals, operated by the Shriners.

Linda Manor of Studio 120 was trying for a hole-in-one at the miniature

golf course the other night. Her son Jeff, 12, and his pal Zack Penney, 10, kept the action on par.

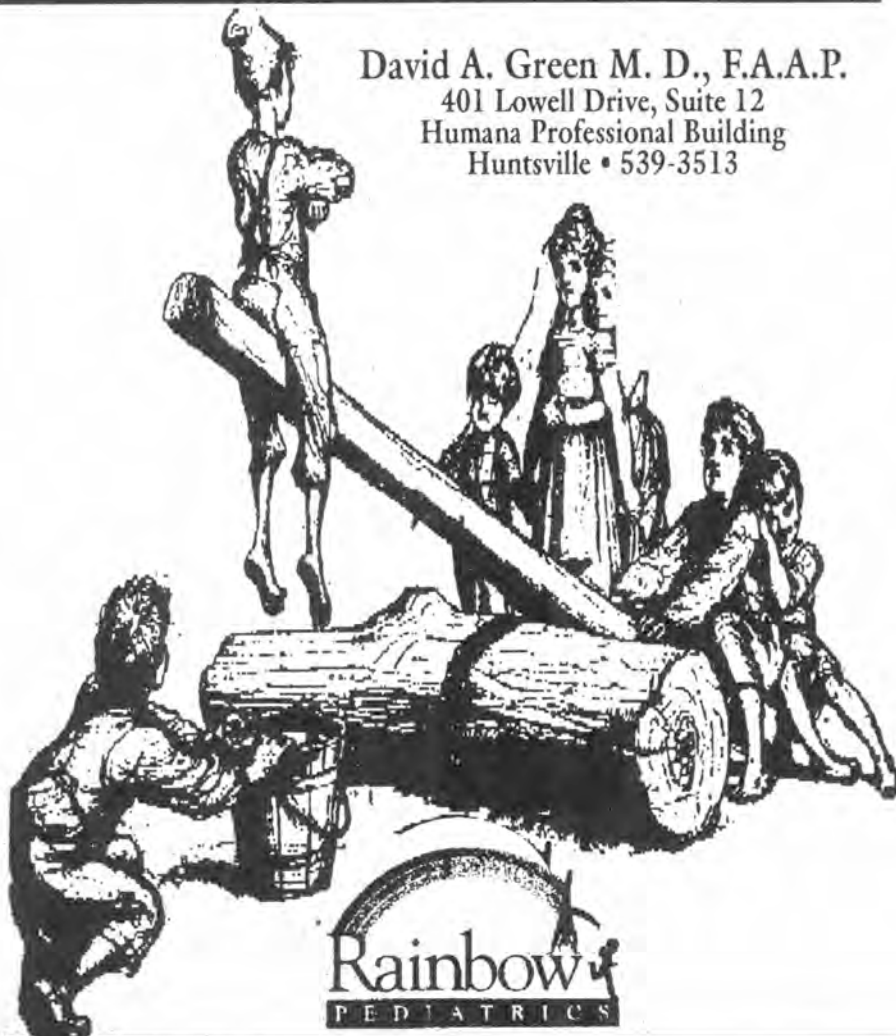
At the age of 12 I would sit in the Princess Theater at South Pittsburg and listen to people sing along with a bouncing ball as it hopped from syllable to syllable across the screen. "Absolutely unbelievable," one man remarked as Mrs. Philpon sang off-key and too loud, two seats behind us. That same singalong concept is still with us, only now its called "karaoke" and lighted words have replaced the bouncing ball. Saturday nights it is featured at Finnegan's Irish Pub. People still sing along. "Unbelievable, absolutely unbelievable," said Ian Richardson the other night as a young woman patron left her bar stool and warbled off-key into the microphone. A young man named Rick sets up his karaoke machine, complete with big screen, every Saturday from early night until the wee hours. It's fun and the crowd loves it, even the off-key singers. An even more startling experience can be found at House of Mandarin after 10 on weekend nights. They do the same thing in Chinese (as well as English). Absolutely unbelievable.

BOOT SCOOTERS is the new name of the lounge in Carriage Inn. It opens in a night or so. Shotgun Evans, who once operated the popular "Afternoon Delight" lounge on South Parkway, has taken over management of the facility. It will cater primarily to the country music set.

That was a fine shindig in Ka-Lea Park a few Sundays ago when Clyde Owens and his Good Times Band staged a benefit, featuring other groups, to help build a new Eagles Club in the county. We hadn't seen Dick Stewart, the bass player and manager of the Good Times, in several years. Among the four bands playing at the to-do was Doyle Brady and his Texas Wind Band.

When I emceed the Monday night Gazebo Concert (July 13) for Bianca Cox, it was a pleasure to see Vivacious Jeune (who owns Alabama Balloon Co.) with her children and friends spreading their blankets adjacent to the stage at the water's edge. Rowdy Owens had joined them. That crowd shows up anywhere Tony Mason is

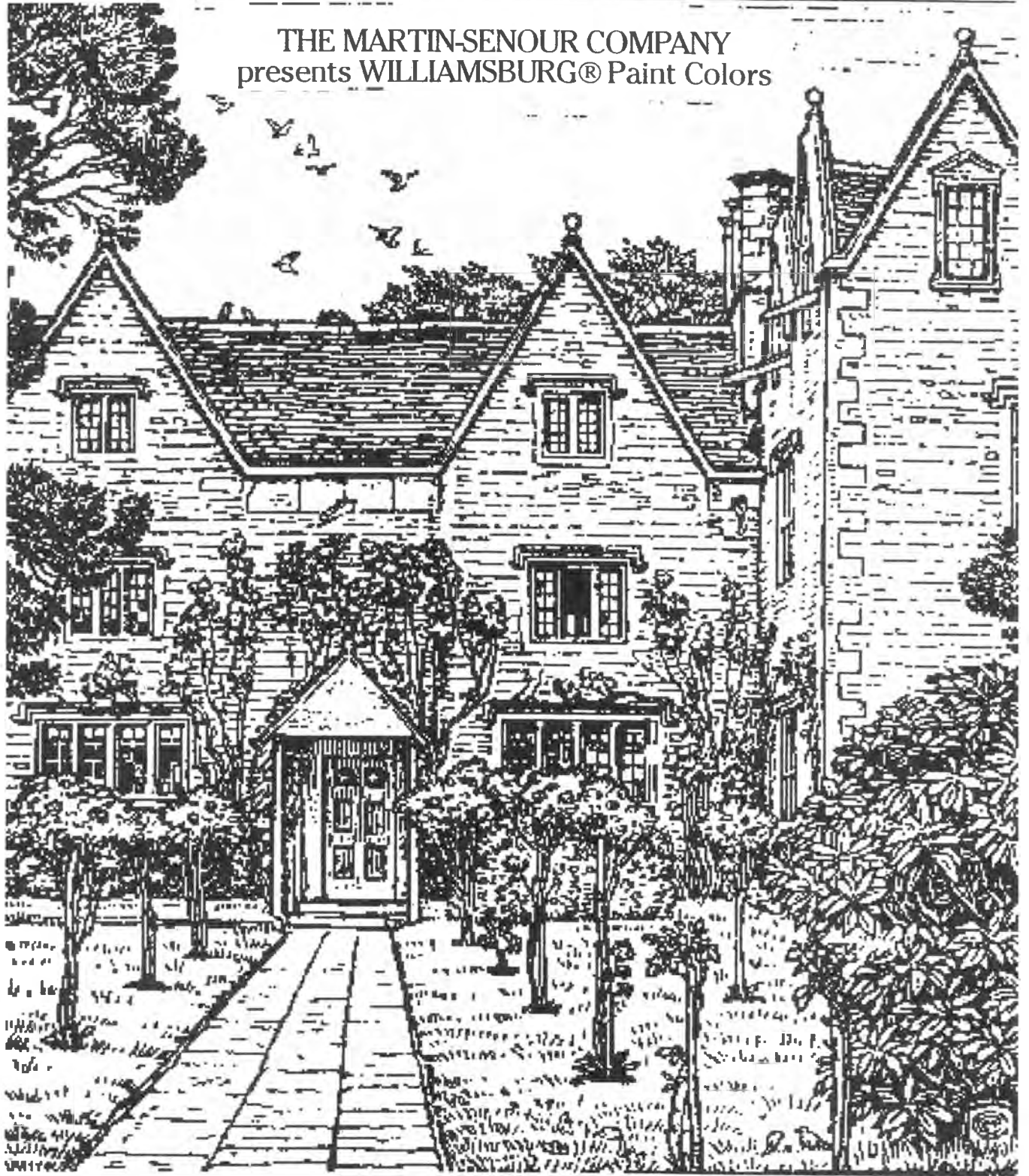
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continued on page 20

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singing. Just him and his guitar for an hour. Bianca has returned, of course, after being in California a few days for her mother's funeral. By the way, Tony Mason's fans will be proud to know that he's been invited to perform in Munich at this year's Oktoberfest.

MIKE LAND, about whom we've written before, is so excited about New England that he's subscribed to our "Old Rhode Island" sister paper. He's back from an adventurous sailing expedition on Chesapeake Bay, or one of those fancy bays. He sells aquariums at his Total Aquarium place out on Governors Drive.

Thad Clark sprained his ankle, so he's been hobbling around, showing his Clark Refrigeration workers which knobs to turn.

"Sister Act" with Whoopi Goldberg was one of the best movies of the

summer. See it, if you can. Another excellent film, also playing at the Cobbs, is "Class Act."


OVERHEARD in Floyd Hardin's Jackson Way Barbershop: "I've discovered a great labor-saving device. It's called tomorrow."

Now that druggist Dave Sharp and his teacher wife Ethel have retired they're doing a lot of traveling to their former hometowns. They were at Eunice's breakfast table the other morning, having just returned from Gadsden. Ethel has joined the ranks of serious journalism, having had an embroidery article printed nationally in "Sew Beautiful" magazine. It's published locally. Ruth Weems, who is usually at the breakfast table on Saturdays, didn't get to hear the Sharps' stories because she was at home getting her car repaired. However, at the

next table sat Roy Priest and friends. He of the Blockbuster Video store. Drs. Bryce and Dolly Davis will be in front row when their daughter Jan and her hubby blast off in the shuttle, of course, but NASA charges a fine price for such seats, even to astronomical kin. The Davises were at Eunice's the other day. At the next table was city fireman Calvin Behr and his wife, operatic soprano Pamela Dale.

Miss Rosemary Champion, the flute teacher, and her friends are excited about the new restaurant at the corner of U.S. 72 and Wall-Triana Highway in Madison. It's called John's Cabin Family Restaurant and the food is delicious. Catfish and steak are the dinner staples, with chef Dee Vinson. Meanwhile, Huntland's Dave Graf provides solid-country singing with his guitar. John McClain has done well with his establishment.

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JOHNNY TONA'S Family Billiards was the place to be last weekend. The giant parlor is especially popular since they've banned smoking in the building. They also don't allow nasty language, gambling or alcohol drinking. Part of the happy crew there this weekend included Huntsville High stalwarts, past and present, Tommy Bucholz, Kevin Davis, Teddy London, Alan Boyd and the Sato brothers, Sean and Larry.

That'll be a major event at Carriage Inn on Sept. 13 when a fun-filled fashion show takes over the main ballroom. It'll benefit the Harris Home for Children, so try to be there with plenty of friends.

THOSE HAPPY HOUR gatherings on Wednesdays after work have become happy, indeed, attracting lots of girls to the poolside at University Inn. Leroy Gilstrap, who also operates the concessions at Ditto Landing, is the chef for the gang on Wednesdays. Bossman Dewey Brazelton keeps the place interesting by setting the pace (he's always the first one in the pool.

Stump Brings Memories

by Malcolm Miller

I was walking through the tall grass when I stumbled over it. Just an old rotting, decaying tree stump. It was a huge thing, maybe three feet across, and as I stood there looking at the old stump my mind started to wander back to my boyhood days and the mighty oak tree that once stood tall from this very stump.

You see, this old stump was all that remained of the place where I spent about seven of the happiest years of my life. Under the outstretched branches of this mighty oak tree stood the farm house that was my favorite of all the tenant houses we lived in when I was growing up. It wasn't particularly a good house, certainly not by the standards of today; but to me, an eight-year-old, it seemed like a mansion. I still recall the shiny

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white doorknobs on the doors. To me this was really something, because all the houses we had lived in up until that time had either wood buttons or latches to keep them closed.

But this house, like all the others I lived in back then, had a tin roof over it. And the sun beating down on it all day in the summer would drive the whole family out under the branches of the big tree where there seemed to always be a little breeze blowing. It was under this very tree I sat for hours listening to grown folks tell of faraway places they had been.

I recall my uncle Curt telling of the time he spent in Texas, and how the real cowboys weren't like the ones we had seen at the picture show in town. I heard them talk with worried tones at the beginning of World War II. You see, for a couple with seven sons, two of which were already in the army, my parents had much to be concerned about.

It was under the branches of this mighty oak that I first learned to play the guitar. One that my brother Frank had ordered from Sears and Roebuck; and when folks, even today, ask me why I play the guitar upside-down left-handed, I remind them that when you are only one of seven sons in a family, you just don't go stringing up guitars to suit yourself.

That old tree stump, rotting away though it was, seemed to be there as a last reminder to me of another day and time — a time when folks seemed to really care more for one another. Neighbors were neighborly, friends were friendlier, and pot wasn't something you wanted to smoke. No sir, it was most likely something that sat under the foot of the bed to save a trip to the outhouse on those cold winter nights.

My, how times have changed since that old stump was a tall oak tree.

Yankees Take Revenge on New Market

Innocent Civilians Suffer Burning
and Looting. From the Memoirs of
James Monroe Mason

In April, 1862, the writer was a schoolboy in Huntsville, Alabama. On the morning of the 11th of that month Huntsville was occupied by the Federal Army under Gen. O.M. Mitchell. The school was disbanded, and the building (located on the site of the present day East Clinton School) seized for military uses.

Soon after this event I undertook in company with a schoolmate to pass through the lines of the enemy and make my way to southern Alabama. Being under military age, we had no trouble in getting permission to go for a few days to visit friends in the country, but having spent more than the specified time in a vain attempt to evade the enemy's pickets and cross the Tennessee River, we were afraid to return home. We communicated our fears to the friend at whose house we were staying, and he informed us of a small band of Confederate cavalry that was being organized in the mountains of Madison and Jackson counties, and advised us to place ourselves under their protection.

At this time there were many Confederate soldiers lurking in this section. A company of the 7th Alabama Infantry, whose term of service had expired, reached their homes only a few days before the arrival of the Federal Army and were hiding about to avoid arrest. There were several from other commands who were at home on furlough or on account of wounds or sickness, and many persons of military age, who had not yet joined the army, were also compelled to conceal themselves in order to avoid imprisonment. Gen. Bragg who was then maturing his plans for the march into Kentucky, gave to Frank B. Gurley of Forrest's Regiment a commission as a Captain of Cavalry, and ordered him to organize these men



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into a cavalry company, and operate in rear of the enemy. When we reached his camp he had collected only about one dozen men. This number was rapidly increased to new recruits, and within a week or ten days it had swelled to fifty or sixty.

Though not members of this band my friend and I being under their protection while awaiting an opportunity to go south, were compelled to move with them from place to place. At length seeing no opportunity of

carrying out our original purpose, we, on the 20th of June entered our names on the company's roll, being respectively 16 and 15 years of age.

The service assigned to this company was both difficult and dangerous. The Tennessee River, with an average width of about eight hundred yards, turns to the southwest below Chattanooga and entering Alabama near Bridgeport pursues this course to Guntersville, about fifty miles, thence, turning again to the northwest, it passes out of Alabama at the northwestern corner of the state. The northern bank of this river was in the possession of the enemy, and was closely picketed. In the four counties of Alabama lying north of this bend there was a large Federal Army, numbering perhaps twenty thousand, who occupied every town and hamlet of importance, and a due proportion of the force was cavalry, engaged continually in scouting. the field of our operations. Our dangers were increased by the presence of a few unauthorized bands of guerrillas in the same region, whose operations gave the enemy presumptive evidence that all the Confederates in their midst were connected with these irregular bands in consequence of which we were indiscriminately outlawed. Our commander, therefore, was compelled to discriminate nicely between the



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CHAUTAQUA '92

East Clinton School is pleased to announce that their fifteenth annual Chautauqua Festival will be held Saturday, September 26, from 10:00 am. to 3:00 p.m. This event is to recreate the "Chautauqua" which toured from Chautauqua, New York, and provided quality entertainment in the communities around the turn of the century. Here in Huntsville, it is held on the grounds of East Clinton School.

There will be a variety of entertainment including Jim Connor's banjo pickin', gospel singing, a barber shop quartet, the Civil War living history, and other community performances of dance and creative theater. There will be a tour of historic homes, a children's carnival and arts and crafts will be displayed both in the school and on the grounds. Food will be available, so come and spend the day!!



methods of war that were legitimate and illegitimate, and to exercise continually such control over the passions of his men as would prevent their wreaking cruel vengeance upon such of the enemy as fell into their hands. The rendezvous of the company was in the mountain region along the border of Madison and Jackson counties. In the fastness of these mountains we found a safe asylum after every contact with the enemy, and from here as occasion was presented we furnished information of the enemy's movements to the Confederate forces south of the river.

There were frequent skirmishes between small detachments of our company, and scouting parties of the enemy, and from time to time many of the enemy were captured, and either sent south of the river, or released on parole. I shall not attempt, after so many years, to record each of those small engagements. A few affairs of greater magnitude I will relate.

The first of these was not creditable either to our discipline or to our courage. Soon after the company was organized, we started upon some er-

rand, the nature of which I do not now recall. Our route lay to the south, as if we would strike the river in the neighborhood of Gunter'sville. It was necessary to cross the railroad along which lay the largest bodies of the enemy. To avoid observation we made a night march. Many of the men had never been under fire, and as we approached the point of greatest danger there was an evident feeling of trepidation, which increased as we advanced. Just before day we discovered that we were in close proximity to a cavalry camp. The company was halted for a moment, but before the position or strength of the enemy could be ascertained, the bugles sounded reveille. In an instant there was a panic. Vainly the officers commanded a halt and attempted to form the company in order. Both men and horses were so completely possessed by fear as to be uncontrollable. Many a man who at a later day showed the most admirable coolness and courage in the midst of real dangers, was now terror-stricken and turned and fled. As is usual in such cases, as soon as the stampede

began, the contagion spread like fire in rubble. Soon we were all in headlong flight. Every bush and tree was magnified into an enemy; every fleeing horseman thought the comrade just in his rear a Federal cavalryman about to deal a sabre stroke. We ran until daylight revealed to us our folly. In the meantime we had become badly scattered and many days passed before the command was reunited. It is but just to state that at this time many of us had no arms.

On another occasion we received information of a wagon train approaching Huntsville on the Fayetteville turnpike, and accompanied by a small escort. By a night ride we succeeded in surprising and dispersing this party, and capturing a quantity of supplies, such as were needful.

Soon after this, we were ourselves surprised, in daylight, at a point near New Market, in Madison County, and suffered a loss of one man badly wounded and several captured. Despite our surprise and discomforture we retreated in good order, and escaped among the mountains.



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While those events were taking place, Captain Hambrick of Forrest's Regiment succeeded in crossing the Tennessee River with his company, and united with us. Our entire force at this time consisted of two companies, mustering about one hundred and fifty men. Thus re-enforced, we were enabled to act with greater boldness, and to undertake some enterprises of greater magnitude than any we had previously attempted. The enemy were using the Memphis & Charleston R.R. for the purpose of moving troops and supplies. Even when our numbers were small we had several times interfered with their use of this railroad, by removing rails at different points, so that they were forced to station garrisons near each other all along the railroad from Huntsville to Stevenson. One of the stations occupied by a garrison was the Flint River bridge, twelve miles east of Huntsville. This covered, wooden bridge was converted into a block house, and furnished with bullet-proof gates at each end.

When Capt. Hambrick united with us, Bragg's army had already turned the enemy's flank, and were upon the march to Kentucky. Part of our duty now was to obstruct the retreat of the force in north Alabama, and a plan was matured for capturing and burning this bridge. Our scouts learned that the doors were kept open during the daytime and that many of the garrison amused themselves bathing in the river. We hoped to be able to get near enough to capture this bridge by a sudden dash. We dismounted in the woods and approached as near as we could under cover. Many of the Federal soldiers were bathing in the river, others were amusing themselves in various ways. We felt that the prize was almost in our grasp. Just then the sentinel on duty discovered us and fired; those of the garrison nearest the bridge rushed to their arms; the bathers in the river grabbed their clothing and ran into the bridge and the heavy doors closed with a bang. Those of our party whose guns were of long enough range amused themselves by firing a few shots. Our plan had failed, and we drew off. The progress of Bragg's army through east Tennessee now began to necessitate the removal of large bodies of Federal troops from west Tennessee and Mississippi to east Tennessee. Their line of march lay just along the

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line of Tennessee and Alabama. Learning of their passage through the country we moved in that direction for the purpose of interfering as much as possible with their progress, and observing their movements. While watching what is locally known as the Ginn Spring road, we learned that a Federal general, ignorant of our proximity, had passed with an escort of only four or five hundred cavalry. He was several hours in advance of us, but the prize was too alluring to be easily relinquished, and we followed upon roads parallel to his line of march. At night he encamped at Rock Springs. It was night when we reached the neighborhood of his camp. Nearly the whole night was spent in securing guides and getting the necessary information as to the location of the camp. When these were secured the night was far advanced and a plan was hastily communicated to the men for surprising the camp and capturing the general.

We approached as near as was prudent on horseback, dismounted and divided into two parties to attack on opposite sides. One of these parties reached its position at a fence about one hundred yards from the camp, and found the Federals already astir. They waited patiently for the preconcerted signal. Before the other party was ready for the attack, the Federals had mounted and begun their march.



This officer who came so near to falling into our hands was Gen. George H. Thomas.

We had followed him further than we could prudently go, and turned again in the direction of our rendezvous. We marched rapidly by the most obscure roads and without halting to rest or eat, about nine o'clock in the morning crossed again the Ginn Springs road at a point about six miles north of New Market. As we crossed this road we observed that troops had been passing. We were halted and

formed in line parallel to the road in the open woods. Captain Gurley, mounted on a large grey mare, turned down the road in the direction from which the Federals had come and rode two or three hundred yards to see if others were near at hand. We saw him wheel and start back at a gallop, and in another moment we saw four cavalymen in close pursuit. As soon as he reached our position he turned and ordered a charge. The Federals discovered us at the same moment and fled. Our column entered the road, left in front, which threw Gurley's own

company in advance. We had pursued about a quarter of a mile when we ran into a body of cavalry, among whom we discharged our double barrel shotguns with fatal effect. Those of us in front passed many of them, and left them to be captured by the men behind us. As we became intermingled with them in their flight we emptied several saddles. Next, we passed a wagon camp by the roadside, and then entered a long lane.

Everything in front of us was panic-stricken. In the lane we overtook a buggy containing two Federal officers. Firing on these as we came up with them, one was wounded and the other surrendered and hastily stating that the wounded officer was Gen. McCook, appealed to us for help. Capt. Gurley who was with the head of the column stopped and caused the general to be carried into a house nearby, where he expired in a short time. The fatal shot had passed through his body from the rear, coming out near the buckle of his sword belt. By whose hand the fatal shot was fired is not known, as three or four were firing at the same instant.

During the pause which occurred at the killing of Gen. McCook, this writer with one other companion pressed forward and for a considerable distance kept close to the rear of the fleeing Federals. As we reached the end of the lane a Federal officer just in front of me threw himself from his horse and fled into the woods. Being determined to kill or capture him, if possible, I turned my horse into the woods, being at a full run. About twenty feet from the road my horse ran under a swinging grapevine which caught me about the middle of the body. I was suspended for a moment in midair with my feet entangled in the stirrups until the saddle girth broke and I fell heavily to the ground. Just after I left the road my companion overtook and captured several musicians on foot, these being the first infantrymen encountered.

While I was hastily repairing the effects of my disaster several of our comrades passed, and about one hundred yards further on these were saluted with a volley fired by an infantry column which had hastily formed across the road. At this volley they turned and fled, except one whose horse, being beyond control carried him into and through the column of infantry, and he escaped with no greater harm than a slight wound in his horse.

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Though we had now discovered the presence of a large force of infantry we took advantage of their demoralization and deliberately returned over the ground that had been covered in the melee, and gathered up the spoils of our victory. These consisted of a considerable supply of arms and other material of war, and a large number of prisoners, though many of the latter not being placed under guard as soon as captured, escaped to the woods and soon rejoined their friends.

Some parties who passed over the entire distance of our pursuit and claimed to have counted the dead gave the number as twenty-one, including General McCook. Among our prisoners was Capt. Brock of Gen. McCook's staff. Most of the prisoners were Germans and could not speak English.

As soon as we had gathered up the spoils we retreated to our stronghold in the mountains.

As soon as the demoralized troops of Gen. McCook were reorganized, they began to execute their vengeance upon the defenseless inhabitants of the country. Every house within several miles of the scene of strife was burned to the ground. Even the family who had sheltered and ministered to their unfortunate commander in his dying moments suffered the common fate. These citizens were wholly innocent of complicity with us. The community was one in which we had not been before, nor had we been in communications with the people. It is to be hoped that this terrible vengeance was but the venting of the blind fury of the common soldiers, and that it was not authorized by the officers in command.

Among the trophies of this flight, was the sword which was presented to Gen. McCook by the Congress of the United States, which bore upon its blade an inscription commendatory of his gallantry.

The immediate results of this skirmish were highly beneficial to the inhabitants of that section, excepting those who were in the immediate vicinity and who suffered as above described. It put an end to the depredations of straggling parties and forced the enemy to keep in compact bodies in marching.

To those who were the immediate actors, it brought another benefit. Through the Federal officer who was captured, communications were

opened with the Federal authorities, and our officers were enabled to show their commissions and obtain for us recognition as regular Confederate troops with all the rights of belligerents. In a few days our prisoners were paroled and these paroles were recognized by the Federal authorities.

The reputation of a brave, skillful and honorable officer of the Confederate Army demands that I, a participant in this affair, and a witness of the fatal wounding of Gen. McCook, should so far depart from the thread of my narrative as to relate the remote effects of this affair upon Capt. F.B. Gurley. The reports of this skirmish that reached the north caused great indignation. It was stated that Gen. McCook fell by the hand of Gurley himself, after he had surrendered. One report was that he was murdered while lying sick in an ambulance. Capt. Gurley was represented as a guerrilla and a desperado.

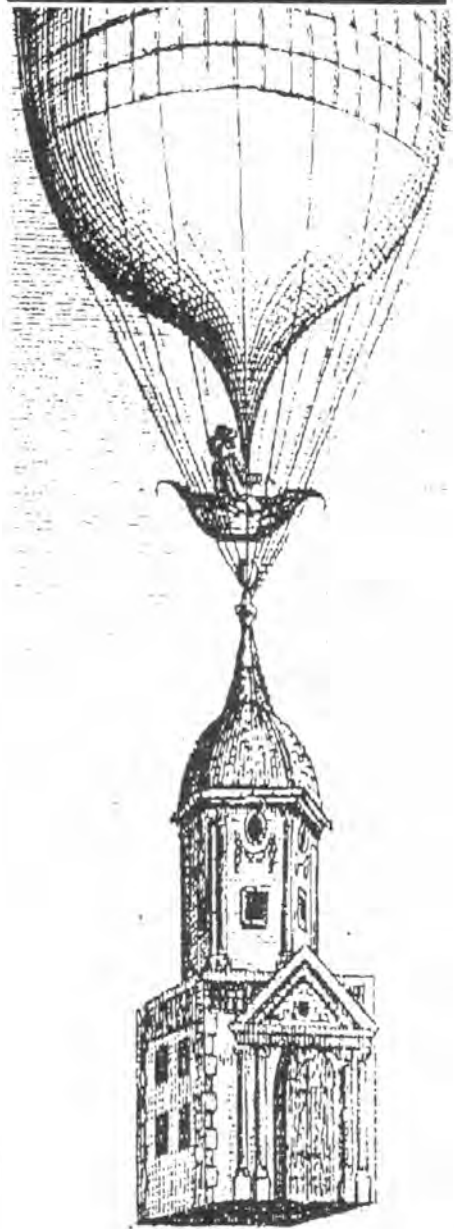
In 1863 this officer was captured. Instead of being treated as a prisoner of war, he was incarcerated in the Tennessee State Penitentiary and held there until the close of the war, when in the general prison delivery he was released. He returned to his home in Madison County, Alabama. In the first election after the war he was honored by his fellow citizens with the office of sheriff of his county. While holding that office the malice of political opponents trumped up the old charges against him and he was arrested, heavily ironed, incarcerated in jail, tried by a military court for murder, and sentenced to death. In all these proceedings there was great haste, and the conviction was entirely upon ex parte evidence. A reprieve was granted by the President until he could himself investigate the evidence, and after a careful hearing of the same he overruled the sentence and set Capt. Gurley at liberty.

The question, "who killed Gen. McCook?" can never be answered, but this writer does not believe, nor does Capt. Gurley that he (Gurley) fired the fatal shot.

It is certain that the McCook fight was as great a surprise to us as it was to the enemy. We accidentally ran into the enemy. We fought without premeditation, deliberation, plan or purpose. Our success was wholly due to the fact that (to use one of Gen. Forrest's expressions), "We got the

Continued on page 29

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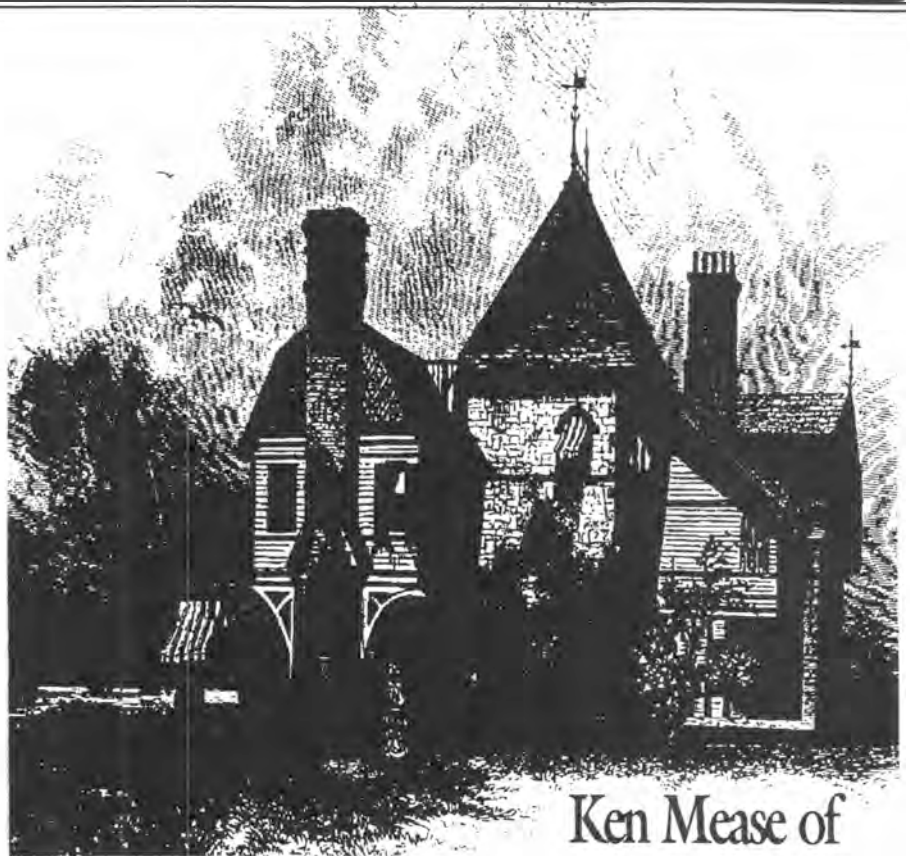
bulge on them." Had we known what lay before us it is probable that we would have retreated without firing a gun. Or had we with deliberate purpose made a cavalry charge upon a Division of Federal Infantry, this would have shown us as courageous and well disciplined as the noted "Light Brigade" whose charge into the valley of death at Balaklava will live in history, in story, and in song as long as humanity retains its admiration of valor and heroism. As I am the first participant in this affair who has ever published an account of it from the Confederate standpoint, I have thought it but just to enter into these details, that a gallant and honorable officer may be vindicated from alleged crime, and that the affair itself may be put upon record by one of the few participants who still survives.

Of the four Confederates who were nearest Gen. McCook when he fell, one was killed in the cavalry attack on Fort Donelson February 3, 1863, another was killed in battle near Kennesaw Mountain, Ga., June 9th, 1864. The other two were Capt. Gurley and the writer.

During the imprisonment of Capt. Gurley, though I was in a distant place, I communicated with him through friends and offered to share with him the hardships of persecution. This offer he magnanimously declined. I then put all the information in my possession at the command of Hon. D.C. Humphries and Mr. Benjamin Jolly of Huntsville, Ala., who placed it before President Johnson, and secured amnesty both for Capt. Gurley and myself.

Mr. Jolly told me afterwards that the press of executive business was so great when he reached Washington city that he remained in the anteroom of the President three days, awaiting his turn for a hearing.

In consequence of the exaggerated rumors as to our strength, which were circulated among the enemy after this skirmish, they seldom moved from their garrisons except in large numbers, and we had the whole country open to us, and moved about with great freedom. Our scouts frequently fired on the enemy's pickets, and thus kept up the impression as to our strength. In this way a general engagement was prevented, our safety secured, and the country relieved from the depredations of stragglers.



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The office of the Adjutant General, U.S. Army, has submitted the following details of the military career of Brigadier General Robert L. McCook:

"The records show that one Robert L. McCook, was mustered into service 8 May 1861 at Camp Harrison, Ohio, as colonel of the 9th Regiment Ohio Infantry, was appointed Briga-

dier General of Volunteers 20 March 1862, was shot by guerrillas 5 August 1862 near New Market, Alabama, while riding sick in an ambulance enroute to Dechert, Tennessee, and died from his wounds 6 August 1862. At the time of muster into service, he stated that he was 31 years of age."



On Hurricane Creek

by Billy Joe Cooley, Senior Editor

Her name was Mary Riddick and she was one of the area's most beloved educators during the years she taught at the Hurricane creek and Riverton schools.

She started teaching as a substitute teacher shortly after the second war, never having attended college. Almost a quarter of a century later, when the education powers to be mandated that a college degree was a necessity, the furor in the community was such that she was given special dispensation to continue teaching. Her students were special people to her. No child would ever enter her classroom with a dirty face, or perhaps with a tear in its eye, without Mrs. Riddick immediately taking notice and providing the comfort that a small child needed so bad. People in the community later said that she could have bought a new house with the money she spent over the years buying food and shoes for the children. She taught three generations, and they were all her children.

She never asked anything in return.

Outside the classroom she set an example in compassion and caring. She was always ready to help the community's ailing, the poor, or just anyone that needed advice or a shoulder to cry on. For newcomers to the area, she would invariably bake a loaf of her mouth-watering homemade bread.

"You could tell when Mrs. Riddick was coming up the path by the smell of that delicious bread," recalls Margaret Frazier Tucker, who along with her husband J.B., are natives of the valley.

Time has a way of standing still, but only in our minds.

This was my thought the other afternoon as some of us drove up along Hurricane creek, listening as we went, to Thomas Frazier relate tales of his young years, many of which were spent in that scenic community on the northeast outback of Huntsville.

Before the day was over we had visited with several old-timers, and a few new residents, of the area.

While several prominent people have their roots - or graves - in this beautiful valley, few, if any, reside there today. Yet, there are still some characters living in this refuge of days gone by, and the memories of the community's mile markers are as vivid as the day they were made.

Mrs. Riddick's son, Frank Jr., followed his mother's inclination and became a public servant; probate judge of the county, to be exact. Buck Watson became a noted Huntsville lawyer. Alvin Blackwell attained sev-

eral high chairmanships, including the county democratic party helmsman for many years. Herbert Ray went on to head one of the state's leading Ford dealers.

There were others who made their mark, of course, and to continue listing names would take more space than we have room for in this story. Such a list would certainly have to include the unsung heroes who have contributed much to the area while avoiding the illumination that often comes with good citizenship.

Gus Peavy, known to all the children as uncle Gus, always had a smile on his face and a place in his heart for

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the youngsters living on the creek. Thomas told me that uncle Gus never forgot the names of any children, and sure enough, while sitting in the front yard of some local citizens, he drove up in his old pick-up truck.

He immediately recognized Thomas and called him by his name (which was Tommy in those long ago days on Hurricane creek).

I later asked Thomas how long it had been since he had last seen Gus.

"Oh, about thirty or thirty five years."

One memory that likely would be better forgotten was the time Laura Jo Wilbourn, who is now circuit judge Laura Hamilton, participated in a pajama party with Linda and Sandy Tucker at the Tucker home during their pre-high school years. The future jurist and her confederates loaded a pan with marshmallows and put them in the electric oven for toasting.

The young ladies immediately launched into a session of girl talk, forgetting the marshmallows until smoke, fire and screams permeated the atmosphere. Fortunately, it was springtime and the windows could be left open while fans blew the odor out into the atmosphere, which, said Mrs. Tucker, could partially explain the ozone problem we're having today.

These were also the days when politicians would hold rallies and provide watermelon cuttings, barbecue cookouts and fish fries. They don't do that much anymore.

Hurricane Creek had other interesting happenings, like the time Elvis Presley's father, Vernon, brought his new bride to the Ray's ranch house for their honeymoon. Vernon wanted a place where he could get away from the press to relax and the valley was a perfect haven for the lovebirds.

During the heyday of moonshine, some mighty fine brew was produced in the area, but the Tuckers don't remember anything about it, they being from proper Christian homes and all. "Some of the menfolks would go up to Jones Hollow in Lick Skillet to get likker. They never caused no trouble, they'd just get together down on the creek and play cards and tell lies" said Tucker, who was born in 1922.

If Hurricane Creek ever had such a thing as a "town hall," it was Bobby Bragg's Grocery Store. Someone sitting on the old wooden bench in front of the store, maybe whittling on a piece of wood, would sooner or later hear of everything that happened in the community.

The store first opened in 1903 as the J.H. St. Clair Grocery. Mr. St. Clair also owned the local sawmill, cotton gin and coal mine.

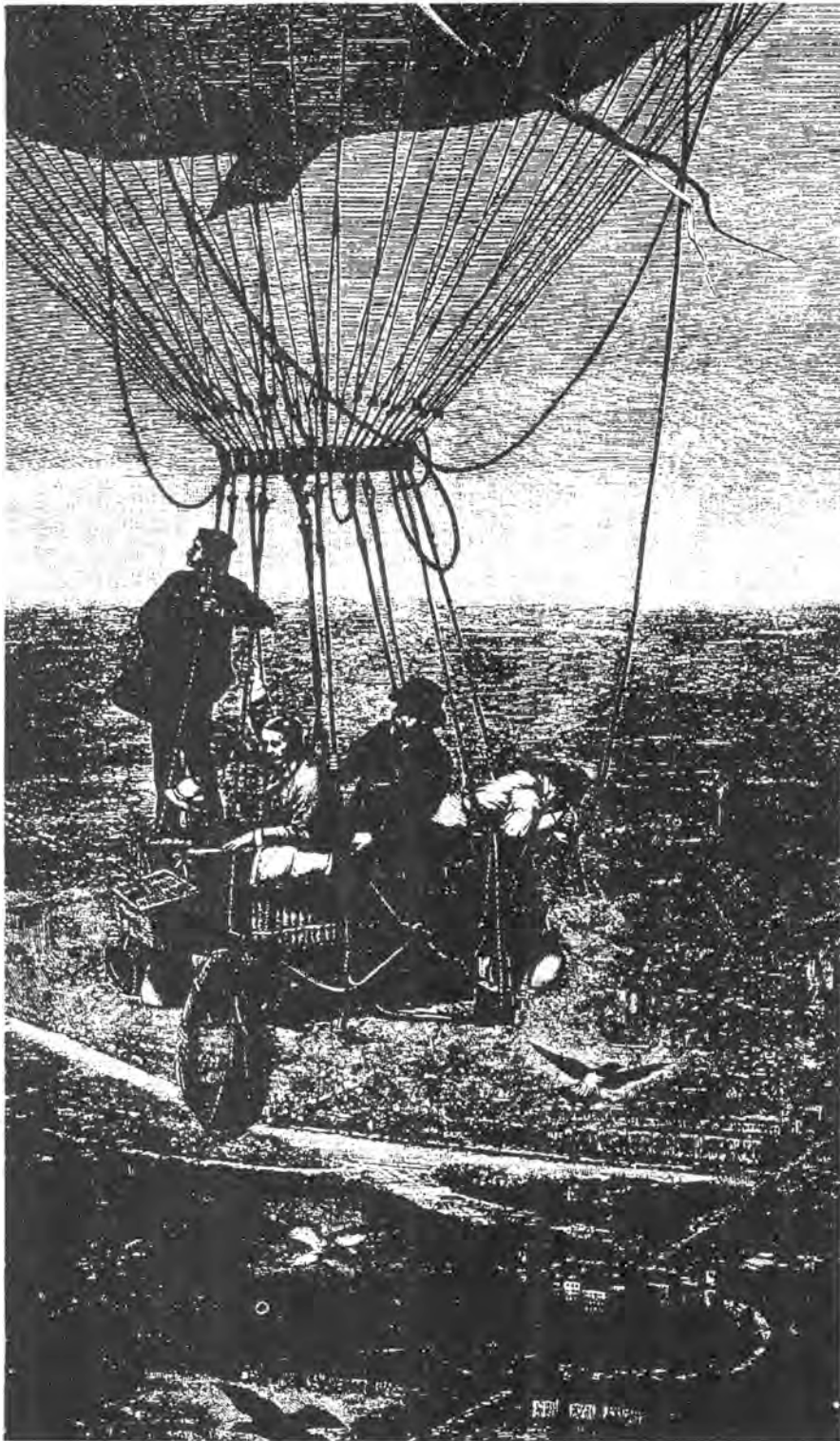
St. Clair was loved in the community, and often spearheaded movements to help widows and orphans, providing food and coal to them. His grocery, if hard times necessitated it, would operate on the barter system when people had no money, or it would operate on the generous credit system when people had nothing.

This benevolence paid off in various ways. The least of which was for many years, some loyal people who left the community to live in other areas of Madison County would return to St. Clair's store to buy their groceries.

St. Clair's descendent, Betty Robertson Bragg, and her husband Bobby, operated the store from 1952 until July, 1992. Forty years of hard work and providing for the community

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are now memories. Time passes on and fresh faces appear to create new memories. They have now leased the building out. It was originally a frame structure, but was torn down and rebuilt in 1946. This time as a concrete block building. The name was appropriately changed to Bragg Grocery in 1952.

Marriages were also big in the community, as they are everywhere, and make for good conversation on a hot afternoon.

"J.B. and I were married at the courthouse on a Saturday in the summer of 1946," recalls Mrs. Tucker. "Then he dragged me off to three baseball games and barbecue dinners at New Market, Hurricane school and Central school. He sure loves sports."

The couple, tired and stuffed with barbecue, finally collapsed in the Yarbrough Hotel for their first night of wedded bliss.

Most of their years have been fun, but they did have a close call with marital disaster one night shortly after they started house-keeping. "We were clowning and I picked up a stick of stovewood, acting like I would hit him with it," Margaret recalls.

"J.B. dared me to hit him on the knee, I gave him what I thought was just a little love tap, but it made a loud crackin' noise and he fell onto the floor, rolling around with his hands rubbing that knee. I started crying and told him I would pack my suitcase and leave. He said, no, that he would leave just as soon as he got his War Bonds."

"We finally decided to leave together and after riding around in the car for awhile, we realized how silly we were. We came home laughing."

"I still get aggravated, though, when I think of him saying he'd leave if I'd hand him his War Bonds. Can you imagine, our love life was falling apart and he only thought of his War Bonds?"

Betty Bragg recalls the day she and Bobby were married in 1947 at the Methodist church, had their wedding supper at the Monte Sano lodge, spent the night at a motel on Whitesburg Drive and got Bobby back home in time for work Monday.

"We had our share of rowdies, too," said J.B. Tucker with a laugh. "Some of us put a wagon in a treetop, of course that was on a Halloween night."

"And there was the time we put a heavy bale of cotton on the store's porch, also on a Halloween," said the man who is now Sunday school superintendent and song leader at church.

Tucker identified some of the long-ago culprits as Paul Holman and the St. Clair brothers, Clifford and Jimmy.

These days the folks in Hurricane creek are just as varied in personality. As we were leaving the store, I walked our old friend Frank Sharp, an excellent cook who once prepared culinary delights for such illuminaries as movie star Denver Pyle, psychic seer Doc Anderson and Texas oil tycoon John Shaw. We recognized him after all these years, having seen his picture in publications with the above celebrities.

"I got tired of the fast lanes in the city and moved out here to Hurricane Creek, where the living is easier, the people friendlier and the sunshine's brighter," he says proudly.

There have been some anxious moments on Hurricane creek, too. Like the time a shotgun was fired through the store's front door. It was the result

of a dispute between two feuding families, one member of which was inside the store buying groceries and the other outside waiting to waylay him. Patience wore thin for the ambusher, however, so he fired into the store, hitting nobody.

That was the most serious violence that ever occurred at the store, although Bob Blackwell, who was a deputy, once arrested a drunk who took the whole matter personally. The drunk returned that night and burned the Blackwell barn.

The store was also a voting place, which attracted more than usual interest. A common practice in those days was for unscrupulous candidates to pay for votes among the rougher elements. One voter, known for his close kinship with John Barleycorn, boasted that he sold his vote three times to various candidates. It was noted, however, that he got so plastered on "candidate whiskey" that he

passed out before he got around to casting his vote for anybody.

Other remembrances among the residents reflect lives of good morality and of helping fellow citizens. Take Milam McGee, for example. He would stop his school bus every day at the store and let the children buy candy. Of course, he always used the excuse that he needed some tobacco. He must have had the biggest stock of tobacco in the county.

Hurricane creek has changed a lot over the years. The old dilapidated homes, with privies out behind the woodsheds, are now being replaced with modern brick homes. The fields where whole families toiled in the hot sun, picking cotton, are now home to expensive hybrid cattle. The old wood stove is gone from the store, as are the kerosene lamps, overalls and candy counters. The school bus doesn't stop there anymore and men will never again gather at the store to swap hunting and fishing tales with Bobby.

We all grow up and most of us move away to pursue different careers. We spend our lives chasing a dream called wealth and recognition.

It's only when we begin to get old that we realize that the true dreams are about places like Hurricane creek.

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Letter To The Editor

Dear Editor:

I read with interest the letter written to you by Larry D. Moyers. Your response to his letter is what prompted me to write to you. My family, as far back as I can remember, has been, and still is, interested in anything pertaining to the James family. Samuel James, the father of Jesse and Frank, was the first cousin of my great-great-grandfather, John Nelson. My great-grandfather, John Newton Nelson, and the James boys spent many a night at each other's house.

John Newton Nelson lived in Clay County, Missouri, and decided to move to Arkansas. It wasn't long after his move that the James family also moved to Arkansas. The James family then decided to move back home to Clay County, Missouri, and grandfather Nelson moved back with them. The Jameses always kept in touch with the Nelsons, and many stories about them have been passed on to the younger generations.

Yes, the bank in Huntsville was robbed by the James boys. And, yes, they did leap their horses over the bluff of the Big Spring park. I've heard that the robbers hid out in a small cave in the side of the bluff. I don't know if that's true or not, but I do know there was a small opening in the side of that bluff.

When I was just a youngster, a bunch of us kids from Rison school knew about a spring or well on Monte Sano mountain that, it was said, had no bottom to it. We had heard that the well curved underground somewhere, and the water from it came out from the bluff and into the spring at Big Spring park. One day our curiosity got the better of us. Several of the kids took a bunch of empty cigarette packages and dropped them into the

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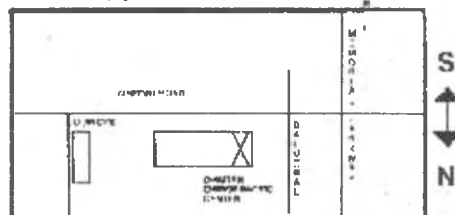
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well on the mountain (the empty cigarette packs were Lucky Strikes). The rest of us kids waited at Big Spring park to see if the cigarette packs came out where we thought they would, and they did! We had waited what seemed to us for hours and hours, and then here they came — the water at the park was floating with Lucky Strike cigarette packages!

That little excursion did indeed prove our point. There was an opening in the side of the bluff at Big Spring Park.

By the way, I'm sending a check for fifteen dollars, so please put my name on your mailing list for the "Old Huntsville" magazine. I find the books so informative and interesting. Thank you so much for reading my letter.

Sincerely,

Ruby Nelson Crabbe

Ruth Hursh's Peach Crisp

1 cup brown sugar
1 cup flour
1/4 tsp. cinnamon
1/8 tsp. nutmeg

Mix dry ingredients together, then cut in
1/3 cup margarine or butter

Pour 2-3 cups fresh peaches, sliced thin, into buttered pie plate.

Place dry mixture on top to cover peaches, place in 375 degree oven and cook for 30-35 minutes or until top is browned. Serve with vanilla ice cream or whipped cream



Heard on the Streets

The Montgomery and Eufaula Railroad is eighty miles long.

The Mobile Register suggests the establishment of a sugar refinery in Mobile.

Many counterfeit fifty cent bills are in circulation in Montgomery.

A little eight-year old Pelham girl sent her beau a love letter a few days since, remarkable quite as much for its brevity as for its being right to the point: "They that seek me early shall find me."

Col. Robert Fearn, a prominent North Alabamian, died at his residence near Huntsville last week.

Small-pox outbreak at Red Mountain and Irondale.

Some person, either on purpose or accidently, shot the fine cow of our neighbor, B.R. Meaders, a few days ago.

Last Tuesday was all fools day. It was enjoyed hugely here.

One day last week, as Mr. Harvey and his little son of Forsyth County, Georgia, were returning from Flowery Branch in a wagon, the oxen became frightened when close to Williams' ferry, on the Chattahoochee and ran into the river and were drowned. Mr. Harvey and his son made good their escape

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Old Records

Recently while talking to Betty Bragg about the closing of Bragg's Grocery she showed us some old ledgers from the store. As we pored over the entries for 1937, we wondered about all the untold stories and the faceless people contained on those yellowed pages.

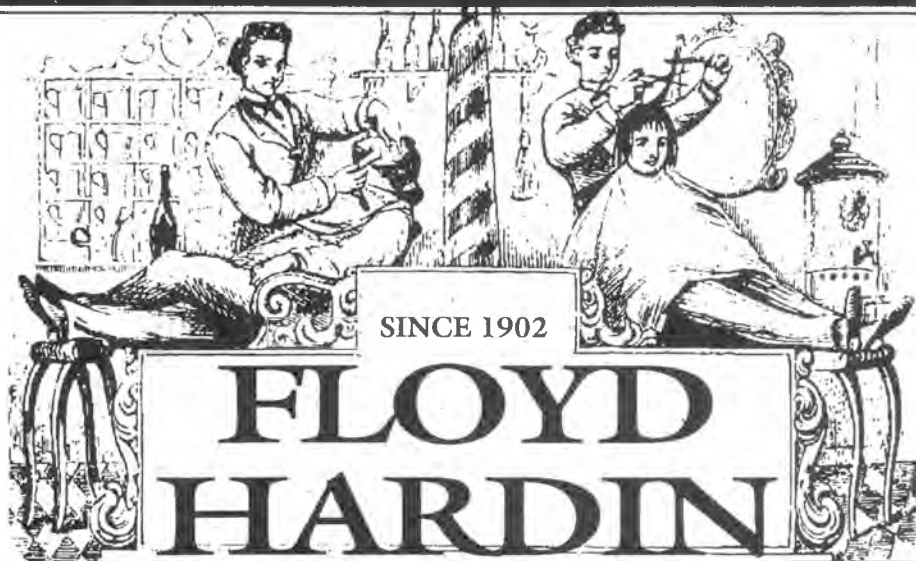
There was Bob Ashbourn, he charged a pair of shoes that cost \$2.65. That same day, he purchased a shirt for .75 cents. Looking back at an old calendar we see that the day was a Friday.

Had he just got paid? Or maybe he was buying new clothes in order to court someone special.

Bill Matthews, the following day, bought 12 yards of cloth and .10 cents worth of snuff. Wonder if the same person used both?

Charlie Fears must have been a hardworking man because most of his purchases were for farm implements and seed. Two days before Christmas in 1937 he was back in the store again buying apples, candy and oranges, probably for Santa Claus.

Henry Tucker stopped at the store for .50 cents worth of gas on Christmas eve. Louise Jolly was in the store the same day settling her account. Bob Langford must have not been in the Christmas spirit that year as the only purchases he made on December 24, was tobacco, snuff and coffee for a total price of .65 cents.



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The first of the month must have been a busy time at the store.

Oldtimers called it "check cashing day" as that was when they received their government checks. That must have been a popular day for the children too, as almost everyone purchased candy when cashing their checks. Among the people cashing checks was Bill Smith, who also paid his insurance premium (.51 cents) at the same time.

Gus White must have been a carpenter, or maybe he was adding on to his own house. In January of 1937 he purchased 500 feet of oak boxing, 50 posts and 25 feet of lumber. The lumber was .02 cents a foot.

Macaroni was obviously a popular food. Besides tobacco, coffee and candy it was the product sold most often. The Walton family purchased macaroni four times in three weeks.

Alvin Blackwell probably didn't travel very far when he was young. His average purchase of gas was only .50 cents. That summer he also charged .19 cents worth of fishing tackle.

The community didn't need a restaurant. On almost every page were listings such as "Logan Honey, lunch — .20 cents."

You would have to guess that the Robert Harris family suffered from sickness that winter. Among their purchases were aspirins, salve, iodine, Black Draught, castor oil, alcohol, and salts. The week before Christmas, Mr Harris added a French harp, stationery, tablets, apples and a coconut to his bill.

Perhaps the most poignant entry in the ledgers is the account of an old man who purchased cotton seed in anticipation of making a crop that year. The man was poor with no way to pay until the crop came in.

Several weeks after the purchase, the old man died, leaving no family or money. The next day someone, in old fashioned, meticulous handwriting, carefully entered "Paid" to his account.



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Things that a Married Man Cannot Help Thinking

That all the girls used to be in love with me.
That all the widows are in love with me now.
That if he were a widower he could marry again whenever he chose.
That all the other fellows are fools.
That he wouldn't introduce any fellow he knows to his sister or daughter.
That his wife is a little jealous.
That she used to be a pretty girl.
That his mother can bake good bread; his wife bakes pretty good bread.
That he wouldn't trust most women.
That if he could ever speculate he could make his fortune.
That his girls would never be so silly as to marry.
That his mother-in-law may be a fine old lady, but
That smoking never hurt a man yet.
That with a little management the servants would always do well, and never give warning.
That his shirt buttons are grossly neglected.
That he is going to make his fortune someday.
That he despises old bachelors.

Things That A Married Woman Cannot Help Thinking

That she was very pretty at sixteen.
That she had, or would have had, a great many good offers.
That her lady friends are five years older than they say they are.
That she has a very fine mind.
That if her husband had acted on her advice, he would be a rich man today.
That the people think too much of the looks of that Miss ... who would not be called pretty if she did not make herself up.
That her mother-in-law is a very trying woman.
That her sister-in-law takes airs and ought to be put down.
That her girls are prettier than Mrs. A.'s girls.
That she would like to know where her husband spends his evening when he stays out late.
That her eldest son takes after him.
That he is going to throw himself away on Miss Scraggs.
That Miss Scraggs set her cap for him and did all the courting.
That her servant girls are the worst ever known.
That she has good taste in dress.
That she has a good temper.
That she pities old maids.

From 1873 Newspaper

Front Gate Courting

Front gate courting under the influence of the recent mild weather is becoming fashionable again. As we pass along the street of an evening and witness such scenes it reminds us of the springs of our own life. We can distinctly remember when to lean over a gate and talk to the girl of our heart, used to send a thrill through us like falling off the front of a three-story house. We never did it but what it made us feel good and want to do it some more.

1872 Publication

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MAKE ME A PROMISE

Recently the staff of Old Huntsville attended a meeting of a small group of Huntsville citizens. Some were young, some were old, mostly they were just the everyday people you would see walking down the sidewalk.

They came from different backgrounds and cultures. A few were native Huntsvillians, although the majority had moved here from some place else.

The only thing these people had in common was their disgust with politics.

"What would happen," asked one person, "if you asked a group of politicians certain questions they had to reply to? Would they evade the questions, would they lie? Or would they even bother to answer?"

This aroused the group's interest and within minutes a list of questions they wanted to ask their local politicians was compiled.

Although, Old Huntsville has agreed to ask the questions and print the replies, we want to make it plain that we are not endorsing any political candidate. Below are the questions asked and the resulting answers. You read them and you be the judge.

When asked for definitions, we told the candidates that their own personal honesty would have to be their guide.

To the Huntsville Mayoral Candidates,

We ask that you review the following statements and affix your name if you agree with them.

It is our intention to print your answer and make every reader aware of your promise, or lack of one.

If you agree, it will be so noted. If you refuse, it will be noted. If you do not respond, that also will be noted.

1. If elected, I promise to resign if I decide to run for another political office before my term is up.

Leon Crawford.....yes
Jimmy Wall.....has certain reservations
James Steele.....yes
Steve Hettinger.....believes in flexibility

2. I promise not to be involved in any type of political mud-slinging and run my campaign solely on the merits of my qualifications and ideals. If any associate of my campaign becomes involved in this type of action I promise to take immediate steps to put a stop to it.

Leon Crawford.....yes
Jimmy Wall.....yes
James Steele.....yes
Steve Hetinger.....yes

(Interestingly enough, three of the candidates asked for a definition of "mud-slinging")

3. I promise, as of this date, to take no campaign contributions from any special interest group.

Leon Crawford.....has certain reservations
Jimmy Wall.....has certain reservations
James Steele.....yes
Steve Hettinger....."everyone is part of a special interest group"

(Again, there were questions. One candidate wanted to know if we considered banks as a special interest group, while another had the same question about ... the P.T.A.)

4. If elected, I promise to always base my political decisions, as mayor, on the desires of the majority of voters in Huntsville.

Leon Crawford.....yes
Jimmy Wall....."totally unrealistic"
James Steele.....yes
Steve Hettinger.....has certain reservations

5. I promise to attend no political fund-raiser to which the general public is not invited.

Leon Crawford.....yes
Jimmy Wall.....no
James Steele.....yes
Steve Hettinger.....yes



"A Cast Iron Skillet"

by Ann LaForce

One of our favorite stories about Huntsville's police department happened about twenty-five years ago when Shirley Frazier was still a young, naive radio dispatcher working the third shift.

Late one night, she received a call about a disturbance at some one's home and immediately called a patrol car in the neighborhood with instructions to check it out. The policeman pulled up in front of the suspect's house, and being duly cautious, radioed Shirley to get the exact location of the suspect.

"Just a moment," Shirley said, "I'll call and find out."

A few moments later she came back on the radio and in excited voice said, "He's on the kitchen floor! His wife just knocked him out with a skillet!"

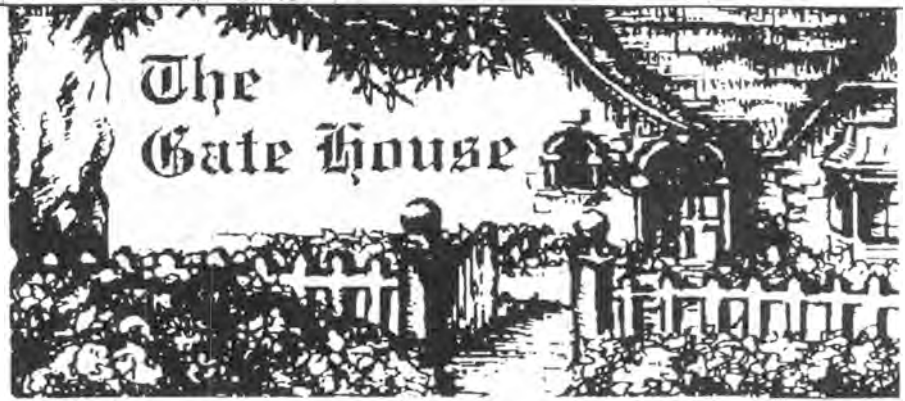
In early 1967, Shirley Frazier started working at the Huntsville Police Department as a dispatcher. Over the years she acquired a reputation of being a hardworking, loyal public servant whose dedication to the Huntsville Police Department could never be questioned. She has seen many officers come and go ... and they were all her friends.

In March of this year, Sgt. Frazier was presented a plaque for twenty-five years of dedicated service to the City of Huntsville by the Chief of Police, on the day of her retirement.

Shirley has seen a lot of changes in Huntsville in the last twenty-five years, (and survived a lot of administrations). All of her friends were sad when they learned that she would be moving back to her family home in Magnolia, North Carolina.

Shirley says to all her friends and the men and women in blue, "God bless you all. I love you and will miss you all. I'm gone fishin' now in North Carolina!"

And from the City of Huntsville to Ms. Shirley, we will miss you dearly. You have been a good friend.



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Favorite Recipes From Julia Gilbert

Recently I was reading "Farmers and Consumers Market Bulletin" published by the Georgia Department of Agriculture and found this little snippet of sayings and superstitions. While it is not recipes and probably should not be in this column, it's too good to pass up. Remember ... This is from a government publication!

Plant cucumbers on the Fourth of July; you will have cucumbers wet or dry. It is bad luck to burn grapevines.

If you want peppers to grow, you must be angry when planting them.

Plant flowers in the light of the moon so they will be large and beautiful.

If a mule looks toward the north, expect bad weather.

A cloudy sunset on Thursday means no rain before Sunday.

Summer Squash Casserole

- 2 lbs. yellow squash (sliced)
- 1/4 cup chopped onion
- 1 can cream of chicken soup
- 1/2 cup dairy sour cream
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 1 cup shredded cheese
- 1 sweet red bell pepper (chopped)
- 1 cup bread crumbs
- 1/2 cup margarine, melted

Cook sliced squash in boiling water for 5 minutes. Drain. Combine soup, mayonnaise and sour cream. Stir in shredded cheese. Fold in squash and onion and red pepper. Spray the bottom of a 12 x 17 1/2 x 2-inch baking dish with vegetable spray. Spoon mixture into dish, top with bread crumbs and dot with margarine. Bake for 25 minutes or until heated through.

Broccoli Chowder

- 1/4 cup margarine
- 1 med. onion, chopped
- 2 tbsp. plain flour
- 3 cups chicken broth
- 1 can cream of mushroom or cream of chicken soup
- 1 small can chopped mushrooms
- 1 cup sliced carrots
- 1 20-oz. pkg. frozen chopped broccoli
- 2 cups milk
- salt
- pepper
- grated cheddar cheese

Melt margarine in dutch oven and saute onions. Add flour to make paste. Add chicken broth and canned soup, cooked carrots, broccoli, and milk. Bring all to a boil. Simmer 30 minutes, salt and pepper to taste. Serve topped with grated cheese.



Scared Stiff

by Jim Harris

I don't like the dark. Actually, I'm afraid of the dark, but only when I'm outside in it, and particularly when the moon is full. I haven't been afraid all my life, just the last 50 years.

I know exactly where I was, the approximate time of day, what happened when I realized that the dark could be scary and the second event that firmly entrenched it in my mind. Some people would say that it was carved in rock.

We lived on Davidson Street, the last house on the north end. From the fence on the north side of our yard, one could see all the way to Meridian Street on the left and to the railroad on the right.

It was summer and a bunch of us had been playing under the street light in front of our house until about 10 PM. All the other kids went home, but I remained outside under the light. A short time after everyone left, a rock came flying over the fence and landed near me.

One of the kids was just trying to scare me, I thought, so I rushed to the fence to catch the critter. There was no one to be seen. The street light lit up the area enough to convince me that no one could run fast enough to escape the area in the two seconds it took me to get to the fence. That scared me. I rushed my skinny little body into the house.

Continued on page 42



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Wash, peel and chop 8 to 10 pounds of apples, and put them in a large pot. Add 1 cup water to prevent scorching, cover the pot and cook until the juices are released.

Remove the lid, simmer the fruit till it thickens, and stir in 1 to 1 1/2 cups honey, 1 tablespoon cinnamon, 1 teaspoon nutmeg, and 1/2 teaspoon ground cloves. When the mixture reaches the desired consistency, spoon off two pints of applesauce and seal in hot sterile jars.

Then to make apple butter, combine 1/4 cup molasses, 1/2 teaspoon allspice, and 1/4 teaspoon ginger with the remaining sauce. Cook the spread until it is very thick and smooth. Seal it in two more sterile pint jars.

Apples are the most widely cultivated fruit grown in the temperate climates of the world. ■



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Scared Stiff

Not long after that, my brother and I went to see my first Frankenstein movie, "Frankenstein Meets the Wolfman," at the YMCA in Dallas Village. I did alright until the man turned into a werewolf; I still have a hard time watching the transmortification, or whatever, of men turning into frightening creatures. I know it's make-believe, but try telling that to the part of my brain that controls fright.

I had nightmares for years after that movie. Even until now, I don't go anywhere it requires me to be alone in the dark, especially if there is a full moon overhead. Romantic moon? Ha! I laugh in your face.

I was twenty years old, in the Air Force and courting my future wife. She lived out in the boondocks. The bridge between the highway and her house had washed out making it necessary for me to go in the back way. I managed fine until I came to a fork in the road. Not knowing which "prong" to take, I did the "eenie, meenie, minie, mo" thing and wound up on the wrong road. Mo lied to me.

The further I drove the narrower, or is that more narrow, the road became until I came to a large dip where the trees formed a canopy, making it too dark to see if the road was there or

if I was about to drop off into a creek. I had to get out of the car and walk to the bottom to check it out. It was OK.

As I was walking out of that depression and out from under the tree canopy, I looked up at the sky — into the largest full moon I had ever seen. Werewolves started jumping out of the bushes. I just barely beat them to my car.

I was scared stiff and the road ended just 50 yards downhill from a large, two-story house which hadn't seen paint since the Civil War. An old man appeared in the doorway with an ax in one hand and a man's head in the other. Somewhere between the house and the car he discarded the ax and the man's head.

I told him that I was lost and where I wanted to go. He told me how to get there. I thanked him kindly and got out of there, having to go back through that dip in the road where all those werewolves were. I finally made it to my girl's house, and as if the night hadn't already been scary enough, I still had to meet her daddy. Some nights it pays to go to bed early.

The bridge had been repaired by the time I got another leave. That made me almost as happy as seeing her.

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Lighting up Rural Huntsville

by Elizabeth D. Schafer

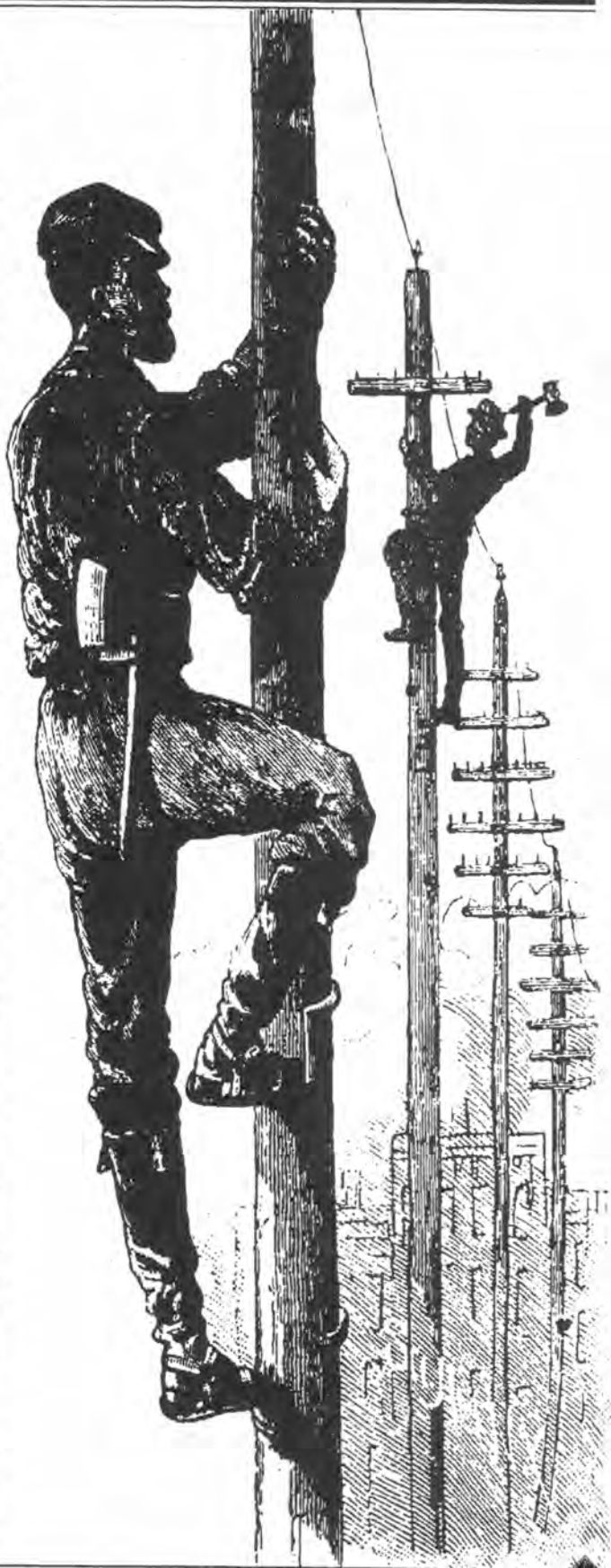
One of the first rural electrical lines established in the United States was built in Huntsville, Alabama, in June, 1920, extending to the nearby community of Lily Flag. Previously, American rural electrification had been limited to the first rural line constructed in 1906 at Hood River, Oregon. Alabama was the second state in the nation to pursue actively rural electrification, soon surpassing the work in Oregon, and was regarded as the most outstanding example of such research.

Alabama was primarily a rural state in the 1920's, and rural residents lacked refrigeration, water heaters, and adequate lighting in their homes and farm buildings. The Alabama Power Company had provided urban areas with hydroelectric power since 1911. Recognizing that agriculture was Alabama's largest industry, Alabama Power Company president Thomas W. Martin supported the construction of rural electrical lines because "we are all dependent upon the farmer for the necessities of life and he lacks this important agency in his household and living conditions."

In Madison County, the Alabama Power Company built four lines by 1923: the original Whitesburg pike to Lily Flag was five and one-half miles long and served twelve customers, including eleven farmers and the Lily Flag Gin Company; the Meridianville pike was almost three miles long and served seven people; the Oakwood School line constructed in 1923 spanned three and one-half miles and served seven customers; and the Big Cove pike line built that summer was three miles long and had five customers.

Mark Lovel Nichols, head of the agricultural engineering department at Alabama Polytechnic Institute in Auburn, heard a paper presented by J.C. Martin, editor of *The Electrical World*, at the 1921 American Society of Agricultural Engineers meeting. Intrigued by the challenges described that could improve economic conditions for farmers, Nichols asked for a copy of the speech to show his administrators at Auburn. He canvassed existing literature on the topic to determine the possibilities and advantages of applying electricity to Alabama's agriculture and planned experimental work to study how electricity could benefit the state's farmers. He approached Auburn Agricultural dean Dan T. Gray and Edward A. O'Neal, president of the Alabama Farm Bureau Federation, with his ideas, and O'Neal contacted Martin in support of Nichols' suggestions.

Because farmers from Huntsville had asked for more information about rural electrification so that they could expand its use on their farms, Martin and the power company established a research fund for Nichols and his staff of engineers at the Alabama agricultural experiment station to develop and test practical and economical methods for electrifying are engaged in this pioneer work in hope that its benefits and advantages will recommend themselves as the work goes on, and thus make electric service permanent in our rural sections." In 1924 Nichols received his first research funds — \$24,000 to examine how farmers used electricity. Nichols was named chairman of the Alabama committee on the relation of electricity to agriculture, a cooperative effort between the Alabama Power Company, Alabama Polytechnic Institute, and the Alabama Farm Bureau



Federation to extend rural electrification and determine its profitability to farmers.

Nichols surveyed farms already receiving service, primarily the four Huntsville lines, to see how farmers used electricity. Farmers also requested assistance to improve their use of electricity, made suggestions for changes, and informed Nichols of the quantity of energy consumed per appliance — such as irons and churns — and accompanying costs and decreases in human labor required. In

support of broadening the research area, Alabama Polytechnic Institute president Spright Dowell stated that “we want to determine how the 256,000 farmers in Alabama, as well as those in other states, can receive the benefits of the use of electricity now enjoyed by city dwellers.” Newspapers announced that the engineers were interested in building additional lines, and farmers flooded the department volunteering to keep records.

A broad group in Madison and Jefferson Counties was selected, and

approximately 1,880 units were wired, including 379 farms; the power company built the lines, the engineers wired the homes, and the customers bought the appliances. The group represented rural residents who lived near big cities, Huntsville and Birmingham, and who had enough income to buy appliances. They chose what appliances they wished to purchase without any coercion by the power company or engineers, representing normal usage patterns instead of artificial conditions. Farmers were given forms and surveys on which they carefully recorded use and cost of electricity and positive and negative comments about the service. Nichols remarked that this real-life aspect “gives the work an entirely different aspect from the purely experimental work on a theoretical basis.”

At the college Nichols researched the applications of electricity for approximately sixty different uses in a laboratory outfitted with electrical appliances identical to those being tested by farmers; Auburn agricultural engineer Everett C. Easter, a native of nearby Limestone County, served as the field representative, directly communicating with the customers. The engineers worked with rural residents, teaching them how to wire their homes and use electricity on the farm. Community meetings were held to educate the participants, and demonstrations showed farmers how to fix appliance cords and other necessary facets of repairing electrical products. Electrified exhibits and model electrical farms were displayed at the Alabama state and county fairs. Rural women enjoyed their new-found freedom in the kitchen, and the family gained leisure time for reading and listening to the radio. O’Neal emphasized the “result in a higher standard of living which cannot be figured in dollars and cents or in kilowatts.” He noted that electrical service enabled “reducing farm household drudgery, helping to meet farm labor shortage and curtailing farm cost to such an extent as to make rural life ideal.”

Clarendon Davis, who farmed outside Huntsville, was one of the participants who recorded the cost to use electricity for cooking, lighting, water heating and pumping, and refrigeration; he commented that electricity saved him time performing chores and was convenient, safer,



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Continued on page 47



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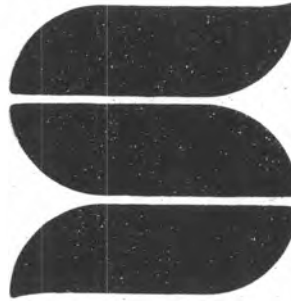
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cheaper than previous methods he utilized such as kerosene. Huntsville's Oakland Junior College used electricity for a variety of tasks from lighting to laundry, and K.F. Ambs, treasurer of the institute, told Easter that the college's cows preferred the feed milled at the school with electricity rather than commercial feeds. The college's mill was used to grind wheat, oats, corn, peanuts, and alfalfa, trying several grinding formulas recommended by Auburn scientists. Ambs stressed to Easter that "we would not be without this mill anymore, especially when used in connection with electric power."

Access to electricity made farm work more attractive, convenient, and comfortable as well as prosperous. Refrigeration reduced dairies' reliance on expensive ice and enabled perishables such as vegetables and milk to be preserved, reducing grocery costs and improving diets. Electricity could be used to sprout oats in winter, incubate eggs to increase poultry production during the short daylight hours in winter, and grind grain; electric gins, not wholly dependent on human labor, could run day and night, assisting farmers to get their products to market quickly. Farm costs were lowered and community

enterprises such as cooperative gins were formed, promoting civic pride. Dairy and poultry farms especially benefitted from refrigeration, using a refrigerator Nichols and Easter designed especially for such uses. Electricity was also used for irrigation, pumping equipment for fire fighting, milk cooling and for silo filling. Incidentally, electricity reduced fire risks because use of flammable oils for illumination decreased.

The power company also allocated funds to Nichols to investigate the uses of solar heating, hoping to utilize the abundant sunlight of the state to supplement electrical services. Solar heating has been used since ancient Greece and Rome, and Nichols determined how to heat water with solar energy more cheaply than by electrical heating. A solar sun porch for chicks was designed, and a dishwashing project to establish better methods to remove food adhered to dishes and utensils was started. Nichols designed a steam generator that he suggested be used for sterilization of utensils in dairies. Other states wanted to follow Alabama's rural electrification example and requested copies of research reports and procedures to model their state's work after. General Electric Company was also in-

terested in incorporating Nichols' rural electrification work in its national program.

Nationwide, Alabama's rural electrification program was viewed as being more successful than those in other states, but, unfortunately, electricity remained too costly for many farmers. By September, 1930, the Alabama Power Company had 493 lines and 9,442 customers, and only three counties did not have some form of rural electrification. Through cooperation with the New Deal Rural Electrification Administration and Tennessee Valley Authority, by 1951, Alabama's electrified rural community had grown to 132,935 customers using 21,700 miles of line. Approximately ninety-eight percent of farms in service areas were electrified. Historians have labeled Alabama's rural electrification project, originating in Huntsville, as the first and most successful of the rural electrification efforts. Easter was promoted to vice-president of sales for the power company, and both he and Nichols were awarded honors for their contributions to rural electricity and improvement of rural communities, such as Huntsville, in Alabama.





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