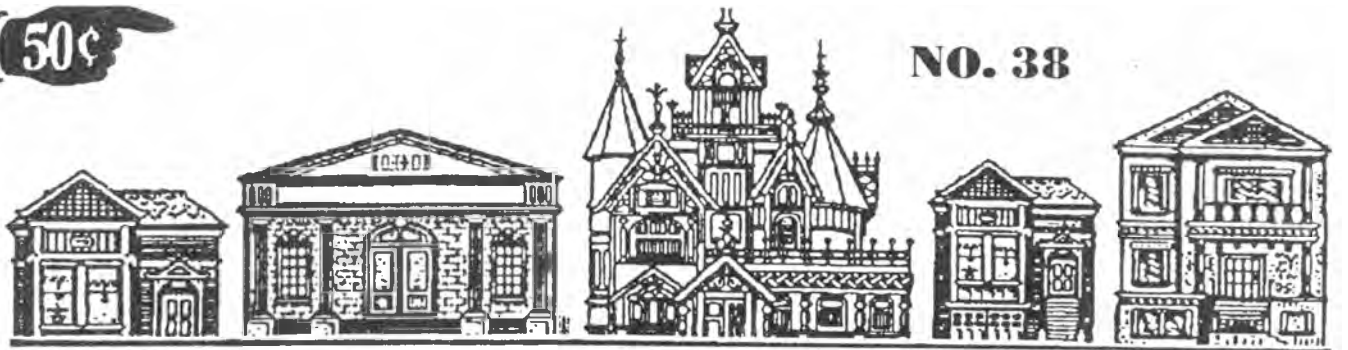


50¢

NO. 38



Old Huntsville



Maggie

A Christmas story
of a woman's love
and her sacrifice



Also in this issue:

Your Christmas Memories



Maggie

This story was submitted two years ago and we have debated on whether to run it because of its sensitive nature. Since it is a "real life" story about a Huntsvillian we've decided to offer it as our feature Christmas story. It is printed just as we received, except that the elderly author's name has been withheld.

There was a hint of snow in the air as we sat in the car outside the bus station trying to stay warm. It was Christmas Eve and the station was crowded with people going home for the holidays. As the bus from Chicago pulled into the Huntsville station and began disgorging its passengers, I watched eagerly, trying to pick out my Aunt Maggie from the hordes of travelers.

The last passenger finally emerged from the bus and there was no sign of her. Uncle Mil, Aunt Rose and I sat there silent for a long time until finally Uncle Mil started the car and we slowly made our way home.

For a boy of 13 it was devastating. I could not imagine Christmas without Aunt Maggie.

We lived out in the country at that time, near a place called Piney Fork. My parents, I had been told, died when I was just a baby and Uncle Mil and Aunt Rose not having any children took me to raise as their own.

Huntsville, like the rest of the country was still suffering from the

Great Depression. Uncle Mil worked part time at a sawmill and whenever he was laid off, delivered firewood door-to-door in Huntsville. Often people would not have the money to pay him and would pay him with used clothes, chickens and other items that we could use.

I learned later in life that my aunt and uncle depended largely on money sent by Aunt Maggie from Chicago for their needs.

Aunt Maggie had lived in Chicago for as long as I could remember. I never knew the details at the time except that she had gotten in some kind of trouble and left Huntsville. I never questioned it or even cared to. For me, she was my Aunt Maggie, the most marvelous person in the world.

We used to receive a letter from her every Tuesday. Before I learned how to read and write, Aunt Rose would sit me down at the kitchen table and laboriously, with her limited ability, slowly read the words that Aunt Maggie had written. There were always two letters in the envelope; one for Uncle Mil and Aunt Rose and another, the long one, for me. Her letters were always full of stories and adventures about people she knew and things she had done. Many times they would include photographs or postcards showing the sights of Chicago.

After I started school, Aunt Rose would make me write Aunt Maggie a letter every week. Often I resented the fact that I had to sit and write the letters while my friends were out playing.

A birthday or holiday never went by without Aunt Maggie sending me a present. Even in the fall, when it was time to go back to school, she would send money for my school clothes.

It was no wonder that I began to think of Aunt Maggie as being rich. Though we lived in a little three room tar-paper house, the fact that I had a rich aunt up in Chicago seemed to



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make me the equal of anyone.

Aunt Maggie always came home for Christmas. Uncle Mil and I would take the axe on the day before Christmas and search until we found the Christmas tree. It was normally a scrawny little cedar bush, but to me it was the grandest tree in the world. That evening we would drive to Huntsville to pick up Aunt Maggie at the bus depot. It was always a thrill to see her get off the bus. She would be dressed in the latest clothes with her hair done up beautifully and carrying large bags full of Christmas presents.

One year when I was about eight or nine we were making Christmas ornaments at school. I remember I made a little wooden Christmas tree and painted it green. I had a photograph of Aunt Maggie that I thought was the most beautiful in the world and after carefully cutting her head out of the picture I pasted it on the ornament.

That year when Aunt Maggie came home I proudly showed her my handiwork. She had a real funny look on her face and then she started crying. Aunt Rose and Uncle Mil never said anything.

I was 13 the last time we went to get Aunt Maggie at the depot. Aunt Rose had already told me that Aunt Maggie might not be able to come home that Christmas, but in my child-like enthusiasm I refused to listen. I insisted that we go to the bus station just in case.

Aunt Rose and Uncle Mil were silent on the drive home while I sat in the back seat feeling sorry for myself. I just couldn't imagine my Aunt Maggie not coming home for Christmas.

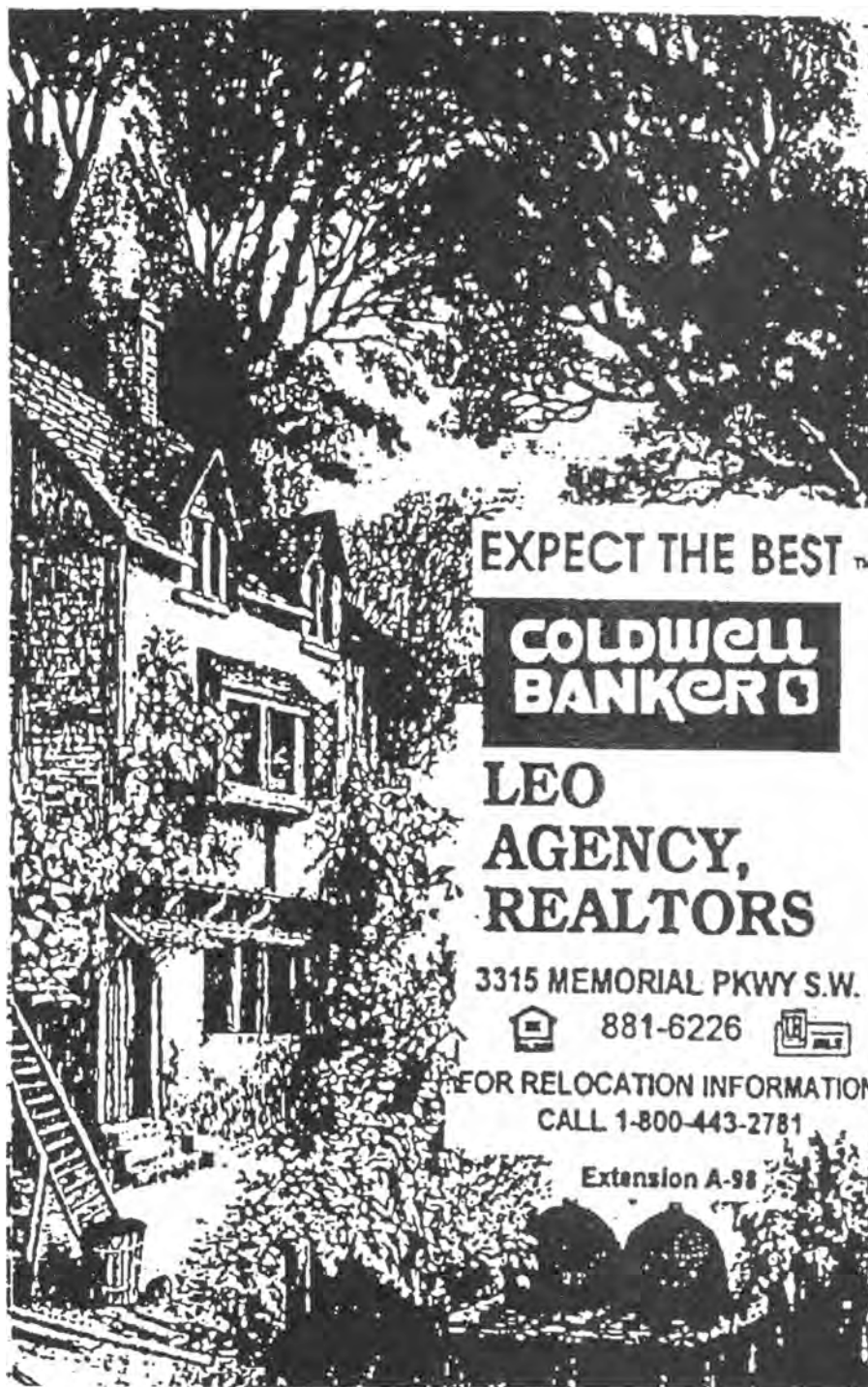
We did not have a Christmas that year. Sometime during the night one of the neighbors brought word that Aunt Maggie had died. I remember waking up during the night and hearing a strange type of silence. Our home was always quiet at night, but this was a different kind. It was a sad silence.

Uncle Mil and Aunt Rose and I embarked on the long drive to Chicago. I remember hearing them talk about cancer and making arrangements and what to do with her things.

Later that day we stopped in Indiana to eat the biscuits and ham that Aunt Rose had packed. Then she and I got out of the car to stretch while Uncle Mil stayed and listened to the radio.

Aunt Rose had always been a strong woman but when she heard the Christmas carols they were playing on the radio she would cry. Uncle Mil made me ride in the front seat with him for the rest of the trip and Aunt Rose laid in the back.

When we finally reached Chicago I was not prepared for the rundown, shabby tenement that Aunt Maggie had



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called home. It was a two-room efficiency with dirty walls and torn wall-paper hanging from the ceiling. It had hardly any furniture.

The only bright spot in the room was a small Christmas tree in the corner with presents piled around in bright festive wrappings. The tree was decorated with pieces of tinfoil, a few pieces

of fake holly and a single ornament. The ornament was a small wooden Christmas tree with Aunt Maggie's picture on it.

All the presents under the tree, with the exception of one each for Aunt Rose and Uncle Mil, were for me.

Uncle Mil left to go somewhere and see about burial arrangements while Aunt Rose and I stayed to pack her belongings. I remember she had what seemed like hundreds of photographs of me. There were pictures of me on my first day at school, playing baseball, fishing and even one of me shooting marbles.

Aunt Maggie was buried the next day in a small cemetery in Chicago. The only people there were Uncle Mil, Aunt Rose, Aunt Maggie's landlady and me. There was no tombstone. There was no money for one.

Though it sounds strange, life improved for Uncle Mil and Aunt Rose after Aunt Maggie died. She had left an insurance policy and Uncle Mil was able to buy a small house in West Huntsville. Soon he got hired at Merrimac Mills where he was, for the first time in his life, able to earn a comfortable living.

I received my draft notice in 1942 and was stationed at Fort Bliss, Texas, when I received word that Uncle Mil

had died. Aunt Rose had died the year before and I was the last of the family. I was granted a brief furlough.

The day after the funeral I began to go through Uncle Mil's papers. He had saved almost every letter he had ever received and among them was a box containing letters from Aunt Maggie. With a nostalgic feeling I began to read the words my Aunt had written about me many years earlier.

The nostalgic feeling quickly turned into one of disbelief as I read further, as Maggie described her love for a young son she had treasured. Then the incredible truth became shockingly apparent - Aunt Maggie, the woman who had written me so many letters and sent me so many presents, was my mother! For a moment I could not move, overcome with conflicting emotions.

In disbelief, I grabbed the small stack of letters and raced next door to see Mr. Kiles, one of Uncle Mil's oldest friends. Even after confronting him with the facts, he was still reluctant to say anything. Finally after seeing my determination Mr. Kiles said, "Son, don't hold it against your mother. She really thought you would have a better life this way. She did the best she could do. She loved you so much."

I returned to Fort Bliss with a heavy heart. All of my childhood memories were destroyed. Every time one of my army buddies would make a crack about an illegitimate child or a loose woman I would cringe inside. I refused to talk to anyone about my family.

When I got married in 1956, my wife, sensing a reluctance on my part to talk about it, never asked about my family. The first Christmas we spent together was hard for me. Every time I looked at the Christmas tree I was haunted by memories of another Christmas tree in a cold water flat in Chicago; of an aunt who was really my mother.

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We started attending church when my wife learned she was pregnant. I had never been much of a churchgoer but I wanted our child to be raised in a proper environment.

J. Otis King was the preacher and, though I admired him, I rarely listened to his sermons, preferring to daydream about other matters. One day we were sitting in church and I was daydreaming about cutting grass or whatever when Brother J. Otis began to preach about love. He used a parable about the man who had given up everything so that his children might have a better life. Though I tried to return to my daydreams, his words kept coming back to haunt me.

"There is no greater love," the preacher said, "than that of a mother for her children."

"How many mothers," he asked, "have done without so that their children might have something?"

Every time he raised his finger to point at something it seemed as if it was pointed straight at me.

My wife could tell that I was upset when we left the church, but she never said anything at the time. That evening after dinner I told her about Maggie and the shame I had felt when I learned the truth.

My wife sat silent for a long time. Finally she said, "Your mother must have loved you very much."

That was the first time she ever saw me cry.

The following year I went to Chicago on a business trip and my wife accompanied me. While there, we placed a tombstone on Maggie's grave.

And every year we hang a special memento on our Christmas tree; a small wooden ornament, timeworn and aged, on which is pasted a yellowing picture of a proud and elegant lady, my mother.

The End

Never exaggerate your faults;
your friends will attend to that.

Robert Edwards



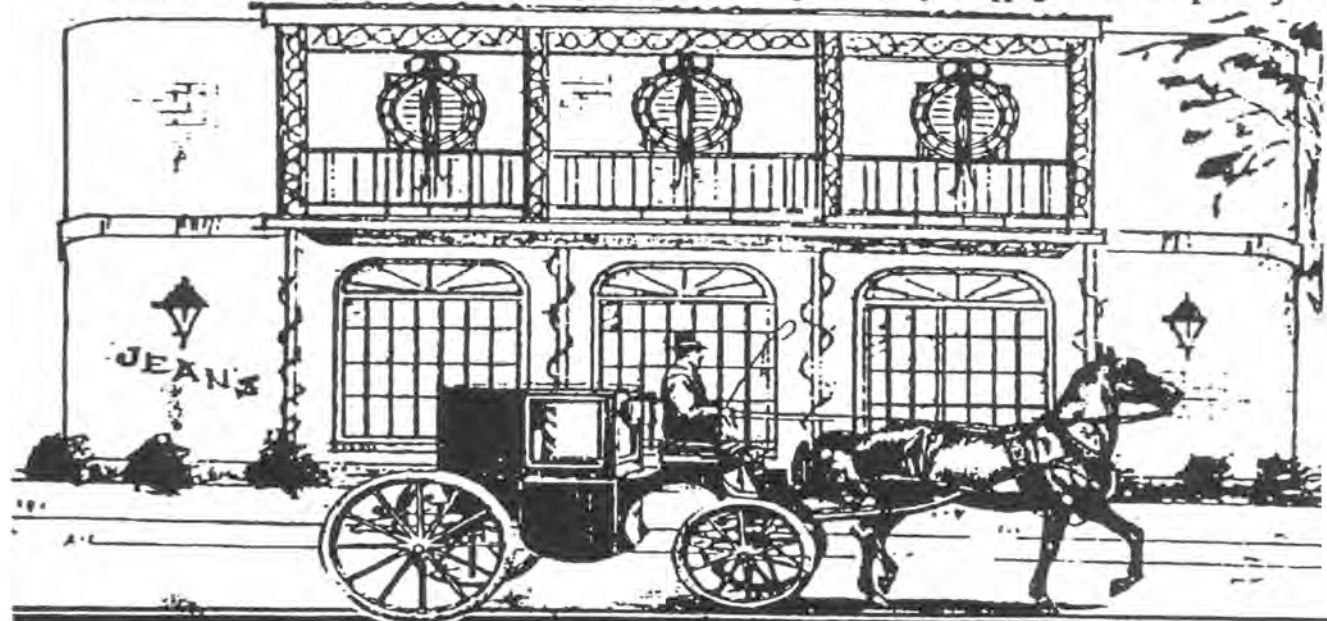
Christmas Lore

Holly is a masculine plant, and mistletoe is feminine. Used together, they were once thought to bring fertility to the whole household.

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Christmas Memories

A White Christmas

In 1943 I was stationed at an Air Force base in Boca Raton, Fla., and the world was in the midst of a horrible war. Young men everywhere were being inducted into service and exchanging the trappings of civilian life for uniforms and rifles.

No one in our unit had any thoughts of the holidays. The weather was too warm for a "real" Christmas and there was no family to share it with. Even the traditional "Christmas chow" in the mess hall did little to put us in the mood.

After supper we returned to the barracks. It was just another day, with some of us writing letters and others

reading books or swapping yarns with their buddies. A few of the most ambitious started a poker game on a foot locker.

One of the men had been listening to a radio all day. None of us paid any attention. It was just background noise.

But for some strange reason every man in the barracks heard it when Bing Crosby started singing "White Christmas." Men laid their books down while others stopped playing poker in order to listen. You could see the transformation on the mens' faces as they began to dream of Christmas back home.

Within seconds we had been

changed from a group of ferocious warriors awaiting battle to what we really were, a bunch of homesick kids.

I will never forget that Christmas.

James Record

Retired County Commissioner

My Tennessee Home

I feel very special to have spent my childhood in the mountains of Tennessee, especially at Christmas time. I still cherish the warmth and love of our family traditions.

Each year, my Dad, sister Henrietta and I would get in our Jeep and go into the mountains around Tracy City to cut our Christmas tree. My sister was always most particular about the tree and not just any tree would do! After several hours, Dad would finally give up on us and cut down the first tree we had looked at.

There were always plenty of holly boughs, blue cedar and mountain laurel to decorate our home. Mother would have real boiled custard -- she always took it to the back porch to cool -- and hot tea cakes. One year, my best friend had one of those gaudy new aluminum Christmas trees, all silvery and shiny. I felt so disappointed with our plain green, God-created tree, not realizing that I was really the fortunate one.

On Christmas Eve we always attended church. Henrietta and I would be in the Christmas pageant. The old church was filled with the scent of burning candles and the spirit of Christ-

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mas was all around us.

I cherish these childhood memories of my Tennessee Christmases. I was fortunate to have such a warm, loving family, and I am proud to call the Appalachian Mountains my home.

Renee Pruitt
Archivist, Huntsville Public
Library

The Gasoline Truck

We were dirt poor and didn't know it. Money was in short supply in our rural Tennessee home during those Great Depression days of the 1930s. My uncle James was 14 and I was 7, the only males in our household. Dad and mama had divorced when I was a year old so I lived with my widowed grandmother Looney and two teen-aged aunts, both schoolgirls (and Uncle James), while mama worked hundreds of miles away in the hosiery mills of Hickory, North Carolina. Uncle James had quit school at age 12 to work on Gonce's Farm and help support us.

While our family was loaded with love and had strong Presbyterian faith, that was about all we had. The 1938 season was the first Christmas I can recall. I was old enough to realize that we had no money for gifts, but there were oranges, nuts and hard candy given out by "Old Santa" as he came down the aisle during the Christmas Eve church service. I didn't torture myself with foolish optimism about Christmas morning. I'd be grateful for the church goodies and for having mama home for a week.

Christmas Day started with the same daily prayer that I have continued to this day: "Thank you Jesus for waking me up this morning. You didn't have to do it, but you did." My young aunts quickly fixed a breakfast of grits, fried pork fatback, cornflakes and

grapefruit, all of which were government commodities we had gotten off the monthly relief truck. It was a fine breakfast, nonetheless.

Mama got us all into the living room and Uncle James handed out our presents, there was one per person. Mine was a pair of long handle underwear. Grandma Looney got a new kerosene lamp (we didn't have electricity at our house). Then all eyes focused on me, the only kid in the family, and five smiling faces watched as mama handed me a second present. Gosh! I sure felt special. She had bought for me an orange colored gasoline transport truck, 18 inches long and with a "Good Gulf" decal on the side. That was my favorite toy for years afterward.

Then grandma and the girls went into the kitchen and started fixing Christmas dinner, the dessert for which was vinegar pie, a deliciously tart concoction of sugar, vinegar and stuff, with a few pinches of love and magic. It was the grandest Christmas of my young life.

The next day we were visited by Mr. Nelson Van Hoosier who worked at South Pittsburg's First National

continued on next page

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Bank. He handed grandma Looney an envelope. I hoped it was money. Grandma couldn't read English, so mama read the enclosed letter to her. It was a notice of foreclosure on our house. Merry Christmas.

Billy Joe Cooley
Old Huntsville Magazine

Christmas in Taiwan

I laugh at how fervently we complain about the commercialization of Christmas, about tinsel and the constant frantic pace of the season. But I lived in Taiwan in a completely Chinese world for 15 adult years: my first Christmas there was gone before I knew it, simply because there were no signs of the season! No street decorations, no Muzak Christmas carols in stores; no Santas on sidewalks, ringing bells, nor in stores hearing wishes; no malls, no Charlie Brown specials or Miracle on 34th Street; no Nutcracker Suite, no carollers, no wreaths on

doors. Not even a wealth of Christmas cards in the mail, because most people forgot air mail stamps, and our cards came in February. And certainly there was no snow! In the Chinese subtropics, our "signs of the season" were 12' poinsettias growing in the ever-present green of jungle. There were Christmas trees sold in neighborhoods where we foreigners lived, but they were very spindly. In order to make them look rich and full, local entrepreneurs took branches from other trees, and wired them to yours! Within a few days, even trees kept in tubs of water would be two-thirds dry branches.

Christmas had always been a season of the spirit for me, and yet I learned very quickly how much I had been depending on all those frills to make me feel "the spirit." And I learned how much the "spirit" of the season in my own life really rested in my own hands. Every year thereafter, I made my own Advent wreath of fat scented purple candles and rich evergreens. On the first of December, I decorated my house with greens, holly and red flowers, with

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Christmas music and the scent of my own baking. I collected a myriad of Christmas treasures that appeared around the house and found a church that performed the Messiah -- my church was too small -- and my friends and I gathered frequently around one another's hearths to celebrate the warmth of friendship and the joy of the season. Those Taiwan friends became extended family, as dear as our own families. We share bonds that stretch around the world, that will never be broken. The warmest Christmas memories of my life are all the Christmases "Made in Taiwan" And I find I miss the poinsettias and tied-together trees almost as much as I miss my friends!

Rev. Margaret A. Hanson
Church of the Nativity
(Episcopal)

The Little Doll in the Window

One Saturday in late 1963, my Mom loaded all five of us kids in our old station wagon and carried us downtown to the Top Dollar store to buy our school clothes. Belk-Hudson was on the opposite corner and after choosing my clothes I would go there and window shop and dream of who I would be one day.

That week's display featured fall clothing and was of the ordinary sort until I reached the last display. I couldn't believe my eyes. There were three of the most beautiful dolls I had ever seen.

I was so intent on memorizing every detail, from the smallest doll to the largest, I didn't know my mother was standing next to me until she spoke. "Time to go home."

"Oh Mama, aren't those the prettiest dolls you've ever seen?" I asked.

"Honey, we can't afford those

dolls, now let's go."

Knowing I couldn't have something never stopped me from dreaming, so from then until the last week before Christmas, I was a regular visitor. I would spend as much time in front of that window as I could. In my mind I was bathing them and dressing them.

They were mine until Mom would come and get me.

So that last weekend, I went to the display with a heavy heart to say good-bye to my darling baby dolls. I knew I would never see them again. ...

Christmas morning as Daddy was handing out gifts, my thoughts returned to those dolls. It was with a sad heart that I accepted my gift.

When I opened my present, to my astonishment, there was the largest doll. Then my sister opened hers, and it was the next largest doll. It was no

surprise when my youngest sister opened hers to find that she had the smallest doll.

They weren't all mine, but they were all in my house.

Linda Trip Hamlin
Linda's Printing

A Holiday Friend

It was going to be a cold, dark, dreary, awful Christmas. Six thousand miles from home in a strange country where everything is closed on Christmas day. The ancient World War II German Army barracks we stayed in were so cold they should have been used as iceboxes. You could still see the imprints on the barracks building where the swastikas had been re-

continued on page 16



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W.C. Handy, Alabama A & M Professor and Father of the Blues

by Mike Kenny

William Christopher (W.C.) Handy was born in a log cabin on Handy's Hill in Florence, Alabama on November 16, 1873. His father had been a minister in the African Methodist Church and W.C. attended the Florence District School for Negroes. His early employment began as a waterboy in a rock quarry for .50 cents a day. Later he worked as a janitor at the courthouse.

By an unforeseen turn of events, a circus was stranded in Florence. This provided an opportunity for the young W.C. Handy to obtain his introduction to popular music. The circus bandmaster, while held over in Florence, began teaching music to a Negro band after hours at a barber shop. One of the band members sold W.C. a cornet for \$1.75; .25 cents down and .25 cents a week. He practiced daily, teaching himself how to play. When he became proficient, he began to play with the Florence Band and sing tenor in a quartet.

He completed his education in Florence in 1892 and went to Birmingham hoping to teach school. Instead, he took a job at the Steel Mill in Bessemer at \$1.85 per day: a good wage in those days. In Bessemer he organized a brass band, led an orchestra, and played trumpet in the church choir. But times and the economy changed, and



many mill-workers were laid-off. W.C.'s pay was reduced to .90 cents per day, payable in paper 'script' and good only at the company store. W.C. quit the job and returned to Birmingham.

There he organized the "Lauzetta Quartet." Not making any money, he and his fellow musicians looked towards Chicago and its World's Fair of

1893 for opportunity. Without funds for a fare, the quartet hopped a freight train to the Windy City. Not finding success in Chicago, they rode a freight train to St. Louis. Again meeting with failure, the "Lauzetta Quartet" disbanded.

In St. Louis, W.C. Handy took odd jobs digging ditches, paving streets, and performing in saloons.

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Later he travelled to Evansville, Indiana and there met the woman he was going to marry, Elizabeth Price. She encouraged him to become a grocer, but W.C. Handy had other ideas.

In 1897, he went to Chicago and joined "Mahara's Minstrels." A year later, W.C. was leader of a 30 member band for "Mahara's Minstrels" and he married Elizabeth.

After a tent-show in Huntsville, Alabama, W.C. decided to leave the Minstrels. A few days later, after performing at a concert in his hometown of Florence, he met the president of Alabama A & M College, William H. Councill. President Councill needed a bandmaster and the Handy got the position. On the school records, Handy was listed as a professor of English, because the school budget had no funds for a band director. Mr. Handy was with the College for two years from 1900 to 1902.

While W.C. Handy preferred the ragtime music he learned in the minstrel shows, the president of the College preferred religious and classical music. It was said that for one concert W.C. rearranged a number called: "My Ragtime Baby," and to satisfy the classical taste of President Councill he entitled it: "Greetings to Toussaint

L'Overture."

The President of the College was enthused with the piece, until he was told how the music originated. Perhaps in President Councill, W.C. saw some of the traits of his own father - including the aversion to popular music. Finally deciding that he could make more money with a minstrel band, playing the music he wanted ... W.C. Handy left Alabama A & M College. His successor, as band director, was James Wilson who had played cornet in Handy's minstrel band and later became a renowned soloist and composer. In later years, W.C. Handy dedicated a religious composition to the College entitled: "They That Sow In Tears Shall Reap in Joy." A copy of the original sheet music is still at the school.

After another year with "Mahara's Minstrels," he formed his own band in Clarksdale, Mississippi. One evening, he heard a trio singing Negro Folk Music. His idea of music changed that night. He composed a few songs and the band later played a few of them each engagement. The band's popularity soared. W.C. Handy then formed a new band in Memphis and travelled each week between Clarksdale and Memphis. By 1910, Mr. Handy had 67 musicians on his payroll

divided into a dozen bands.

In 1912, the Victor Company recorded: "Memphis Blues" (Originally called, "Mr. Crump"), which became a big hit. W.C. formed a music publishing company, but permanent success did not come quickly. Finding his home in Memphis with four active children not conducive to music composition, he rented a small room with a piano in the Beale Street area of Mem-



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phis. Memories and scores flashed through his mind and the night was nearly gone when he began to write: "I hate to see de evenin' sun go down ... cause my baby, she done lef' dis town. ..." The music and lyrics began to flow. It was the creation of a masterpiece: "St. Louis Blues." It was the beginning of another chapter in the life of this incredibly gifted musician, who became to be known as: "The Father of the Blues."

Years went by and Blues music became known and appreciated worldwide mainly through his efforts. As his fame and fans grew, he became no stranger to hard work. A letter from W.C. Handy to Professor James Wilson at Alabama A & M (April 21, 1943) attests: "... I am still working 16-18 hours a day every day and do three shows a night at the Billy Rose Diamond Horseshoe." Many with such phenomenal success would relax, but not W.C. Handy. He headed a major music publishing company in New York City, performed in all the leading theatres, radio stations, and television studios, all while composing and arranging hundreds of songs. He was also the founder of the W.C. Handy Foundation for the Blind. In 1957, a motion picture of his life was made entitled, naturally, "St. Louis Blues."

W.C. Handy died on March 28, 1958 at age 84 at his home in Westchester County, New York, but his memory and music live on. In May of 1969, a United States Commemorative Postage Stamp was issued honoring "The Father of the Blues." W.C. Handy's name today graces many public parks, schools, and buildings. His acclaim was well-deserved and his distinction well-earned.

A note to W.C. Handy from President Councill of Alabama A & M College almost a century ago stated: "Work is the measure of worth." If so, then the value of the life and work of W.C. Handy is immeasurable.



Lessons From The Great Depression

People who lived through the Great Depression learned to make do with very little. They were frugal people and did not waste things.

John was a truck farmer whose produce stand was several miles from his house and farm. When he woke up every morning, he would look over the things that he needed to take to his stand. If he could carry it, he would simply walk the few miles with his arms filled with produce. It was common to see this man walking to his produce stand with a bushel or more of beans. He had a truck but he was saving his gas.

His house was electrified but he still used kerosene lanterns and wood stoves. To save matches, he would keep little rolls of paper around to move fire from one place to another. Why waste a good match when a scrap of paper will do the same job?

When he got his first radio, he kept the volume down real low. He had to sit with his ear almost touching the speaker to hear anything. He figured that you wouldn't wear out the radio as fast if you were careful with it! If he was right, that radio must still be playing somewhere today.

Moody Monday's

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past.

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A Rebel to the Last

taken from 1864 Dalton, Ga. newspaper

The suburbs of Huntsville and the lands for some distance around the town are being fast denuded of timber. The beautiful groves are fast disappearing under the ruthless axe of the invader. There is scarcely a fence around any of the grounds in the vicinity. In all parts of the town there is similar evidences of destruction, but not to the same extent.

The soldiers are, for the most part, Regulars, and under better discipline than formerly, and being prohibited from entering private houses or lots, without special leave. Not a single Negro company is stationed there or has been organized there. Negro men, women and children are quartered in Greene Academy. When Governor Chapman was ordered out of his home for refusing to take the oath, and was on the eve of starting, he received notice that the family must vacate the house in a specified time and it was said that he was ordered not to remove any of the furniture, and that Negroes were to be quartered there, but the latter needs confirmation.

Thurstan Lumpkin, a citizen of Huntsville, who was sent to the Nashville Penitentiary, several months ago, for telling the Yankees that he believed that they were stealing Negro men to carry them North and improve the Yankee breed, is reported to have died there, a short time since.

It is said that he was a Rebel to the last and denounced the Yankees almost, with his dying breath.



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1. Re-Souled - A Spiritual Awakening - By Huntsville Native Dr. William H. (Bill) Goodson (\$13.95)

2. The Sword of Bushwhacker Johnston - The Civil War in Madison & Jackson Counties (\$19.95).

3. Huntsville - Where Technology Meets Tradition. A Great Gift For Huntsvillians, Old and New (\$39.00)

4. Wernher Von Braun: Crusader For Space - Pictorial Memoir of the Space Pioneer by Dr. Ernst Stuhlinger (\$29.50)

5. Silent In The Land - Stunning Color Photos of Alabama Homes by Huntsville Native Chip Cooper (\$45.00)

6. True Tales of Old Madison County - Reprinted by the Historic Huntsville Foundation (\$5.00).

7. Warm-Climate Gardening - Barbara Pleasant's much needed gardening tips, especially for new Southerners (\$21.95 Hb/\$12.95 Pb).

8. Historic Limestone County - Stories and History by Robert Dunnivant, Jr. (\$9.95)

9. Glimpses into Antebellum Homes of Huntsville & Madison County (\$10.00).

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A Woman's View of the Civil War in Huntsville

Taken from the *Confederate
Veteran* (1895)

Mrs. Andrew Erwin was formerly Miss Mary Webster, of Maury County, Tenn., a daughter of Mr. Jonathan Webster, who was a prominent planter on the Little Bigby River. When barely nineteen, she was married to Col. William Tait, of North Carolina, a cousin of Gov. Zeb Vance, of that State. He lived but a few months, and she afterwards married Col. James W. Camp, of Virginia, a highly educated and wealthy planter living near Huntsville, Alabama. This union lasted for nearly twenty years, and was regarded as "the romance of her life." When she was thirty-nine years of age she was again married, her choice being Col. Andrew Erwin.

Mrs. Erwin's at Beechwood, Tenn., was headquarters for many of the officers of the Tennessee army. For six weeks previous to the battle of Murfreesboro there were encamped within her grounds Gens. Hardee (with his family), Breckenridge, Cleburne, Bragg, Polk, and J.E. Johnston.

In her home she entertained graciously, even lavishly, and among those who spent time at Beechwood was a Col. Freemantle, a representative to America from the English government, sent here to inspect military tactics. He spent several weeks at Beechwood, and wrote a book called 'Six Months

in the Confederate States.' In this he mentions the ladies he met there. He liked the South better than the North, and seemed to be one of the family. When there was a lull of hostilities Beechwood was a social center.

She has the following to say about her brief sojourn in Huntsville, Ala.

"In 1862, in order to get away from the Yankees, I went to Huntsville, Ala., but it was from the frying pan into the fire, as the Yankees poured into the city, and I was arrested a few days later by Gen. O.M. Mitchel (Cincinnati), of geography notoriety.

"My offense was having been seen with a tiny Confederate flag in my hand. My niece, Miss Rosa Turner, and Miss Mathews had played with a grace hoop with one of these flags attached, and the three of us were summoned to his tent.

"He began his questioning, saying to me, "Don't you, know I could send you to Fort La Fayette in five minutes?" I said, "That would be very rapid traveling; I do not know that I could make the trip in that time." I could see a lurking smile in his eyes, and he said, "What is your jail made for, Miss?" I answered, "To put outlawed men in, sir." He then said, "No man, woman, or child shall say in my tent that they are Rebels." I said, "I am a Rebel, open and aboveboard. You had better watch that class who are good Rebels when I see them and good Federals when you see them, when they want favors done. You know where to find me." Said he, "Are you a lady?" "Who doubts it?" I said. "You women get to your homes," he replied, and if I had had a pistol I should have shot him.

"He was a poor, cowardly man - sat all the time behind his desk buying cotton in gold while he paid his soldiers in greenbacks. He never went to the front, but sent the Fourth Ohio and other soldiers to fight his battles. This regiment went out fifteen hundred strong, and at the close of the war there

were but fifty left! They were brave men, and we women were wicked enough to count the empty saddles on their return.

"This Gen. Mitchel had some bad men in his command, and was bad himself. He died of yellow fever on the coast of Charleston."

The End

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Memories

continued from page 9

moved. The remote site I was stationed at was so small we had no entertainment facilities. Thirty years ago we didn't even have television.

The afternoon of Christmas Day I was returning to the barracks after the traditional U.S. Army Christmas meal when Heinz, a German maintenance worker I had often waved at, stopped and motioned for me to get on the back of his moped with him. Heinz spoke no English and I spoke no German. So I didn't know what was going on. But I was in such a depressed mood it didn't matter. He took me through the snow to the gasthaus his family owned. It had been opened for family and close friends only. (Christmas is a strong family day in Germany.) I was greeted at the door with a liter of the best German dark beer a person ever drank. Everybody crowded around and wanted to know more about me. With a lot of hand waving and slapping me on the back two of the men made me realize they had been prisoners of war right here in Alabama. Then they tried to explain their jobs by ultimately holding extended fingers together and closing them. They had picked cotton! In a strange way I was among friends from Alabama!

Shortly afterwards the cognac and schnapps were brought out. Then we started singing, swaying to the rhythm, holding our drinks in the air and exclaiming "prosit." That was when I first realized Germany's contribution to our American culture. Until that evening I was so naive that I thought beautiful songs like "Silent Night" and "O Christmas Tree" were American. My new found friends sang in German and I sang in English. We sang "She'll be Coming 'Round The Mountain" which was also originally a German song. I

felt like I was at home. I spoke no German and they spoke no English. But it didn't matter. We were friends. Since that evening whenever I think of Germany and its wonderful people I have a warm feeling in my heart.

David R. Carney
Computer Analyst

The Senses of Christmas

The master engineer of the model railroad manipulates the controls to produce a lasting remembrance of the moment. Christmas touches and guides each of our senses like no other event. The Season itself, like the engineer, creates a new memory to be added to all before and recreates all the scenes we have travelled - our tracks of life.

Christmas stimulates the taste glands. As I eat the party mix, fudge, eggnog, turkey, ham, fruitcake, candied walnuts, divinity, pecan pie, etc., I sense the presence of a grandmother and mother who are no longer with me to prepare such feasts, but who nevertheless are with me in the tastes of Christmas.

Just to touch the presents, wrapping paper and ribbons, the tingly branches of a freshly cut tree, or the delicate lightness of the fragile tree decorations remind me of the many

who have given. The giving of gifts and ornaments represent a blessing and a transfer of positive feelings.

The smells of the Christmas season also take us on a walk down memory lane. Spiced tea, baking pies, and the crisp cool air of December have a subtle way of reaching the subconscious and open us up for daydreams. Christmas music prompts our aural senses to travel that same highway into our innermost self and in my case provides a religious rejuvenation. Then, our eyes are stimulated by the colors inherent to the season and furthers the process of mentally viable pictures.

Christmas is like that model railroad with movement, sights, sounds, and smells. And we are the engineer with the power to control and enjoy it. We have the ability to make others feel good, especially children. We have the power as we play with the controls to draw as much from our senses as we want, and to go as deep into the heart as we can, because Christmas is that warm fuzzy memory diary and each year we add a new chapter to it.

Steve Hettinger
Mayor of Huntsville

Rush Limbaugh may not always be right, but he laughs all the way to the bank.

Tom Carney, copy boy



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A Christmas Breakfast

Christmas was twice as much fun when I was growing up. That's because I had a twin. I shared a lot of great Christmases with my twin brother and our older sister Donna. Just like every other kid who grew up watching Gene Autry and Roy Rodgers on TV in the late fifties, it seemed like I got a new cowboy hat and a set of shiny new pistols every year. I also remember the year Santa brought Terry a Roy Rogers guitar. I got a fiddle. That was 1960.

But some of the best Christmas memories are of my Dad. Every year, while mother was picking all the wrapping paper from the floor, Dad would head for the kitchen. It was a tradition in our home that Dad cooked his country ham breakfast for us on Christmas morning. The smell of hot biscuits in the oven, scrambled eggs on the stove and country ham frying in a black iron skillet meant that we were about to sit down to a Christmas breakfast feast.

Dad passed away in 1988 but we still cook country ham when I take my daughters, Leigh and Megan, to Nanny

and Paw Paw's house for the holidays. I can still see him standing there in the kitchen sneaking a piece of country ham.

He said he had to make sure it was good. It always was.

I still have the old fiddle. Some of the parts are missing, but I'll always have a part of that Christmas when I was still a child.

And I'll always have those memories of my father cooking his Christmas breakfast.

Jerry Hayes
WHNT-TV (Comcast 9)
News Anchor

Of Family and Goodwill

Celebrating Christmas could not be done in a better place than Huntsville. Though our town has grown, one cannot help but remember the days when life was simpler and Christmas meant sharing goodwill (and good food).

My favorite Christmas memories are of when I was in elementary school. The class would decorate the rooms, sing carols, and our teacher would read

us Christmas stories. There would be an abundance of cookies and treats for any child with a wishful look in its eye.


We did not have a fireplace, so realizing Santa could not visit without one, it became my job to construct one. I would begin by getting six large boxes from the old Hill's Grocery Store on Brandon Street. After using a prodigious amount of scotch tape, aluminum foil and brick-colored wrapping paper, I could usually manage to create a reasonable facsimile of a haphazardly constructed, and slightly lopsided, fireplace.

Of course when I later expressed a desire to study engineering my family tactfully changed the subject. But to a young boy the most important thing was that Santa Claus came every year.

Christmas Day always meant opening presents and gathering for a turkey dinner. Even today it is hard for me to smell Pepperidge Farm dressing without becoming nostalgic.

Bill Kling
District 4, City Council

Continued page 36



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The Monte Sano CCC

by Walt Terry

In the mid-thirties the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), an organization created as part of Roosevelt's New Deal, built two camps in Huntsville, one at what is now the Eastern extension of Maple Hill Cemetery and one on Monte Sano Mountain.

The Monte Sano camp was situated on either side of the present Highland Plaza, near the south end of the plateau. This facility, as did the other camps, provided work and living quarters for young men out of work during the Great Depression. It also taught the men skills and a sense of social responsibility. It taught many of them to read and write. It gave hopeless men direction and purpose and self respect.

The main work for the Monte Sano camp was the construction of a state park, which included roads, trails, a water system, cottages, a lodge and an amphitheater. Most of the buildings still stand. The lodge was gutted by fire years ago, leaving only the stone walls and chimneys.

The walls of the entranceway to the camp grounds still stand on the east side at the intersection of Highland Plaza and Monte Sano Boulevard.

Of the roads built, there was one to Natural Well on the east slope about 200 feet below the top of the mountain. Government officials considered developing this cave into a tourist attraction. CCC personnel were lowered into the 200-foot hole to investigate the possibility of digging a shaft alongside it to accommodate an elevator. Tourists would then have access to the

extensive caverns at the bottom. These plans never materialized, probably from a lack of funding. Now only the shell of a small rock hut remain.

On August 25, 1938, three years after the start of the project, the Huntsville Chamber of Commerce sponsored a dedication of the park, with Robert K (Buster) Bell as Master of ceremonies. It was a festive occasion. The principal speaker was William B. Bankhead, Speaker of the United States House of Representatives and a former resident of Huntsville (and the Father of Tallulah). A night pageant was held depicting the history of Monte Sano.

And perhaps most important, the CCC's vital role in the realization of the park was recognized.

Since the dissolution of the CCC

in the late thirties, the Monte Sano members have held annual reunions at the old horse stable in the park.
The End

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Wonderful Christmas Delicacies

Christmas Chocolate Fondue

- 12 oz semisweet chocolate morsels
- 3/4 cup light cream
- 1 tsp instant coffee
- Fruit to dip

Melt the chocolate and cream together over low heat; keep stirring until smooth. Remove from heat and stir in the instant coffee granules, keep warm in a chafing dish or fondue pot. Find some long fondue forks, and put out apple cubes, angel food cubes, strawberries, marshmallows, sliced bananas, papayas, whatever you feel like. This is a delicious treat on cold nights.

Eggnog Snow

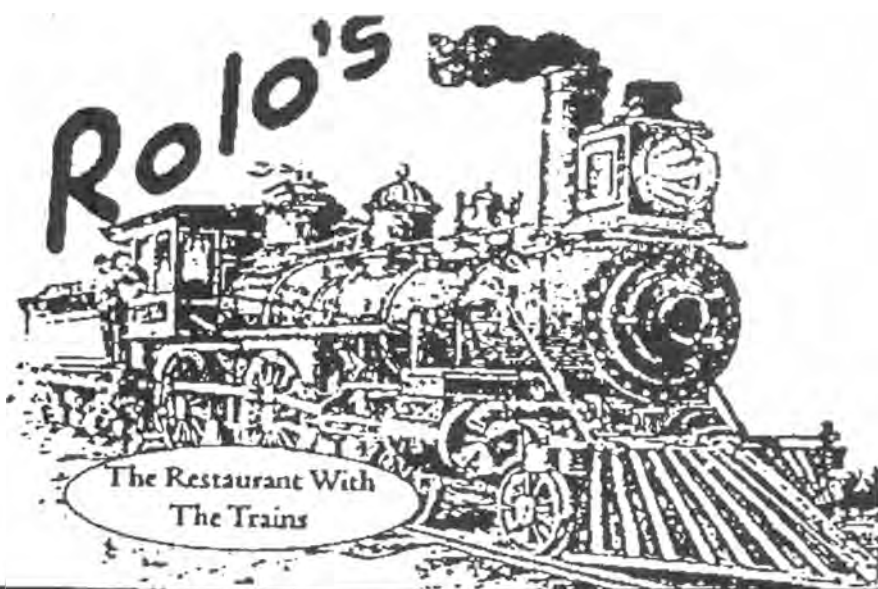
- 1 tbl unflavored gelatin
- 1/2 cup cold milk
- 3 1/2 cups scalded milk
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 3 eggs yolks, slightly beaten
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 3 egg whites
- sprinkle of ground nutmeg

Add the gelatin to cold milk, when it has softened, dissolve all in the hot

milk. Add sugar and stir a small amount of the hot mixture into the beaten egg yolks, then add this to the hot mixture. Add vanilla and cool. Wrap with freezer paper or put into freezer containers and freeze. Put the egg whites into another small container and freeze them as well.

When serving time comes, let the

egg whites and eggnog thaw for one hour and fifteen minutes. Beat the egg whites til stiff. If the eggnog mixture is still frozen, break it into chunks. Put this into a chilled punch bowl and beat all until fluffy - then fold in the egg whites. When serving, sprinkle nutmeg over the top.



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Cranberry Walnut Pie

- 1 1/2 cups fresh cranberries
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts
- 1 egg
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/3 cup margarine, melted

Grease a 9" pie plate and spread the cranberries on the bottom. Mix the nuts and brown sugar and sprinkle this over the cranberries. Beat the egg til thick, gradually add sugar and beat til thoroughly mixed. Stir in the flour and melted margarine. Blend well. Pour this mixture over the cranberries and bake in a preheated 325 oven for 45 minutes. When you serve it, serve with either whipped topping mixed with a little almond flavoring, or vanilla ice cream.

Spicy Christmas Peanuts

- 1 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup water
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp ground cloves
- 1/2 tsp nutmeg
- 1 pound roasted peanuts

Boil sugar, water and spices til syrup threads from the spoon. Drop the peanuts into the boiling syrup. Stir until nuts are dry-looking. Pour on waxed paper and let stand til cool and dry.

Glazed Pecans

- 3 cups sugar
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 1/2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/2 tsp almond extract
- 4 1/2 to 5 1/2 cups pecan halves

Cook the sugar and cream over low heat, keep stirring, til mixture comes to a soft ball stage. Remove from heat and stir in flavorings. Keep stirring til mixture begins to cool; add pecans and mix well. Pour the pecans on waxed paper, separate each one so

that they don't touch. Cool and eat.

Rich Eggnog Ice Cream

- 2 egg yolks, beaten slightly
- 2 egg whites, beaten stiffly
- 1 cup whipping cream - whipped
- 2 cups half and half
- 1/2 tsp nutmeg
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 2 tsp vanilla
- 1 cup sugar

Combine egg yolks, 3/4 cup of sugar, half and half, vanilla and nutmeg. Put in freezer til firm. Remove from freezer, whip into a cold bowl. Beat egg whites with salt and remaining 1/4 cup sugar til stiff. Fold this into the frozen mixture. Fold in the whipped cream and refreeze til firm. Serves six chubby people.

Krispy Date Balls

- 1/2 stick margarine
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 eggs
- 8 oz chopped dates
- 1 cup chopped pecans
- 3 cups rice krispies
- 1 tsp vanilla

Angel Flake Coconut

Beat the butter, sugar and eggs together. Stir in the dates, bring to boil over medium heat and let boil five minutes. Remove from heat, add the nuts, rice krispies and vanilla. Roll into balls after you grease up your hands, roll them in the coconut. This will make about 4 dozen balls.



Apple pie without the cheese
is like a kiss without a hug.

Martha Radsinski

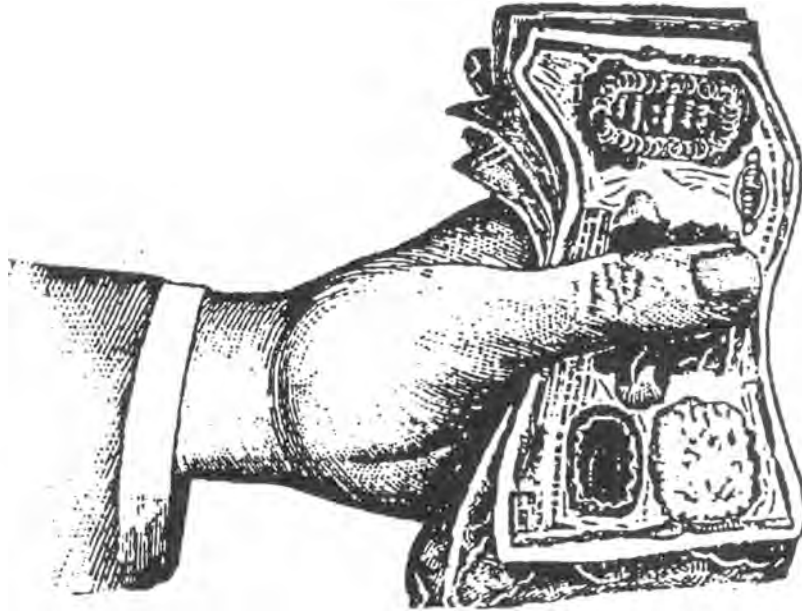
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Sensational Tragedy in New Hope

Houston Clark, a prominent young man of New Hope, is on trial in the law and equity court for the killing of Charles Drake, a young man of the same neighborhood. The charge against him is murder in the first degree.

A jury of twelve men was selected this morning. The hearing of evidence for the prosecution was begun shortly after noon. The state claims that Charles Drake was beaten to death by Houston Clark at the home of P. Overton, a short distance from New Hope and has introduced evidence to show that the instrument of death was a plank of wood which is presented as evidence. There are three dents and blood stains on the plank and these are said to correspond with the wounds on

Drake's head. Dr. H.R. Johnson testified that he was called to examine the dead man and found that his skull had been fractured in three places and his neck disjointed, any one of the wounds being serious enough to cause death.

The defense will introduce evidence to show that the defendant found Drake in the act of pulling a young woman through the window of the Overton home. The plea of the defense is that the act was justified by the circumstances. Miss Overton will be an important witness in the case.

Both families involved in the tragedy have large connections and immediately after the killing Clark, accompanied by his uncle, walked to town and surrendered to Sheriff Mitchell. Clark states that he walked in order to avoid trouble, as threats had been made against his life.

The trial promises to develop some sensational features and because few of the facts in the case have been allowed to reach the public, there is considerable general interest in the case. The state is represented by So-

licitor James H. Pride assisted by Milton Lanier Taylor, and for Drake, R. Smith appears for the defense.

from October 28, 1907 newspaper

Raking leaves is like puppy love
- given enough time it'll all
disappear of its own accord..
Fred Carmichael

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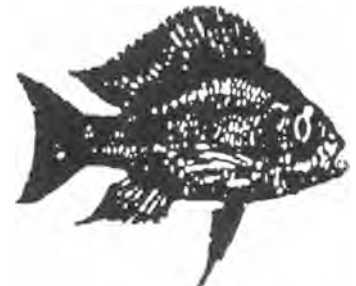
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THE HUNTSVILLE MERIDIAN

by Jack Harwell

Street names are a little like shoelaces. We know how to use them, and we'd be lost without them, but we never give much thought to where they come from. The origin of the shoelace may be lost to us, but it's possible to know something of the way in which the thoroughfares we drive on every day gained their identities.

Most of the major roads in town are named after people, usually either presidents or prominent local citizens. One exception to this is Meridian Street. It is named, not for a politician, but for a topographical feature. The story of how that name came about goes back nearly two centuries.

At the turn of the 19th century, the land where Huntsville is now located was mostly untouched wilderness. The human population consisted largely of Indians, with an occasional hardy white settler. The numbers of the

latter grew rapidly after John Hunt settled near the Big Spring in 1805, as news of the area's suitability for farming began to spread.

As more and more settlers came to what would one day be called Huntsville, disputes inevitably arose over land ownership. With no local government, there was no way for an individual to stake a legal claim to his land. Fortunately, the nation's founders had foreseen this problem, and one of the first tasks the new United States government undertook was to establish a standard for locating and disposing of public lands in the territories west of the Appalachian Mountains.

In 1785, Congress established a method of surveying the public lands by which all such lands were divided into squares six miles on a side. These squares were called townships. The squares were marked off on the map with east-west lines, called township

lines, and north-south lines, called range lines. Each township was further divided into 36 squares called sections. Each section contained an area of one square mile (640 acres). Settlers could then buy the land in sections, half-sections, and quarter-sections. These sections lines are still used today, usually to identify land outside the city limits.

In order to determine the exact location of the township and range lines, a single reference point was needed. This point, called the initial point, was marked in 1807 by Thomas Freeman, a surveyor from Nashville, who was employed to survey the public lands in north Alabama. For his initial point, Freeman selected the point where the highway from Huntsville to Fayetteville crossed the state line. The site is visible from the modern highway, U.S. 231-431, which follows the same route. From that point, Freeman struck a line due south, which he called the Huntsville Meridian, since it passed through Huntsville, then the largest town north of Mobile. He drew the north-south range lines parallel to the meridian, one every six miles, and the east-west township lines he drew parallel to the state line. Freeman completed his survey in May 1809, and the first lands were offered for sale three months later.

Because the highway leading north from Huntsville ran along the meridian, it came to be known as Me-

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ridian Pike. The part of the road that lay within the city limits became Meridian Street. Of course, Meridian Street does not run true north and south along its entire length. Coming from the north, the street bends to the west as it passes Colonial Hills Elementary School. But the meridian continues due south for more than a hundred miles, until it intersects the 33rd parallel near Columbiana. Lands south of that line were surveyed separately.

Meridian Street remained the major north-south route in north Huntsville until Memorial Parkway was completed in 1955. At one time there were five motels on Meridian to serve travellers arriving from Fayetteville and points north. All are gone now. Also gone is Woody's Drive-In Theater, which was located just north of the Quietdale Drive intersection. The author can recall, as a child, falling asleep in the back seat of my parents' Chevy as they took in one of the features at Woody's in the early sixties. The site is currently vacant, with only the vestiges of the marquee to mark the entrance.

The Huntsville Meridian comes down the middle of England Street and passes through Maple Hill Cemetery. There, in 1835, riverboat captain and outdoor enthusiast Richard W. Anderson erected a monument on the meridian. Anderson was known as an avid long distance walker; he liked to take his cotton by boat to New Orleans, then walk back to Huntsville! Every morning before breakfast, he would walk from his home to Whitesburg and back. The reason for his interest in the Huntsville Meridian is not known; however, since his monument bears the names of many family members who lived here, he may have just decided to make one marker serve two purposes. The Meridian Monument is located a few yards south of the grave of one of Alabama's founders, Clement Comer Clay. *The End*



He Stretched a Wire for Wife and her Lover

An Alabama banker who we will not at present name, was arrested today for killing his wife and her rich admirer because he believed the woman was fonder of the man that she should have been. He heard the couple plan an automobile trip and secured a tightly stretched wire across the highway between two trees. The auto dashed against the wire and the couple were almost beheaded. The banker is proud of the skillful manner in which he carried out the deed, and freely admits his guilt.



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billy joe cooley

AN EDUCATED MAN

THEN AGAIN is the Sunday night band at Turning Point.

Mark McDonald and **Ellen West** partied seriously at The Vapors Club the other night. Meanwhile, bossman **Sanford McLain** and brother **Matthew** were discovering the Jeopardy game on the club computer.

EL MEJICANO Restaurant is celebrating 20 years of serving delightful Mexican cuisine at the corner of Bob Wallace and Patton Road. Customers congratulated owners **Ken** and **Joyce Barnett** all last month.

Friends gave **Bill McAnelly** a surprise 60th birthday party on Nov. 23 in Finnegan's Irish Pub.

DELTON SORTER from Guntersville, was on the *Doyle Brady TV Show* on WAFF (Comcast 11, at 1 a.m. Sundays). Produced by **Howard** and **Almut Austin**, the show is also shown Thursday nights at 7 on CHRM-17.

Laura O'Keefe, **David Englekemeyer**, **Michael Vega** and little **Elena Roca** turned out to hear **Eva Roca** sing the other night at the popular Depot Dance. The last dance in the series will be New Year's Eve It'll feature music by **Richard Cox's** big band. Our favorite barberess, **P'Nut Wilson** of Jackson Way Salon, will be first in line.

LEWIS GRIZZARD signed books the other night at Books-a-Million and was so tired that he canceled his appointment for breakfast at Eunice's. Meanwhile, Madison Academy student **Mark Sanders** and other Grizzard friends breakfasted at Eunice's, anyway. **Pat Statum** brought son **Jason**, leaving husband **Lloyd** to oversee their *Lloyd's Electric Co.* At the next table was ex-Air Force officer **Steve Rowe**. Then entered silvery-haired preacher **Byron Laird** and his **Tilley**. The personable **Gallimore** boys from Lacey's Spring, **Clayton**, 9, and **Tyler**, 6, brought their ma and pa, **Tom** and **Krista**, and their grandma **Katy French** for their birthday breakfast.

Tyler had just won the Autumn Chase Run in 7 minutes, 38 seconds.

Brent Talley and pretty **Jennifer Hajck** showed up for socializing at Bubba's, as did **Kymberly Griffin** and **Dave Webster**. Another impressive group, headed by collegian **Rich Barnes**, included **Brian Bence**, **Parrish Dunnaway** and **Jeff Bechtel**. They helped performers **Tony Mason** and **Tommy Sheppard** thrill the crowd.

JACK DANIELS' annual barbecue fest brought some 20,000 people to tiny Lynchburg, Tenn., on Oct. 23. **Andy Yarbrough** and his ma and pa, **Dixie** and **Hub**, came for the doings. Jack Daniel publicist **Tana Shupe** outdid herself in the welcoming category. Memphian **John Balbric** brought a bunch of his Vandy pals along. **Tony Mason** didn't show, of course.

World class water-ski titlist **Michael Champion** brought West Palm Beach beauty **Amanda McIntire** when he visited his mom, flutist **Rosemary Champion**, the other week. They were at Eunice's breakfast table.

It's hard to understand **Bill Clinton's** ambitious taxing program. **Jesus** only asks for 10 percent.

LANNY'S DOWNTOWN lounge has opened with live bands



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nightly. Opening week was tremendous. **Rusty Michael** of Nashville's Fat City booking agency, came to watch his clients, *The Hot Dice*, perform their mod-version of 1950s rock. Huntsvillian **Artie Dean** drums for them. The first visitor in the place was Lanny's friend **Daniel Wilmoth** of Cutting Edge Lawn Care. **Mary Beth Williams** was there, too.

Pensacola's **J.W. Owsley** visited the other day and looks even happier than when he left here 15 years ago. He has turned his life over to **Christ**. It makes a difference.

As 1993 draws to a close we like to reflect on our blessings and offer a thought to our close friends who didn't make it through another year. There was **Erskine Parcus**, the best blues singer I ever heard and whose family was the first close friends I made when I came to Alabama. And there was actor **River Phoenix**, whom I met on his 20th birthday and who, with his rock band and sister **Rain**, joined pretty **Lindy Critelli**, myself and others for a dinner party at Ryan's on University Drive that Sunday afternoon. Most recently was **David Castrillo**, a former waiter at Ryan's (South) and The Mill. He died in a car wreck.

LOTS OF ACTIVITY everyday at *Burrito Bandito*. So much so that noontimes are swarming with diners. Not a good time to make reservations, says **Chef Oscar**. That's where **Nathan Mears** and **Ronnie Robinson** showed up for nourishment the other night.

Kevin Gentle of Guntersville High football fame has tied the state record for the longest field-goal kick (60 yards). With all the college scouts pursuing him, his proud dad **Ken Gentle** of **Hewlett Packard** has been seen reading a book titled "How to Become a Sports Agent in Ten Easy

Steps."

New Year's Eve will begin with a 7 p.m. **John Phillip Sousa** concert by the Huntsville Symphony, conducted by **Keith Brion**, who will be dressed like Sousa and who has practiced the march king's stocatto mannerisms. Texan **Samuel Woodward** is executive director of the orchestra these days. Call 539-4818 for tickets.

We joined friends for a nice Chinese meal at Mr. Jackson's **House of Mandarin**. That establishment is also open on Mondays again.

We entered Jones Pharmacy in Ardmore just as the Bama-Auburn game ended. It was a joyous occasion in that establishment. **Bret, Bradley and Judy Holland** lead the cheering.

Johnny Tona's is where we crossed paths the other night with **Allen "Bubba" Percival, Darryl Bingham and Brooke Baker**. At the next table were **Will Maddox and Doug Weeks**, with their pals **Cale Tennison and Charles Roberson**. Across the aisle were **Robert Massing and Geri Vickers**.

And a good morning to **Marilyn Horne**.

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Old Landmarks

by Ruby Crabbe

The train whistle tooted and the thunderous roar of the rails sang through the air like the long wailing sound of a thousand wolves caught in the hunters' traps. The train tracks ran between two landmarks on Meridian Street. E.P. Miller's feed store on one side and the Bon-Aire Restaurant on the other side. E.P. Miller was in the real estate business as well as the feed store business. My husband, Isaac Crabbe, worked 47 years for Mr. Miller. He was the electrician, plumber and painter for Mr. Miller's real estate business. During cotton ginning season Isaac also operated the gin that was located on Marion Street.

Livestock feed from Miller's feed store has been put in about every farmer's barn in Madison County. His line of canned goods has graced many a table in Huntsville and surrounding areas. Mr. Miller was in business for fifty-four years at the place better known as Miller's Crossing. Prior to E.P.'s taking over the business, his father Press Miller and his uncle Frank Miller ran the business.

The Bon-Aire restaurant cooks filled many a stomach with the fine food they prepared. The homemade rolls were the best this side of the Mason-Dixon line. During the years I worked at the Bon-Aire, I saw thousands of

people leave that place with a well-satisfied look on their faces. I worked for Mr. Rob Hicks, and he, along with his daughter Sis, son Olan and Olan's wife Joyce were the nicest people to work with. Of course, we had our little ups and downs - what place of business doesn't become more lively when there's a spat now and then? Mr. Hicks was very firm about one thing - there was to be absolutely no alcoholic beverages of any sort allowed - he wanted his restaurant to be the best family place around.

Now the overpass has blotted out the scenery where the Bon-Aire and the feed store used to be, but it can never blot out the memories of those two old landmarks. So many things have changed in Huntsville and Meridian Street is no exception. A person could get lost driving down a street he's driven down since he was knee-high to a duck. For sure, Meridian Street will never be the same. So many overpasses here, yonder and there. It's a wonder someone doesn't change the name Huntsville to Overpassville.

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The Things I Remember Most About Christmas

Trying to decorate a palm tree when I was stationed in the South Pacific during the Second War.

Harry Thompson, Retired

Attending Christmas Eve church services with my mother and father when they were still alive.

Lois Miller, Waitress

Seeing my son on television during a Christmas day broadcast from Viet Nam.

Evelyn Little, Retired

Delivering presents to my family on Christmas Day only to find that I had put the wrong name-tags on them. My mother got a chainsaw.

Larry Giles, NASA

The Christmas I looked outside our front door and found a cold, hungry little kitten asking to come in.

Cathey Carney, Animal-lover

Trying to get home in time for Christmas and being stranded during a snow storm at the Chicago airport.

John Foster

Not having money to buy a present for my husband during the depression. We wrote letters telling one another how much we loved each other and placed them under the Christmas tree. I still have mine sixty years later.

Irene Gebler, Retired

Receiving a Zorro watch for Christmas when I was eight years old.

Clarence Scott, Old Huntsville

Being in a POW camp in Italy during the Second War. Our guard brought us an old gramophone with a Christmas record and we played it all day. Most of the men spent the day writing letters to their families.

Roger Stanford, Retired

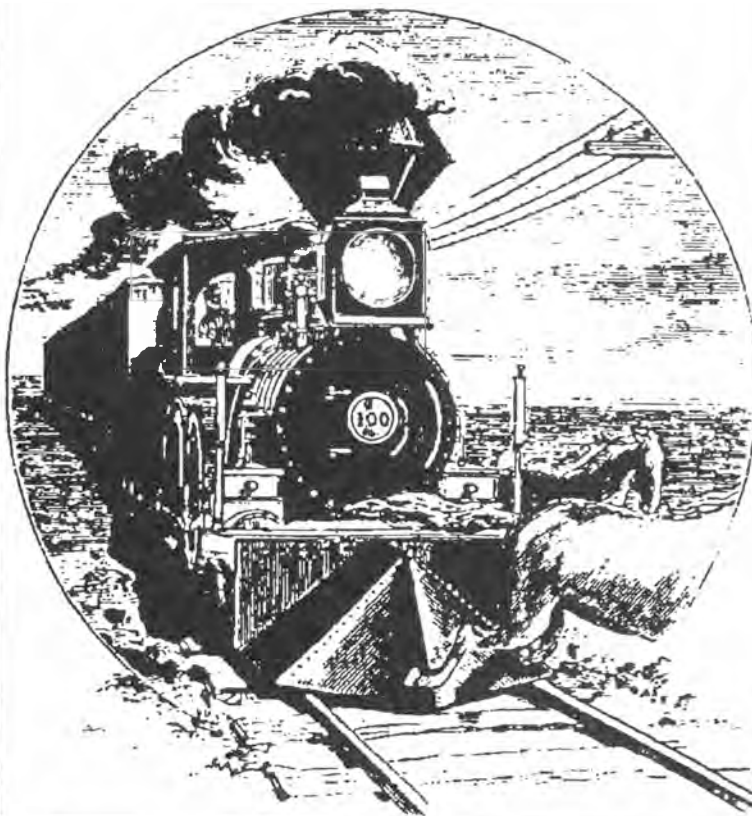
Watching television when I was child and seeing all the different countries celebrate Christmas and wondering how they could believe in Christ and still fight wars.

Diane Younger, Secretary

The look on my daughter's face when she saw her first Christmas tree.

Kenneth Pope, Carpenter

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Happenings in Huntsville in 1907

In the recorder's court this morning Peter Stevens, arrested for disorderly conduct, was fined \$5 and costs.

John Williams, an old man who was arrested a few days ago for drunkenness, was ordered released and directed to leave Huntsville at once. Williams is quite an old man being 72 years of age and Mayor Smith took pity on him.

By reason of an open switch on the Southern railway freight train No. 306 - J. Edward, engineer and switch train No 431 with Conductor Miller in charge - collided on the side track on Meridian Street late yesterday afternoon, wrecking and derailing two cars of the regular train, demolishing the pilots of both engines, smashing the front of a car and the trucks of the end of the switch train. No one was hurt.

Hon. W. T. Lawler, probate judge of Madison County, entered upon his 4th year of office on Monday morning with every deed mortgage left on the books from the past year. Business is

heavier than ever and the probate office is especially busy.

Mrs. Elma Wesley died of apoplexy in Merrimack. A long time resident of Merrimack Village, she died last night after a few days illness with apoplexy. She left three daughters.

R.C. Smallwood, sixty years, died last night at his residence in the Rowe Mill Village of pneumonia.

The bursting of a water main leading from the city pumping station to the standpipe caused no end of trouble Saturday and Sunday. A leak was found in front of the Schiffman Building on the southeast corner of the square early Saturday morning and a force of men set to work to dig down and make the necessary repair. The job was bigger than they thought it to be. When the hard crust of the macadamized street was removed the escaping water burst forth and flooded the street.

The flood washed out a bed down the gutter and being unable to get in the storm sewer at Randolph Street, passed on down to Clinton and flooded that corner. No damage whatever was done by the flood.

The daily newspapers of the city are the chief sufferers because they had to depend on water power to run the presses. *The Evening Banner* was caught half through with its editions and city subscribers were furnished with the paper in an unusual form. *The Evening Tribune*, which had gotten into trouble at its own plant and was depending on the *Mercury* plant for publication, was unable to get out at all.

Three Buildings on Jefferson Street Burned Sunday Night

A blaze that is supposed to have originated from a live wire in the grocery store of C.K. Brown on Sunday evening ruined three of the small frame

buildings across from the McGee Hotel on Jefferson Street and resulted in a property loss of about \$2000. The losses were as follows:

C K. Brown, grocery, loss \$900; Cedar Garden restaurant owned by Mary Gray, loss \$200, James McKee, stock of wallpaper and building, loss \$900.

An older man, too drunk to walk, was arrested this afternoon by Officer Bullard on a charge of drunkenness. The old man was too intoxicated to walk alone and he was hauled to the city lockup in a delivery wagon.

A negro by the name of Sharpe appeared in the recorder's court and complained that while driving his mule along East Holmes street last night his mule ran into a pile of brick, the presence of which was not disclosed by any sign of warning. His mule broke his leg but was not shot.

Material for street paving is expected in a few days.

The city street force and Superintendent Murphy are making improvements in various portions of the city. California Street is being graded and put in good condition. Granitoid pavements are being placed on Locust Street in accordance with the promise made the realty firm that developed the property further out this street.

Foot bridges are being put down wherever needed. Good use is being made of the street force and the convicts who are sentenced to hard labor are required to do the good work.

Mr. Murphy said today that he was looking for the arrival of the material for paving the square any time, and when it does arrive here then his job will begin.

The Police Court record is again broken.

The fines, forfeitures and sen-

tences in the police court this morning broke all previous records in Huntsville, amounting to \$590 or something more than 1180 days of work for the city. The raid made by the police last night on the disorderly house of Ret Wales produced four hundred dollar fines or 296 day terms at hard labor. Mary White, Ret Wales and Jenny Humphrey were fined \$100 each with the option of working out the fines at the rate of .50 cents the day. Charlie Mason, a young man who was caught in the house was fined \$100. Mary Davison, an inmate of the house, was given 24 hours in which to get out of the city and unless she is gone by that time she must pay a fine of \$100 or begin a term of 209 days labor. Four young men who were caught in the same raid were discharged.

Dave Pointer was fined \$5 for using profane language in the presence of females. Lacy Clemens was fined \$5 for leaving a team unhitched. R. Dervis, drunk and disorderly, was fined \$20. F. L. Oates, drunk, was fined \$10 and John Sutherfield for drunk and disorderly and for carrying a pistol was given a term of 60 days. L. Larkin, Lake Walker, H.H. Harris, Dave Jordan and Will Allison were fined \$10 each for drunkenness.

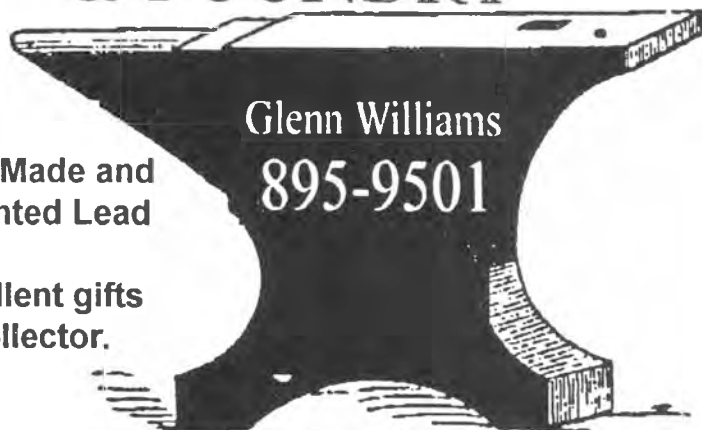


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When Johnny Came Marching Home

by Charles Rice

They had been arriving for days now. Some of them came alone on horseback. Others rode in small numbers in buggies. Most came crowded into the passenger cars of the Memphis and Charleston Railroad. The Confederate Army was converging once more on Huntsville - except the war had been over for a full quarter of a century. The aging veterans of the South were coming together at last, and Huntsville was eagerly turning out to welcome them.

The Johnny Rebs came to town in peace this time, armed only with their

memories and with hearts filled with fondness for comrades now grown old or long departed. The year was 1890 and the month was July. The Confederacy had ceased to exist long ago, but for a few brief days the clock could be turned back and time worn faces would shine again with the glow of youth. The occasion was the reunion of the 4th Alabama Regiments - the Fighting Fourth Infantry of Robert E. Lee's fabled army and the gallant horsemen of Colonel Alfred A. Russell's Fourth Cavalry. Alabama was proud of her sons and this was Huntsville's chance

to show it.

The idea for a reunion had seemed to grow almost spontaneously among the Alabama veterans. Unlike the Union's defenders, who had formed their veterans associations almost as soon as the shooting stopped, the soldiers of the South were prohibited from gathering during the long years of Reconstruction. They had been forbidden to wear their old uniforms and had even been denied the right to vote and hold public office. Those troublesome days were over, however, and Southerners could once more take pride in being citizens of a reunited country. In a symbolic gesture of this reconciliation, an invitation was extended to the Union veterans who had settled here since the war. Now even old foes could clasp hands in friendship and forgiveness.

Huntsville went all out in extending a welcome to her heroes. It almost seemed as if the citizens were striving to outdo each other in their expressions of love. "The very artistic manner in which many of our business blocks and private residences we re-decorated," noted the local newspaper, "deserves special mention and reflects great credit to our city. Thousands of yards of red, white and blue bunting were waving in the breeze. Flags of many designs, pictures of many of the prominent Generals of the Confederacy greeted the eye on every street. It could truly be stated of Huntsville that she was as pretty as a blushing bride, or a full blown rose."

Confederate and Federal flags seemed to be everywhere, and veterans of the blue and gray could be seen in animated conversation together on every corner or strolling arm and arm in the streets.

Huntsville had hardly seen such large numbers of people since the tragic war had ended and the rival armies disbanded. Families and spectators swelled the crowds sufficiently to almost double the city's population.

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Some 3,000 visitors were present from North Alabama, while out of state visitors provided perhaps another thousand. Madison County was well represented in the 4th Infantry with 14 members of the "Huntsville Guards" - Company F, Col. Egbert J. Jones' old company - and 12 members of Company I, the "North Alabamians," whose first Captain, Edward Dorr Tracy, rose to be a Brigadier General before falling in battle. Frank Gurley's Company C of the 4th Cavalry boasted 25 veterans present, while Huntsville's Company F, formed by Oliver B. Gaston in 1862 at the Big Spring, numbered 22. Missing was gallant Captain Gaston, long dead of disease in a distant Northern prison. Company K, raised in eastern Madison County, was represented by an impressive 41. Scores of veterans of other 4th Alabama companies from across the state added to the ranks, and some 500 Confederate veterans from other regiments were on hand. Union veterans numbered 23, while a handful of black ex-Confederates were also in evidence, the average Confederate unit in fact having been about five percent African-American.

The July 29 celebrations began with the veterans assembling at the old Calhoun house on the corner of Eustis and Green Streets. Then the Confederate regiments formed by companies for the first time in two and a half decades to march through the streets to the Courthouse square. The touching moment must have brought memories rushing back for many. The north side of the lovely old George Steele designed Courthouse "was filled with beautiful ladies," reported the local newspaper, "while the yard was filled with citizens and soldiers." Captain Milton Humes, a distinguished veteran who had settled in Huntsville after rising from private to command Company A of the 63rd Virginia Regiment, spoke first. He alluded to the soldiers' devo-

tion and their sufferings and privations - all for the love of country. "Welcome to this beautiful and quiet little city nestling under the shadow of yonder mountain," he said "Welcome to our homes and firesides. Welcome to the holy of holiest, the inner temple of the sanctuary of our hearts. Welcome to as generous, cordial, and bounteous hospitality as was ever offered by man to his fellow man." He was by no means exaggerating. Samuel H. Moore, a veteran of the "North Alabamians," spoke next. Moore, a state political figure, became "so much enthused that he knocked over the pitcher of water on the table and did not know it." Speaking for the Union veterans was A.R. Simmons, formerly of Company

D of the 45th Ohio Infantry. Introduced by Captain Humes, the transplanted Yankee noted that his first meeting with Confederates had earned him a bullet in the ankle "Besides that," he added, "you licked us like the devil!" Simmons' witty speech was frequently cheered by his one time enemies. The final speaker was Colonel Alfred A. Russell, former commander of the 4th Alabama Cavalry. Still an "unreconstructed Rebel," the Jackson County native had emigrated to Mexico after the war. Cheered wildly by his old regiment, none of whom had seen him since the surrender, Dr. Russell gave an address

continued on page 35

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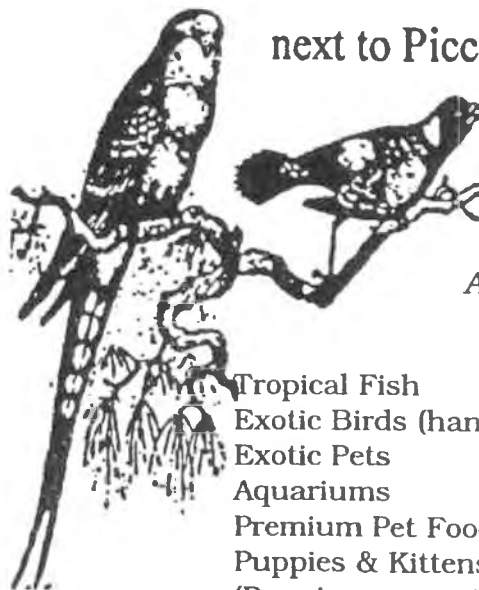
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To prevent a lamp from smoking, soak the wick in strong vinegar, and dry it well before your use it. It will then burn both sweet and pleasant, and give much satisfaction for the trifling trouble it took to prepare it.

When you have a fine piece of marble and wish to get the iron stains out, mix equal quantities of spirit of vitriol and lemon-juice, shake well, wet the spots and in a few minutes rub with soft linen til stains are gone.

If you have different size beds to make up, color code your sheets. Buy one color for all your queen size, another color for twin, etc.

Baking soda works great when cleaning your stainless steel sinks.

Often times your tea kettle will

have lime deposits on the bottom, after much use. To clear this out, heat vinegar in your kettle and let it stand all day til the next morning. Rinse thoroughly before using.

A little Borax added to your glass cleaner will make mirrors shine.

You can get that dirt out of your bathroom grout by rubbing with a pencil eraser.

When you wash your broom, dip it in hot soap suds, rinse and dry. Put a rubber band around the bristles to keep them straight.

Want your scouring powder to last twice as long? Put some scotch tape over half the holes, you'll be surprised how long it lasts

For better-tasting oatmeal cookies, toast the oatmeal first in the oven for about 8-10 minutes.

If you notice there is a lot of moisture in your bathroom linen closet, store a few pieces of charcoal to absorb the excess moisture.

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Johnny

continued from page 33

"replete with good advice, spiced with humor, and appreciated by the boys as well as the audience."

The speech making concluded, the veterans reformed their units and marched back to the Calhoun house, where soldiers and citizens were treated to an impressive barbecue, prepared by Captain Frank Gurley. "The way the boys ate shoat and lamb," commented a participant, "with bread and other condiments thrown in, looked like they would make up for the privations of the camp which they had suffered. For at least four hours after the barbecue they boys scattered about the town, and it was interesting to see them about the streets in knots of three or four together, relating their experiences of the war ... The fraternal feeling was so great that every man with a badge looked upon the other as a brother. The best of feelings prevailed, and the boys in blue mingled with our boys in friendly conversation."

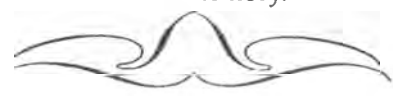
That evening the men of the 4th Regiments met again at the Courthouse. They voted to continue their reunions and the beginnings of Huntsville's United Confederate Veterans' camp were made. James R. Crowe of Sheffield, ex-Fourth Infantry, caused many an eye to moisten as he recalled wartime incidents in his closing speech.

The first reunion of the Alabama regiments had ended, but it was a day that would long be remembered. "Varied were the feelings that stirred each heart during this happy meeting," re-

called a veteran. "First each was pleased and happy as a comrade would grasp them by the hand whom they had perhaps nearly forgotten; then when marching, the feeling of sadness for all who had passed away during the battle, in the prison, and since the close of the war. With great reluctance the old soldiers parted to return to their homes, perhaps never to see each other again."

There would be many more reunions of the old soldiers of the North

and South, a few of them even held in Huntsville. And then one day the veterans would be no more. Johnny Reb and Billy Yank were gone. Yet their legacy is our great nation of today - a country they shaped with their courage and baptized with their blood. It is only just that we, their living descendants, continue to honor and cherish their memory.



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Computer Sales

Memories

continued from page 17

A Santa Claus

What do I think of when I think of Christmas? Of course there are all the family things that are so much a part of every Christmas I can remember.

But also, there was one Christmas when I was a very little child that the furniture store on the corner of Clinton and Jefferson had a huge mechanical Santa in the window. He would laugh and slap his knee and shout "Ho, ho, ho, Merry Christmas." Every time we went to town that season we would see lots of people, children and adults alike, standing around that window watching Santa and laughing with him.

I only remember that one year that he was there but even though it's been most of a lifetime since I saw it, I still think of it when I pass that corner every year.

Jane Mabry
Antiques Etc

God Provided

That fur jacket and heavy overcoat did not feel a bit bad as students from the North felt a tinge of nostalgia, plodding through the snow and

witnessing the boys and girls tossing snowballs to their hearts delight. Here and there snowmen (monuments to somebody's artistic talent) stared out of their coal black eyes, gloating over the chill landscape.

The loving voice of our Creator could be heard teaching us students a lesson as well as bringing to earth a blessing. God's word says, "For as the rain cometh down and the snow from Heaven watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater. ..." What a blessed assurance of temporal and spiritual food for tomorrow these wintry days promised us. In every flake of snow and drop of rain his tender care wrote upon earth's furrowed brow, "I love you my child."

Christmas, 1948, God's voice spoke to us students through nature and the voice of the business manager L.E. Ford, who announced at a general assembly of all students to "get your things ready to begin moving at 12:00 noon, today!"

An explosive round of cheering rang from Moran Hall Auditorium as the students, gladdened with the thought that they would now occupy better homes, hastened to begin the exciting trek to a new location.

Minneola Dixon
Archivist, Oakwood College

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- 1 tbl ground cinnamon
- 1/2 tbl ground cloves

Put your whole cloves in a container with the scented oil, cover tightly and shake well. Leave for 24 hours, shaking occasionally.

Mix orrisroot powder, ground cloves and cinnamon. Pierce the orange with the whole cloves in an attractive pattern. (You may need a knitting needle to make the holes in your orange). Coat the clove-studded orange thoroughly with the orrisroot mixture, place in a cool, dry area for several weeks. Check every other day to make sure pomander remains covered with the mixture, and turn it occasionally.

If, after the first few days, the orrisroot mixture on the pomander still looks damp, brush it off and coat the pomander with some of the drier mixture.



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From the desk of James Record



John McCormick is a Huntsville author, who wrote his first novel, entitled "The Right Kind of War," in September, 1992. Although ostensibly a work of fiction, the book is strongly autobiographical, Private Moe, the narrator, being the author's alter ego. McCormick was a member of the U.S. Marine Corps elite raiders, the vanguard of the campaign to liberate the Pacific from the Japanese.

Written in a sparse, straightforward style, the book is filled with sad stories of the men who didn't make it back, tales of exceptional courage and perseverance and many humorous anecdotes of the often outrageous things the men would do to entertain and make a little money on the side. Over

the years from the first landings in 1942 to 1945 and the last big battle on Okinawa, McCormick recalls that they had a lot of casualties. He writes that between the time they landed in the Pacific in January, 1943, and by the time they reached Japan in 1945, there were only 48 men left of the thousands who landed and every one of them had been wounded at least once.

He recalls that he was in an army hospital on Saipan ("I was wounded four times during the war") when the atomic bomb was dropped, recovering from a skin graft. At war's end he heard that the 4th Marines was to have the honor of being the first outfit to land

on Japanese soil. The doctor wouldn't let him be discharged so he asked for a 48-hour leave to visit the 4th and say good-bye. Though the doctor was not fooled by McCormick's stated intentions, he reluctantly agreed to the pass.

By the time the army caught up with him, he says, "I'd been in Japan 50 days. They gave me a quick court-martial and fined me a dollar."

In 1951 McCormick sold his first magazine article to the *Saturday Evening Post*. His works have also appeared in *American Legion Magazine*, *American Heritage*, *Field and Stream*, *Pathfinder*, and others. He co-authored and co-published *Huntsville, Alabama: Rocket City, U.S.A.* with James Record.

Since 1959, McCormick has been busy teaching classes in writing and oral presentation through a company he founded called Communication Skills. In the early 1980s, he stopped writing exclusively for the company.

Book club rights to his book have been sold to the *Book of the Month Club* and the *History Book Club*.



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HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

by Robert L. Sanders

I and another Marine (a Tennessean) left Quantico by train about noon on December 22, 1945. We had five days of leave and were heading home for Christmas. We had to go some thirty miles north to Alexandria, Virginia, to make connections with a train coming out of Washington. It was snowing and by the time we arrived in Alexandria, several inches were on the ground. Since our train was not due to leave for a couple of hours we strolled around the downtown area of Alexandria.

All the stores were decorated for Christmas, and there was a lot of Christmas music in the air. One of the popular songs that was of significance to us was "I'll be Home for Christmas." We really had the Christmas spirit by the time we got back over to the station to catch our train. All the trains coming out of Washington's Union Station (which was only about 10 miles north of Alexandria) were completely packed with servicemen on their way home for Christmas, some for the first time in three or four years.

The station master was in a small raised booth along side the tracks just outside the Alexandria station. Because of the snow, which had by that time accumulated to about a foot, and due to the overloaded conditions, all trains were late departing. Our train was due to depart Alexandria about 4 p.m., and we checked with the station master on every train that pulled into the station after that hour. Several trains came through, and about 6 p.m. the station master told us that the next train coming through was the train we were scheduled to depart on. The train was loaded, standing room only in the aisle

and between the rail cars. The conductor did not get off, and the train was only in the station for a couple of minutes before departing.

We got aboard, and in about five minutes the conductor came strolling down through the car to check our tickets. He looked at the tickets and said "Boys, you're on the wrong train. This is the Atlantic Coast Lines "Champion" heading for Florida. First stop is Richmond, Virginia, a hundred miles down the line. I'm going to stop the train at the next station, Quantico, and let you boys off."

You can imagine the sickly feeling we had. We told the conductor that we had been misinformed by the station master at Alexandria, and he wrote us out a free ticket from Quantico back to Alexandria. As we unloaded at Quantico we were faced with 400 or 500 Marines trying to get aboard a train to Alexandria.

When we finally got back to Alexandria about 9 p.m., we looked-up the station master, but he had been relieved from duty for the day.

The next train going South to Tennessee and Alabama left about midnight. You can bet your bottom dollar we checked with the conductor before boarding that train. I arrived home in Huntsville late the next day, December 23, 1945. Since it took two days going and coming I was only home three days; however, they were three wonderful days. Of course we had a big tree, went to Midnight Mass, and had Jack and Nettie Edmondson by after Mass for eggnog, fruit cake, etc.

Grandpa who had a stroke some two years earlier, which caused paralysis in his lower legs, was actually walking around with the help of a cane. Before he died in 1947, he would get to where he could walk across Triana Blvd. to Florence Slaughter's store.



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Grandpa was a tough, determined 83 year old man. He did not know the word "Quit."

As usual, there wasn't much under the tree for Christmas in 1945; however, one gift that I did get, I still have. A diary that June Hill gave me. Although I wasn't too faithful in making entries into this diary, it has proven to be a good source of information in writing this little short story of my life. One of the first entries indicates that I was back at Quantico on December 28, 1945, and that Alabama beat Southern California in the Rose Bowl, 34-14 on January 1, 1946.



Died in a Dentist Chair

Mrs. C.E. Jordan died very suddenly while in the care of her dentist. Death was attributed to heart failure. Eleven teeth had been extracted by Dr. W.S. Meyers, 735 Market Street. As a result of the unfortunate death, Mrs. W.C. Miller of Huntsville, a sister of Mrs. Jordan who was with her at the time, and Mrs. John Glenn, her mother, became hysterical when they learned the news, and were compelled to be placed under the care of their physicians.

from 1900 newspaper



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A Christmas Eve Letter

Editor's Note: This letter was written by A.R. Wiggs of the Madison Rifles of Huntsville, Ala. on Christmas eve of 1861.

Bowling Green, Ky.
Dec. 24, 1861.

Dear Jack: I would write you a letter, if I felt like it, but, as the spirit does not move me to write today, I will content myself with sending you an apology, merely to inform you that the 7th Alabama Regiment is now in its wanted position - facing the enemy. When I wrote you last, we were basking in the sunshine of peace away up in East Tennessee, where the clouds of war could only be seen in the dim distance. Now, we are immediately under the cloud, and a daily expectation of bursting upon us. And, when it does burst, there will be the storm, such as has never before been known on the American continent.

Fabulous hordes of Yankees are advancing upon us, "many ten thousands" of them having crossed Green River, some forty miles north of us. Our

army, numbering - no matter how many - enough, however, to repulse a hundred thousand - stands ready, waiting and impatient for the shock.

The two armies are so near to each other, that pickets meet almost every day and exchange shots. Our boys, especially the Texas Rangers, seem to take delight in picking off the Hessian outposts. As to our Regiment, we feel at home more being in a position to do our country some service before our time of service expires, and to shake off the disgrace of having been detailed to guard the bridges in East Tennessee, for you must know that before coming here our regiment was divided into detachments and sent to different points along the railroad. The detachment to which your correspondent was attached, was stationed at Loudon, at which place we gave ourselves up to luxury and ease, and dream like ambition. Being well quartered and believing that we were stationary for the winter, we donned our Sunday clothes, took board at the hotels, cultivated the acquaintance of the ladies, and began to feel very like civilians, nor cared for the hardship of our fellow soldiers at other posts. But in the midst of our ease and enjoyment, word came that we were wanted at Bowling Green: that the Northern vandals were pressing our people hard at this point. The news aroused us. We bade adieu to inglorious ease, put on the soldier again, and came forth as eager to conquer or die for our country; nor shall we proper rest until we do service worthy of Alabamians! The 7th stands high here, and is recognized by Gen. Hardee, the best drilled regiment in the army - a compliment indeed when we consider the great number of regiments in the field. We are ambitious to sustain our reputation for good drilling, and to make one for good fighting.

But I did not sit down to write a letter, but simply to let you and the friends of the army know that we are

still in the field, ready and anxious to do our duty. Letter writing in our camp is no easy business, or I might write more. That you may know the difficulties under which I labor at this time, I will as near as I can, draw the picture that surrounds me.

I will introduce you to our tent, and let you see for yourself. You see, the tent is circular in shape, and large



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HAPPY HOLIDAYS

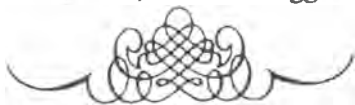
Elizabeth Reed,
Stephanie Reed, Bill Dingle

enough to contain twelve men, with a squeeze. In the centre is a hole in the ground, about eighteen inches square and one foot deep, and in it some smoldering sticks of wood, making a vigorous effort to burn, (for the day is chilly). From this excavation is a subterranean flue extending to the outside of the tent, designed but woefully failing to draw the smoke from the interior of the tent. An impromptu chimney, made of two upright flour barrels, one on top of the other just outside, fails to render the necessary assistance. The smoke persistently refuses to be drawn, preferring to lounge and eddy about within the tent.

Now, in this smoke, on twelve pallets of straw, lie or sit twelve men, radiating out from the centre like the spokes of a wheel, wiping their red eyes and endeavoring most strenuously to be jolly. One is singing, "Do they miss me at home," another "Dixie," a third is mending his pants, a fourth is telling to two or three listeners a marvelous yarn, a fifth is reading aloud the newspaper comments on the Mason and Slidell affair. The rest are discussing Christmas, which will be upon us tomorrow - while your correspondent, in the midst of this clamor and confusion, sits and writes upon his knee. Do you wonder at the dullness of this letter? Or would you wonder if I did write at all?

Wishing you and all my friends a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

I remain, &c. A.R. Wiggs



The only difference between men and boys are the price of their toys, especially at Christmas.

Holly Meadows



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Christmas Desserts

Some favorite recipes from a Pensacola reader, Arlene M. Drier

Cherry Delight

- 6 egg whites
- 1 tsp cream of tartar
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 2 cups crushed soda crackers
- 1 cup chopped nuts
- 1 16oz cherry pie filling
- 2 packages dream whip

Beat egg whites, cream of tartar, vanilla and sugar til stiff. Fold mixture into crackers and nuts, pour into a 9 x 13 pan. Bake at 350 for 25 minutes (don't overbake). Chill for 3 hours, prepare dream whip, spread on top of the cooled cake, chill for an hour. Pour 2 cups cherry pie flavored with a teaspoon of almond extract over the top, chill again for 2 hours.

To serve, cut into serving squares - you'll love this one!

Christmas Tart Cranberry Salad

- 1 package red jello
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1 pint hot water
- 2 cups raw cranberries
- 1 cup red apple
- 1/4 cup chopped nuts

Dissolve jello and sugar in hot

water. Put cranberries and apples in food grinder or processor to chop. When jello is slightly thickened add the cranberry/apple mixture with the nuts.

This makes a pretty mold and has a delicious fresh cranberry taste.

Chocolate Crinkles

- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 4 sq unsweetened chocolate
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 2 cups granulated sugar
- 4 eggs
- 2 tsp vanilla
- 3 cups flour
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 cup powdered sugar

Mix the oil, melted chocolate and granulated sugar. Blend in one egg at a time til mixed. Add vanilla, flour, baking powder and salt. Chill overnight.

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Drop teaspoonfuls of dough into the powdered sugar, roll in the sugar and shape into balls. Place about 2" apart on a greased baking sheet. Bake 10-12 minutes, don't underbake. Save in airtight containers.

Country Quiche

- 4 slices bacon
- 2 cups shredded cooked potatoes (frozen hash browns can be used)
- 1/4 cup chopped onion
- 1/2 cup chopped green pepper
- 4 eggs (I use 6)
- 1/4 cup milk
- 1 cup shredded sharp cheese

In a 10" or 12" skillet, cook the bacon til crisp, leave drippings in skillet, drain the bacon and crumble. Saute onions & pepper until soft, add potatoes and lightly brown. Blend eggs, milk, 1/2 tsp salt and a dash pepper,

pour over the potatoes. Top with cheese, sprinkle bacon bits over the top, cover and cook on low for 15 to 20 minutes, turn off heat and let stand for 5 minutes. Cut in wedges and serve as quiche

This makes a great winter brunch when served with fresh fruit and English muffins.



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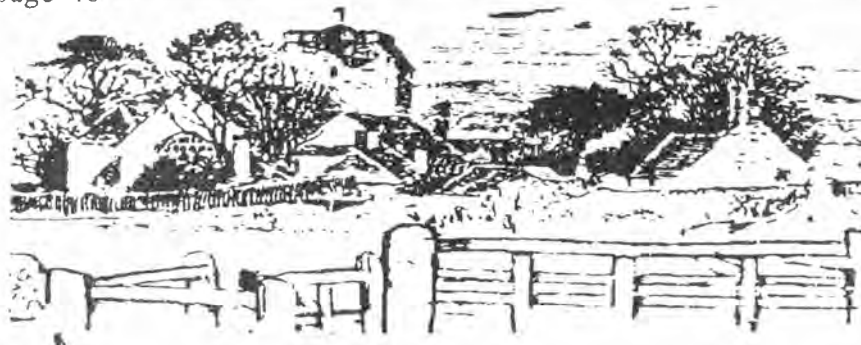


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Maysville, Alabama 1864

Maysville, Alabama., a sleepy little country village of perhaps 150 is the town that time has passed by.

It wasn't always this way though. Before the Civil War, the town was one of the most thriving communities in North Alabama.

At that time Maysville boasted of a population of nearly five hundred souls, four saloons, four doctors and a booming commercial district.

With the advent of the Civil War and invasion of the Northern Army came times that few people today can even begin to comprehend. The following letter was written shortly before Christmas at Maysville by Dr. Madden and gives a good idea of the hardships faced by its citizens during wartime. The holiday season was not on people's minds at this time, survival was.

Read it, and try to imagine what life was like. ...

Maysville, Ala. Dec. 16, 1864

Dear Sir,

Yours by Dr. Clopton is at hand. We are delighted to hear from you as we so seldom get any knowledge of you. The condition of things around us is somewhat changed, but we are in daily dread of a raid. The Yankees are at Paint Rock. Twenty odd were captured by General Meade yesterday and passed through last night. Roddy and others are after the balance of them and we will hear from them today or tomorrow.

Well, we are all used up as to fencing, etc., as I wrote you, and years will pass before the destruction will be repaired. Many vacant houses were torn

down to make tools, etc. Mr. Stewart's store, Bill Hall's old exchange, Masonic hall, all torn to pieces. Some parts remain, but ruined. Mr. Jones' store and Wortham's gutted. Your office remains as it was with the exception of the things - medicines, table, etc., all of which is gone except for a few bottles. I got most of your papers, among which is Mr. O'Neal's note for property - which I got from a Yankee doctor, for they occupied it as an office. It was then turned into a saddle makers shop, then into a pesthouse (for smallpox).

Since that time it has not been disturbed only the removing of the two front sash which are lost, as also all the Jack O'Neal residence, where not a trace is left to tell where it stood except one load of joist, which I paid a man \$5 to haul home and are now in



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the smokehouse. All the fencing about the place, except for the orchard and garden are gone, and they are simply patched up.

Nearly all the citizens are gone, negroes and whites, and the present conscript act will leave not more than eight or ten men in the place, such as Mr. Burns, Pitts, Wortham, etc.

There is scarcely a single negro here that was here when you left. Some few of the Daniel plantation negroes are here in great confusion since the retreat of the army and should any of your darkies come here they will find a change of population and a ruined town.

I will give you an idea of that retreat caused by a flank movement of General Hood. The soldiers amounted to about 8000 and baggage wagons beyond number. Refugees and contraband, astonishing in number slowly moved with the cavalcade. It began to pass here at 8 a.m. and continued until 4 p.m. So hasty was the move among the contraband that they emptied their featherbeds and cotton on the road until, even now, the track of the caravan could be followed by feathers and cotton.

The day they passed led to many astonishing sights but the distressing feature is that women gave birth to children during the flight and quite unnaturally left them to perish. One case occurred near this place. A yankee soldier picked up the infant, wrapped it up and tried to give it away as he passed along.

Several cases of the kind are reported to have taken place on the banks of the Paint Rock. At Stevenson, 'tis said that they are dying by multitudes since the cold weather set in. Other children were left behind, running about looking for their mothers, who had left them to their fate.

At or near Paint Rock many of them (refugees) were cut off by our calvary and for several days others

were passing in small numbers, deploring their lot, returning to their former homes.

As to our own condition, we have lived in constant dread surrounded and subjugated by our foes. We have lost by the yankees many things, but we have not been used like others who were plundered of all they had; in flour, meal and meat, bed clothes etc., but even now, though we have a respite, we dread a raid.

A few almost worthless horses, a little stock and a few pigs are still left. Our house was once ransacked from top to basement by a set of the worst men I have ever seen, but were dispersed by two surgeons who providently stepped in while they were depredated, and so we lost but little. I got twenty men to guard the town that night, had two at my house. But for them we would have been ruined, burned out, as was threatened.

As to supplies, we have always had bread and meat and even some of the luxuries. Thomas has sent us cof-

fee and sugar, cheese, bacon and salt. These have kept us together with what I could do with my own scanty money. My cow, or rather yours, died last winter. This put us on short rations. As to milk and butter we have done without until a few weeks ago. Mrs. Howard, who went to live at the college in Huntsville, loaned her (a cow) to us. She has now returned and will take her home again. Mrs. Kelley loaned me her cow and calf but the yankees took the calf before we got them in our possession and we left the cow, not bringing her home.

We raised nothing but what we got from the orchard and garden, which was plundered of all its fruit before they were ripe. It would amuse you and distress you to see how they stole from the orchard, and how obsequious we all were, fearing to say a word.

We are now hiding our scanty food, fearing we shall lose what little we have left, for so much depends

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on the success of the companies now doing battle at Paint Rock. Cannon was heard booming yesterday, but to what result we don't know.

Our home affairs go on very quietly. Mattie is not quite so taciturn as formerly, has become domesticated, can wash a little, iron, cook, milk, make fires, feed chickens, bring in wood and nurse the baby as though she was used to it. Her health monthly is inexpressibly better than formerly, although she fell into her old condition and was alarmingly sick until she heard of a certain herb whose vulgar or classical name I do not know.

I eat two meals a day and sleep about six hours in twenty-four, rather restless, and lay awake many hours these long nights. I chop all my own wood and work hard during the working season, have not preached for many months except for a funeral sermon for Mrs. Debois six or eight months ago.

I keep no horse, so I go nowhere from home; indeed I am afraid to go anywhere - robbers are spread over the country and yankees hitherto on every road.

The End



Letters to the Penny Pincher

Dear Penny,

Don't throw away those old bedspreads or sheets. Tear them into 1" to 2" strips and make a braided or crocheted rug for the bedroom, bathroom, kitchen or by the front or back door.

Fran Scimeca, Ronkonkoma, NY

Dear Penny

Instead of buying expensive window or all purpose cleaners, save your

last spray bottle. Put in a tablespoon of liquid dishwashing soap and fill the rest with clear ammonia. Works great!

Valerie Lindeman,
Smithtown, NY

Dear PP,

I have been converting my family from paper to cloth napkins and have found an inexpensive way to get them. I shop garage sales for old stained or torn tablecloths and I cut them down for napkins (from the good parts). I satin stitch the ends to keep them from fraying. This idea could also be applied to turning bath towels into kitchen towels or wash rags.

Penny,

Pantyhose are EXPENSIVE!

Here are a few money-saving hints:

When possible, wear thicker leggings, because they don't run as quickly. Especially under pants and longer skirts.

Buy more than one pair in the same style and color - you often times will save when buying in quantity.

When you get a run in one leg, cut it off at the top of your leg.

Then when you get a run in the same color hose, cut that leg off. Now you can wear them both at the same time with one good leg each.

Call L'Eggs Showcase of savings, at 800-522-1151 for great savings.

Jackie

Dear Penny,

If you love old furniture but don't want to pay the jacked up prices you find in antique stores, go to auctions. When you find an auction house you especially like, be sure and go during bad weather. The majority of the bidders will likely be home, and you may find some wonderful bargains.

Stefanie Callaway, frugal

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My Mother's Life -- Mary Ella Hatfield

by Ethel Virginia Davis Pruitt



Hurricane Valley is a beautiful valley in Madison County that lies below the blue-green mountains. Mountain Fork Creek winds its way through the woods in this valley. Just above the fork in the creek, my mother, Mary Ella Hatfield was born on the bright, sunny morning of May 26, 1884. She was a pretty little brown-eyed girl with raven black hair. She was the oldest of twelve children born to John H. Hatfield and Mary Ida Lamb Hatfield.

Her father was a descendant of the Hatfield clan of Devil Ance Hatfield of the feuding Hatfields and McCoys. He came to Madison County from Kentucky when he was a young lad. John had no money and only the clothes on his back when he arrived here. Rumor has it that he got into some kind of trouble in Kentucky and had to leave in the middle of the night and was unable to take anything with him. During his trek to Alabama, he would stop and work along the way for his food and bed. Sometimes he would work several weeks for people. It took him all summer to make the trip. He arrived in Madison County not knowing any-

one. John ended up in the Mountain Fork area where he got a job cutting wood. There, he lived on someone's farm helping with the chores. In the summer he plowed the fields for 40 cents per day.

One day he met a girl named Mary Ida Lamb. She lived in the Hurricane Valley. Her parents were Joe Sorrell

Lamb and Mary Smithey Lamb. They disagreed with her over her courtship to John Hatfield and forbid her to see him. By that time, John had matured into a tall, handsome, black-headed man. Ida's parents could not change her mind and one day they decided to elope and elope they did. I have heard her say her parents never really forgave her for it. Times were hard for them but her parents never helped them with anything.

My mother, Mary Ella, grew up into a happy little girl. She walked three miles to a one room school. Sometimes she would only have one good dress to wear. Her mother made her clothes for her. She would wash her good dress every other night and dry it by the fire. Then she would iron it with a smoothing iron she heated in the fireplace. Having one dress did not dampen Mary Ella's spirits. She would leave walking every morning with her lunch in a little syrup bucket made into a dinner pail. She would carry whatever she had. Sometimes it was sweet potatoes or molasses in a bottle that she poured over corn muffins. Mama said when

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dinner came the children would stay in the one-room school house on rainy or cold days and eat their lunch.

Sometimes they would have spelling matches and her teacher would say "I do believe little Ella, you are going to spell them all down again." She said she would try her best. Then when she did spell them all down, she would be so thrilled that she would go home that night and ask her mother to give her all the words in the old blue back speller.

When my mother was eleven years old the family moved to Huntsville. That ended her schooling. In those days, there were no child labor laws so along with her father, she went to work in a textile factory working for 25 cents per day. Her father made 75 cents per day.

So life went on with the Hatfield's. Grandma Hatfield kept boarders to help make ends meet. She was a good cook and could make a lot of the food she served the boarders.

When the Spanish American War started, they chose a place down behind the old textile mill as a camp for the soldiers. Of course, the young girls

were all thrilled over that as girls do about men in uniform. Mama was sixteen years old at the time. Her father would not allow her to date them. Many of her girl friends married the soldiers. While they were camping there once again tragedy struck the Hatfield family. Mama's little brother Warren was nine years old. He had been ill with the fever. He and a little friend wanted to go down by the mill to pick up steel shingles to play with. That was his first trip out of the house since his illness. Three soldiers had the old press wound up. They turned the lever loose and let it unwind. When they did this, the handle flew off. They tried to catch it but it ripped through their hands hitting Warren in the head, killing him.

My grandmother was standing in her front door watching him. It was a terrible time for them. Seven weeks from that day, another little brother named Alex died from spinal meningitis.

While the soldiers were camping behind the mill, a small pox epidemic broke out. There were no hospitals in Huntsville at that time. Many people died from it. Mama had the small pox

and several of her family did also. They all recovered. Mama said many people had so many sores they had to be turned in a sheet and were left badly scarred.

Mama was always willing to go sit up with the sick even as a young girl. She told us one night she and Jerry Jones and two other couples were sitting up all night with a lady that had died. About 1:00 a.m., the boys went out to get them a snack of cheese and crackers. The girls told them they would stand on the porch until they returned. They only had to go a short ways. While they were standing on the porch, the slats fell out of the bed that the dead woman was on. She said it scared them to death. When the fellows came back, they put the slats back in the bed. In those days, they did not take people to the undertaker. They kept them at home. When the casket was delivered, they put the corpse in it and kept them at home most of the time. The funeral was also held at home.

Shortly after this, a tall dashing young man about thirty years old came to the village. His name was Will Reed

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and he was a carpenter by trade. Will began to court her. Her papa approved of him and on October 26, 1901, she married him. Her life began to change. Mama's husband wanted to go to Helena, Arkansas to help build a village around a new plant they were building there. He decided to go first and send for her later. When he had been there a few weeks, he sent for her along with all the rest of the Hatfield clan. Mama said they went by train. She helped her mother with the little brothers and sister. The train went across the Mississippi River on a swinging bridge. They were all so excited about that. That was the first trip they had ever made away from Huntsville. After the family stayed a few months, her Pa decided to come back home. She stayed on with her husband Will. By that time, he was helping to build a hotel. In August, she decided to come home.

On July 16, 1906 they had their third child and first boy. They were both so happy to have a son. He was named James Calvin. I have heard her tell of him many times - how black his hair was and how handsome she thought he was. Mama said he was never sick but when he was eleven months old, they had gone to bed early because Papa had been plowing in the field all day. Mama said she had just dozed off to sleep when she heard the baby struggle. She told my father to get up quick and to light the lamp. The baby was real sick. Papa had to ride five miles after the doctor on horseback, then five miles back. That took quite some time. The doctor stayed the rest of the night but at the break of day he was gone. Both of them grieved so much for their little boy.

The next year they moved to Flintville, Tennessee. That is where I was born on March 14, 1909. The night I was born there came a bad storm. Papa had to go get an old lady that practiced being a midwife. There were no doctors at that time in Flintville. The

creek was up and their horses had to swim the creek. Mama was so worried about them. She was at home with two little girls and was about to give birth to me. My name is Ethel Virginia. My grandmother named me. She named me after two of her old school mates.

In 1910, Papa decided to go back to Plevna so back we all moved. They loved the mountain and the spring that ran beside it. They wanted to go back and be near the cemetery and near his people. His father and grandfather lived and died in this little community and they were always happy there.

The older children were expected to help around the house and help in the cotton and corn fields. Mama always enjoyed working. She was just delighted with everything she did. She made all of our clothes from the underwear to the top clothes. She quilted quilts and raised ducks and geese. She used the feathers to make pillows and feather beds. Mama would save all of the scraps from making our clothes and use these to piece quilt tops. She would then make them into quilts using her quilting frames. She thought if people did not have plenty of cover to keep them warm they were just too lazy to make them. She made lye soap from an ash hopper and from scrap meat she trimmed from the pork meat we raised. Hog killing was a fine day at our house. Mama hated to hear the men killing the hogs. They knocked them in the head with an ax in those days. She would get in the house and close the door and feel sad until the slaughtering was over, then by the time they were scaled, scraped, and cleaned, she would be ready to help take the fat off for lard. We would all have a good time grinding up sausage. It would take about one week to get everything worked up. She never complained of having too much to do. I never heard her complain about her life. She loved to do things for other people.

When spring would come, she

could hardly wait to plant the garden. Of course, Papa was always right there helping her, but she seemed to be the leader. She canned fruits and vegetables. She cut and dried apples and peaches. Mama would send Alta and myself to put them on a cloth and lay them on top of the barn to dry. Every morning we would spread them out and take them in every afternoon. We would always slip and eat a few of them as kids will do.

Mama would make a barrel of

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kraut every year. The kids always delighted in that. On that day, we ate all the cabbage stalks we wanted. We helped her carry water from the spring for use at home and my father built a wash bench down by the spring branch under shade trees so we would not have to carry the water so far.

Mama and Papa would take us all to the cotton and corn fields. She would work gaily with us all day. They raised watermelon and cantaloupe. She said if you did not raise it you would not have all the good things to eat. She would see to it that we had plenty of the good things to eat.

When the summer passed and the harvest came, Mama and Papa were just delighted that it was time to harvest the crop. That meant some money for them and the family. When they sold their cotton, they would catch the train and come to town shopping for us.

We had a little depot two miles from our house. The train came to town in the morning and back about 7:00 at night. I often wondered how they made the trip from the depot. They would have their hands full of clothes for all the family and after shopping all day in town they had to be tired. The depot in town was one and a half miles from the main part of town. The kids would have all the chores done and when Ruler (our dog) spied them coming, he would bark. We would go to meet them so proud of everything they had bought for us. They would bring us bananas and hoop cheese and crackers and believe me that was a real treat for us. We would light up the old oil lamps and gather around the kitchen table and have a good time. Mama would be telling us all about the experiences of the day. Then after supper, we would all try on our new clothes they had bought for us. We never fussed or grumbled about anything they brought us. We loved everything.

Fall of the year brought school

time. Mama wanted us to go to school. She made us all three or four dresses each to have for school. We would get up at 4:30 each morning, milk the cows, feed the stock, and then Mama and Willie would cook breakfast. In the winter the ham and sausage would smell so good we could hardly wait for breakfast. As long as Mama lived, she liked her breakfast early in the morning. Then she would pack our lunch in our large split basket and off to school we would go walking - two miles each day.

Around the table at supper was a good time for all of us. After supper the girls would wash the dishes. Then each of us would do our homework by the oil lamps. To this day, I still love the smell of oil lamps. Papa would help the beginners and Mama helped the older children. We would pop popcorn and eat peanuts they had raised in the fields. Mama would tell us stories of her early life. She told about how they would light the old gas lights on the street corners each night and put them out in the morning. She would tell us about the Spanish-American War soldiers camping below their house and the smallpox epidemic they started in Huntsville. She liked to read and would read everything she could find. She would then tell us about it.

Mama was our only outside in-

formation. She was kind and sweet to us but believe me she would give a switching if we disobeyed. One of her old sayings was if you spare the rod you will spoil the child. She gained and kept our respect so she did not have to switch very often. We thought what Mama and Papa said was fact. Both parents would talk to us by the fire-side at night and tell us right from wrong. Never to lie, never to take anything that did not belong to us, treat people good and that bad company would lead you off. I have often seen that happen and I always think of what they taught us. I am sure with every one of us that thought has lingered throughout our lives.

Both Mama and Papa are gone now. Papa died in 1927 when he was 56 years old. Mama went on to remarry many years later when all the children were grown. My youngest sister Evelyn was the only one at home. Mama's third husband was named John Talley. We called him Mr. Talley. He died in 1954 and made Mama a widow for the third time. She died from a stroke on December 24, 1963. Mama was 79 years old. Mama and Papa are both buried side by side in Maple Hill Cemetery.

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News of the Absurd

Doctors who were operating on an elderly lady for what they thought was an ovarian cyst found instead a cyst surrounding a diamond that measured 1/8 inch across. The physicians guessed that it had dropped into her reproductive tract when she had had a baby by cesarean section fifty years earlier.

A man was arrested and accused of a wave of hair-snipping crimes in South Dakota, Wyoming and New Jersey. Supposedly, he would sit behind women in movie theaters, and at especially suspenseful moments in the film would snip off braids or pony tails. He would then dash off before anyone could spot him. Police found four shoe boxes full of snipped hair in a search of his home.

A sixty-five year old Illinois man was sentenced to thirty days in jail for gardening naked in his back yard. Mr. Norton, convicted six other times for the same offense, said it was his constitutional right to garden in the nude.

A middle-aged lady in Nashville, Tennessee called the police to report that her shoes were on fire. When the

policeman beat out the blaze with his stick, the woman explained that she had wanted a hot barbecue sandwich and decided to use her shoes to heat it up. She was charged with unlawful burning within city limits.

Ten people were hospitalized after they ordered a drink called a "Wa-

termelon Spot" at a nightclub in Kansas. Instead of liquor, they were served some type of dishwashing liquid from a container similar to the one in which some watermelon schnapps was kept. It had been mistakenly placed where the liquor was stored.

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History of the Whisenant Family

by Richard Smallwood

If you grew up on Brindley Mountain in Marshall and Morgan counties, Alabama, the name "Whisenant," or one of its variants, was probably very familiar to you.

The earliest record of this name, in the United States, is in Pennsylvania, appearing in the 1600s, with a family arriving from the Palatine region of Germany. The name later appears around Lincoln County, North Carolina, in very large numbers, in the late 1700s and early 1800s. In Alabama, this family name first appears in St. Clair County in the early 1820s. It also appears in Jefferson County, in the 1830s.

In 1882, there are four, non-related, Whisenant families living close to Morgan City in Morgan County and Oleander in Marshall County.

The first is the family of York Whisenant. He was a black, who first appears in Marshall County in the 1870 census. He was probably, from Etowah County.

Secondly, there is the family of William A. Whisenant, son of a Martha Whisenant. He appears to have moved from Dekalb County into Marshall County between 1850 and 1860. This family's last name may have originally been "Whisenhunt."

Thirdly, there is the family of Hamilton David Whisenant. In 1882, he and his wife, Mary Jane Carroll, moved to Morgan County, Alabama from Floyd County, Georgia. He was born in 1840 in Hall County, Georgia. In 1862, he enlisted, as a private, in Company F of the 22nd Battalion of Georgia Heavy Artillery. Before the Battle of Atlanta, he was thrown from a gun carriage and "ruptured" himself. This injury prevented him from returning to his unit, but he reenlisted in a Georgia Infantry Regiment and performed sentry duty until the end of the war. The 1900 Marshall County, Alabama census shows his children as Wesley, Martin P., Joseph W., Dock W., David S., Annie M., and Cora. Also

living nearby was his brother, James J. Whisenant, with his wife, Lucinda, and his children Linda, James D., & Belle. A Marion Whisenant, with his wife, Bella, and his children Stella and Viola, appear to also be related to this family.

Lastly, there is the family of George Erwin Whisenant, his mother, two brothers and two sisters. They appear in the 1850 Marshall County census. They are believed to come from St. Clair County, Alabama. The 1860 Census, shows George in the Oleander area with his wife, Nancy King, and his sons, Henry and Lawson. In April 1862, he enlisted, as a private, in Company A of the 49th Alabama Infantry Regiment. In June 1864, he was captured at Kennesaw Mountain, Georgia. He was first imprisoned in Chattanooga, Tennessee where he contracted measles. He was then transferred to the Federal prison hospital in Louisville, Kentucky. In August 1864, he was healthy enough to take the Oath of Allegiance to the United States and be released. He was transported north of the Ohio River and released to find his way back to Alabama as best he could.

In October, 1865, he arrived back in Marshall County to find that his wife

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had been living, in his home, with another man. He also found that when his wife had heard that he was back in the county, she fled to Shelbyville, Tennessee. She fled with her lover and George's two children.

His divorce and child custody suit were uncontested and ruled in his favor. He had to pay all costs, and he had to go, in person, to Shelbyville to bring his children back. During the court proceedings, his attorney testified that the divorce's legal notices, had been published in the "Huntsville Independent" newspaper. He testified that these notices were published for three consecutive weeks, but no such notices can be found.

In June, 1866, George married a widow, Lucy Harris. Unfortunately, George's divorce was not finalized until June, 1867, so the marriage was not legal. In October, 1867, after the birth of his daughter Dilith, George again exchanged marriage vows with Lucy Harris. In 1869, another child, Lorenzo D., was born and Lucy died. In June 1869, George married another widow, Mahuldia Allen Metcalf. He had six children by Mahuldia. They were George Preston, Calvin, Liddie (a daughter), Asa (a son), Ara (a daughter) and Frank.

In 1887, George sued a neighbor, Bathsbeba Gordon, for buying his late, senile and aged mother's land under false pretenses and for less than its actual value. Initially, Bathsbeba won the suit. It was appealed to the Alabama Supreme Court, where, in 1892, the Court ruled in George's favor and the sale was declared null and void.

In 1890, George bought land, a saw mill, and a cotton gin in Morgan County. This was a successful investment, as he lived well in his final years. He died in 1900. His wife, Mahuldia, died in 1910. They are both buried at Mt. Tabor Baptist Church, Marshall County.

George Erwin's sister, Elizabeth, married a Youngblood and moved to Jackson County. His other sister, Lorinda, stayed in the area and, apparently, had an illegitimate son named John Whisenant. In these cases, custom dictates that the child use his mother's maiden name.

George's two brothers, John P. and Alvin, apparently, did not have children. Alvin married in Marshall County, Alabama, but between 1860 and 1862, both brothers moved to Arkansas. In May 1862, they both enlisted in Company H of the 25th Arkansas Infantry. By June, 1862, both had died from disease.

The way the name "Whisenant" is spelled is no indication that two Whisenants are related. There are two major spelling groups for the name: Whisenhunt and Whisenant. The name has over 60 documented spelling variations, including: Wisenant, Whisnant, Whissenant, and Whisonant. Pronunciation is the best indicator of family relationships. If the name is pronounced "Whiss (like Swiss)-zen-gnat (like the insect)" then George E. is probably the ancestor or the family may come from Etowah, Jefferson or St. Clair counties, Alabama. If it is pronounced like "Whiz-and-ant" then H. David is the ancestor or the family probably came from Georgia. Lastly, if it is pronounced "Whizzen-nut" then the family probably has direct roots in North Carolina.

Whisenant descendants live throughout the Huntsville area and have diverse backgrounds. They include: Frank Whisenant, who started television station Channel 48 in Decatur, Alabama; Glenn G. Whisenant, formerly of White - Mayflower Transfer Co.; Troy Whisenant and Roy Howard Whisenant who both worked for the U.S. Army Missile Command; and Douglas Whisenant who works for Intergraph Corporation. Female descendants include; Susan

Whisenant Brown., secretary for Southside Baptist Church; Rosemary Whisenant Jones, manager of Argosy Gifts; Glenda Whisenant Drinkard, later Smallwood, a secretary with the State of Alabama; and Shirley Whisenant Simchik, a former librarian and teacher in the Huntsville City School system.

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You are first born - The oldest child tends to be very aware of responsibilities, is very organized and, at the same time, cautious. Perfectionists tend to be in this group, always pushing themselves and rarely meeting their high self-expectations. Often persons in this group are bossy or tend to be bosses in business.

You are next to the oldest, within three years - You are very competitive, especially if the gap be-

tween you and the first born is small. People in this group try harder than any other age group.

They tend to take more risks, and many entrepreneurs are next to the oldest in their families.

You are the middle child - You instigate constantly, and your favorite line is, "It's not FAIR!" Excellent mediators fall in this category, because they can see both sides easily. They also make good debaters, and often play the Devil's Advocate. Philosophers, counselors, politicians and ministers often are middle children.

You are the baby of the family - If you're in this group, chances are good that you're one of the best con artists in the family. You easily understand people, and are usually very perceptive. Some of the best sales people come out of this group, as they understand what drives people and what people want.

You are an only child - If you are in this group you are very creative and have a vast imagination. You are used to creating your own world with imagery and no one ever criticized it. Your friendships are intense and loyal, but with few people. One example of this age group was Franklin D. Roosevelt, who was both creative and imaginative but had few close friends.



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THE DOCTOR SEZ

by Dr. Annelie Owens

Tuberculosis, called simply TB, and sometimes referred to as Consumption, has been around for a long time. Written documentation about the disease dates back to Hippocrates in ancient Greece. The ancients not only knew about it, they thought that they knew what caused it and how it could be cured.

TB is a disease that develops slowly and can lead to chronic ill health and death, if it is not treated. It is caused by a specific bacterium and it is usually transmitted from one person to another through the air. The disease is spread when people who have the germ in their lungs or throat cough, sneeze, or speak, and people who breathe these germs can become infected. Usually though, infection occurs with very close, day-to-day contact. Cattle can also get this disease, and the germ can be carried in the cow's milk.

This is highly unlikely in the United States, but very possible in many other parts of the world. The early stage of TB usually lasts for several months, and may cause no symptoms, or a flu-like illness. You may never even know that you have had the disease. During this period the body's natural defenses resist the disease. Sometimes natural resistance cannot stop the progress of the disease and

the infection continues on doing further damage to the body. In this phase, you are likely to develop a fever, night sweats, lose weight, feel tired without obvious cause, and suffer other symptoms, depending on which parts of your body are affected.

The most common type is TB of the lungs. This causes a dry cough that eventually produces blood and pus-filled phlegm, or sputum. Sometimes shortness of breath and chest pain also develop. Compared to other parts of the world, TB is a rare disease with a low mortality rate in the United States. From the 1880s to the 1950s America waged a furious war against TB that just about wiped it out and until recently was almost forgotten. In the 1980s, a TB death was almost unheard of. Now, after decades of decline, TB is again becoming a serious health problem in the United States. The number of new cases are on the rise. What is most alarming now is that the drug-resistant strains of TB may supplant susceptible strains as the most common form of TB. These drug-resistant strains are causing havoc among health-care workers who not only find it difficult to treat the patient, but who

themselves are becoming infected.

In this country, the disease usual occurs among elderly people, impoverished individuals living in unsanitary housing, and malnourished persons such as alcoholics. Also, a rise in its incidence in some parts of the country is attributable to the influx of immigrants from areas such as Southeast Asia, Mexico, and Central and South America, where TB is common. It is estimated that 10 to 15 million Americans carry the Tuberculosis-causing organisms in the dormant state - and could come down with the disease. Worldwide there are some 107 million carriers of TB, with 8 million new active cases and 3 million deaths annually. Special drugs and antibiotics will cure TB. Several are used in combination, and they must be taken continuously for several months. After successful treatment, the patient should have periodic checkups for at least two years to ensure the disease does not flare up again. Full rest is essential for full recovery from this disease.

* In addition, those with immune deficiencies such as AIDS, are susceptible to TB.

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Burning Rage

by Charles Rice

War seems to bring out both the best and the worst in people, and the longer a war lasts the more exaggerated the differences become. Yet, few soldiers in modern conflicts have stooped so low as to make war on

women and children. It happened in our Civil War, however, and right here in Madison County.

It was in January, 1865, and the horrendous War Between the States at last seemed to be drawing to a close.

In the east, Lee's once-invincible army, reduced by death, disease and desertion, stoically awaited the human wave assaults Grant would surely launch when the warm spring weather returned. In the Confederate heartland west of the Appalachians, the situation was even more desperate. Gen. John Bell Hood had led the Confederate Army of Tennessee to disaster at the bloody battles of Franklin and Nashville, and there was little left to oppose Sherman's Hun-like crusade of destruction through Georgia and the Carolinas. The Union soldiers could almost sense their impending victory, and to some of them, continued Southern resistance seemed almost intolerable.

The Union Army had returned to Huntsville on Dec. 21, 1864, ending three brief weeks of freedom following their flight before Hood's Army. The vengeful Yankees quickly made up for their humiliation by ransacking homes, looting stores and arresting those who had cheered their departure. Though the townspeople suffered, it was their country cousins who felt the full fury of the Union army. Safely out of sight of their officers, the Northern soldiers ran riot. "The country people are suffering dreadfully from the depredations of the enemy," noted Huntsville's Mary Jane Chadick in her diary, "and in many instances, not only all their stock, provisions and means of subsistence have been taken from them, but their clothing and bedding have been taken and the alleged excuse for this is that they harbor bushwhackers. While those in command know very well that [Col.] Mead and [Lt. Col.] Johnston's men are regular cavalry, yet they persist in calling them bushwhackers and, if any of them are unfortunate enough to fall into their hands, they are treated as such!"

Eventually, the Union general commanding in Huntsville would be forced to issue orders forbidding his

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men to "forage" outside the city.

Mrs. Chadick had correctly identified the Yankee's sore spot: the so-called bushwhackers. While the South was unable to stop the Union advances in North Alabama and elsewhere, the men in blue were equally unable to eliminate Col. Lemuel G. Mead and his bold band of Confederate partisan rangers. Indeed, a perplexed Union colonel at nearby Fayetteville, Tenn., described Mead's men as "the most reckless and daring in the country." As if to thumb their noses at the enemy, Col. Mead and his second in command, Rev. Milus E. Johnston, had ended the year 1864 by gobbling up the entire Company G of the 13th Wisconsin Infantry. Mead, Johnston, and 40 of their men had trudged over a snow covered mountain to surprise the Wisconsin boys, literally asleep in their quarters at Paint Rock Bridge. The victorious Rebels then torched the strategic railroad bridge, rolled a cannon into the river and slipped away to safety with their prisoners.

On Jan. 11, 1865, an additional regiment marched to Huntsville to reinforce the garrison. It was the veteran 101st Ohio Infantry, bloodied in many of the war's major battles. The brutal Sherman, and commander, Lt. Col. Bedan B. McDanald, had equally firm feelings on how to deal with Rebels. He would soon have the opportunity to put them into practice in Madison County.

The 101st Ohio had been in Huntsville less than a week when they made the bushwhackers' acquaintance. A forage party of four men with one wagon had been sent out to seize whatever food they could find for the use of their regiment. Lieutenant Elbert J. Squire accompanied the men to keep them under control. Lt. Squire realized that sending so small a party was asking for trouble. Nevertheless, his superiors refused him more men. Sure

enough, on the morning of January 17, Squire and his foragers were captured in Kennamer's Cove by a body of men in civilian clothes who claimed to be part of the 4th Alabama Cavalry. Just who Squire's captors actually were is uncertain. Since Mead and Johnston were then near the Tennessee border and in fact captured a forage train of nine wagons near Hazel Green the following day, it could hardly have been them. Regardless of who made the attack, Mead's men got the blame.

An irate Colonel McDanald quickly readied his regiment to punish those who dared to attack the 101st Ohio. Issuing his men three days rations and filling their cartridge boxes, McDanald led them south down Big Cove road. It was 7 o'clock p.m. by

the time the regiment started, but McDanald was unconcerned. There would be plenty of time for sleep once these haughty Rebels had been taught a lesson. On the morning of the 18th, McDanald was joined by Lieutenant David C. White and 25 men of the 15th Pennsylvania Cavalry. Accompanying White was the notorious Benjamin R. Harris, an Alabama turncoat who wore a captain's uniform and scouted for the Yankees, but had no official standing in anyone's army. Neither McDanald nor White questioned this villain's dubious credentials. They also were unaware he had reputation as a cold-blooded murderer. Yet "Captain" Ben would show his true colors soon enough.

McDanald reported he crossed

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his men over Flint River on a raft of logs and in a single canoe. This time consuming task completed, he "scoured the country lying between Flint River and Paint Rock River from the Tennessee River as far north as Cedar Mountain." McDanald did managed to capture four of Mead's men-- Adam Cobb, Theophilus Cobb, George W. Hunt, and Harrison D. Herrin. He also arrested two civilians (John Cobb and William P. Hornbuckle) for the "crime" of feeding the bushwhackers. That these "bushwhackers" were in fact Confederate soldiers does not seem to have troubled McDanald in the least.

While the arrests of Cobb and Hornbuckle might be rationalized, McDanald's further conduct is another matter. "I burned some fifty tenements on my line of march," he boasted, "that were occupied by bushwhackers and their supporters, leaving their families in a houseless, helpless condition, with orders to leave that country by going north or moving south of the Tennessee River." All this in the middle of winter! "The community at large through the country between Flint and Paint Rock rivers uphold and support these bands of guerrillas," rationalized McDanald, "by feeding them and communicating with them, informing them of any Federal force that is in the vicinity." McDanald's logic was simple: if you can't catch your enemy, take it out on his family.

Lieutenant White, the Pennsylvania cavalryman, had seen his share of combat, but even he was disgusted with this mode of warfare. The Alabama scout, Ben Harris, would arrogantly identify the houses to be destroyed. Reluctantly, the horse soldiers would then set them on fire. "The pleadings of innocent women and children that their homes should be saved were too much for the Lieutenant," a fellow officer recalled, "and he made a strong protest that this was not warfare but

simple and wanton cruelty." However, "Captain" Harris insisted the lowly Lieutenant obey his orders. Finally, at one house, they "were met in the yard by a woman who pitifully begged they would not destroy her home, as her daughter was very sick in it and could not be moved." Just then the woman spotted Harris and asked, "What's he doing with the Yankees?" White asked if she knew him, and she replied she "had known him for years, that he owned property in the valley and had never been in the army." With that, White refused to take any more orders from the "Captain" and reported the matter to Colonel McDanald. After that, the senseless burnings seem to have stopped.

While Ben Harris might bear the blame for the arson, Colonel McDanald was solely responsible for an act that

almost brought warfare to the streets of Huntsville itself. This was the arrest and imprisonment of an inoffensive young wife and mother. Her name was Mary Elizabeth Johnston.

Among the houses burned near New Hope (then called Vienna) was that of a Methodist minister named John Hicks Hamer. Rev. Hamer peacefully went about his business of trying to support his family as best he could during the troublesome times. Unfortunately for Hamer, however, his sons were all in the Confederate army. Furthermore, his daughter, Mary Elizabeth, was the wife of Milus E. "Bushwhacker" Johnston. That was reason enough for the Yankees, and the Hamer and Johnston families had already been burned out twice. The first time, the bluecoats destroyed Rev. Hamer's two-story frame house, forcing the



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floor. The Northern hero promptly struck her over the head with the burning broom, scorching her hair and burning numerous holes in her dress. The plucky Mrs. Johnston seized a poker from the fireplace and flew at her enemy, driving him from the house. Nevertheless, the Yankees burned both buildings before they left, forcing the families to seek shelter as best they could.

"Does it not seem," asked Milus Johnston, "that any set of men, who were right in either heart or head, would have called off their troops by this time, and let the family have a little rest?" Perhaps they might have, had not been for the hated Tory, Ben Harris. One can easily picture the gloating Harris pointing out the Hamer home and ordering the Pennsylvanians to destroy it. Oddly enough, it had been Rev. Hamer who had married Harris to his wife. No one knows what had made Harris so bitter towards his old friends and neighbors. Probably it was just plain meanness. "The pleadings and prayers of the women availed nothing," wrote Milus Johnston long afterwards, "for the house was set on fire. By an extra effort of the women, while the house was burning, they succeeded in getting out a part of their furniture, but had to stand with tears in their eyes and see the balance consumed under the last roof they had to shelter their heads. But to cap the climax, the colonel proceeded to arrest Mrs. Johnston, tearing her infant from her breast and forcing her to leave it at home, which was then nothing more than the woods. He then placed her in the saddle and made her ride horseback twenty-five miles through the roughest weather of that winter."

It was late afternoon when McDonald and his men started back for Huntsville, carrying their female captive with them. Overtaken by darkness, they had to spend the night in the Big

Cove. Lt. Col. Johnston, "having been on a long scout, was returning, and spent the latter part of the night in the upper part of the valley, perhaps within six miles of his wife," he recalled in 1902. "Had the husband known the condition of his wife, it is probable the Big Cove would have witnessed a scene entirely out of the regular channel of nature," wrote Johnston with barely concealed emotion. "But he did not know." Johnston's deep devotion to his wife is evident in his writing more than thirty-five years after the event. "It, perhaps, would have been hard to find a more perfect model of woman kind," he remembered. "About the medium height; weighing one-hundred thirty-five pounds, she stood erect, with her head always thrown aloft; large dark brown eyes with heavy lashes; her hair almost as black as a raven; while her rosy cheeks showed the picture of health."

"On reaching Huntsville," wrote Johnston, "it was said that the whole garrison was disgusted at the conduct of the officer. The prisoner was placed in the Huntsville Hotel to board at three dollars a day, and at the personal expense of the miscreant that arrested her.

But what do you suppose was the feeling of the husband of the prisoner, when he thought how tenderly she had been reared; and when in her young womanhood she had left her mother, home, and friends and cast her lot in with him. She who had soothed his pillow in sickness, who had stood by him in health and encouraged him in all his duties and trials."

"We had trials before this, and had often been tempted severely," said Johnston, the fighting Methodist minister, "but we had never been introduced to anything like this. And if there ever was a time when the prince of darkness called a council of war, commissioned his officers, and armed his soldiers, at the same time throwing wide the gates of the lower regions, and bidding them charge a poor, weak human being, it was then. ... The temptation was to cherish vengeance against everything that wore the blue, and to prevent it settling in the heart was accomplished by appealing in agonizing prayer unto God ... Thank God, we gained the victory at last. But the conflict was awful."

"Bushwhacker" Johnston hast-

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ily made plans to lead his men into the Union-held city and forcibly free the unfortunate captive. "We knew all about the situation in Huntsville, and also of the garrison stationed there. We knew every street, nook and corner. We even knew the number of the room occupied by the prisoner. In short, we had 'all the ropes' in our hands. And we had determined to go in by night, and slip those pickets, enter the prisoner's room and take her out, or die in the attempt."

Johnston was fully prepared to do exactly what he said. Fortunately, the suicidal mission did not become necessary, and Mary Johnston was soon freed for several reasons. First, Captain Robert Welch, one of Johnston's company commanders, was then conveying thirty-five Union prisoners to the Confederate authorities. Learning of Mrs. Johnston's arrest, the outraged Captain Welch sent a note to the Union commander threatening to hang his prisoners unless Mrs. Johnston was released immediately. More significant, however, was the revulsion most of the Union soldiers felt for Col. McDanald's conduct. John W. Horner, Lieutenant Colonel of the 18th Michigan Infantry, was provost marshal at the time. Horner was a martinet who made many enemies among both the Southern civilians and his own army. Nevertheless, even he was disgusted by the arrest of the unoffending woman. Conveniently, Doctor Thomas A. Wright of Paint Rock happened to be in the city at that time. Horner told him, "Doctor, if I knew how to get Mrs. Johnston home, I would set her at liberty." Doctor Wright, an old friend of the Hamers, promptly offered to see her home. The provost marshal wrote out passes for both doctor and mother, and young woman was soon on her way back to her four-month old daughter and her other children. Yet Colonel McDanald was still not out of the picture. With

unbelievable arrogance, the Ohio officer halted the pair on the street, tore up their passes, and told them, "Mrs. Johnston is not a prisoner of the government, but she is my prisoner." Doctor Wright returned to the provost marshal's office and informed Col. Horner. Seeing his authority threatened, it was the proud Horner's turn to become angry. Writing out new passes, he told the doctor, "Now, you go on; and if that fellow interrupts you again report him to me, and I will teach him a lesson he will not soon forget." With that Doctor Wright and Mrs. Johnston left the city and returned home without further incident.

As an undoubtedly relieved "Bushwhacker" Johnston admitted, "This was a happier ending of the matter than at one time could be expected." Mary Johnston returned to her husband and children, and within a few months the war was over. Rev. Johnston immediately returned to the pulpit and spent the rest of his long life preaching the gospel of the gentle Jesus. Yet even this man of the church could never completely forgive those who had made war on his family.

Johnston wrote when he was a 79-year-old widower, "but if he knows in his own heart it is as free from malice, prejudice, and revenge as that of the common men. But if God be willing, he would rather not meet that colonel and know him, until we meet in the presence of that All-Wise Judge, who will administer justice between angels, men and devils. We wish the reader to understand us distinctly." It is not hard to grasp his meaning.

The Sword of "Bushwhacker"
Johnston by Lt. Col. Milus E. Johnston, a 240-page hardcover limited edition, can be purchased for \$19.95 plus \$2.00 postage from Flint River Press, P. O. Box 49, New Hope, AL 35760. It is also available in Huntsville at Shaver's Book Store on Whitesburg Drive. Buy one for Christmas!



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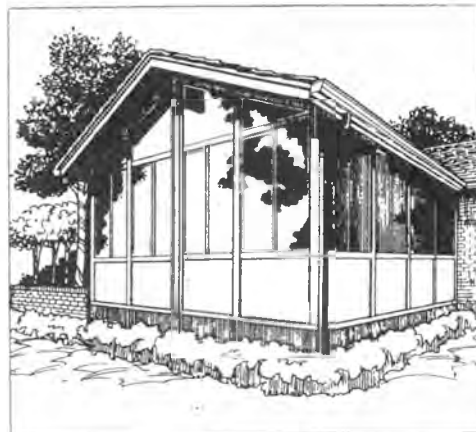
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