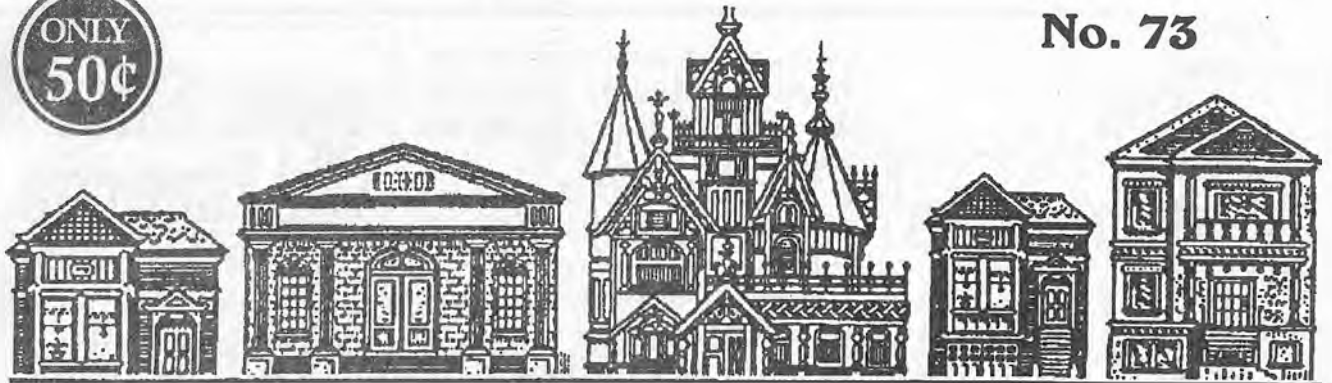


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# Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

## The Remnants of War

Though the war had been over for more than a half century, its terrible secrets returned to haunt Louise.

What does a person do when her best friend returns from the grave to destroy everything she had believed in?



*Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!*

# The Remnants of War

Louise stared at the strange letter. She could tell it was probably a woman's handwriting but it was written in a foreign language. "Probably German," she thought.

Although her first inclination was to dismiss the letter, she still had an uneasy feeling. She had heard too many stories about straying husbands and German Frauliens. "I trust Bill," she kept telling herself, "but what if ...?"

That evening, after dinner, she showed the letter to Bill. "What's this?" he inquired while trying to decipher the foreign language.

"You tell me," Louise said as she pointed to the signature. "Is Gitta an old Army buddy?"

Abruptly Bill crumpled the letter up in to a tight ball and threw it in the trash can. "It's nothing," he said in an impatient and aggravated voice. "She was just a woman who lived near the camp. There's nothing to it! I told you before I left that you had no reason to worry! No reason at all!"

Louise vividly remembered that cold winter morning in 1942 when Bill had left for the Army. They had been married for less than two weeks when Bill received the notice to report to the National Guard Armory on Dallas Street at five in the morning.

Normally the inductees had reported at ten in the morning but as the casualty lists from overseas grew, the war depart-

ment decided there would be less emotional trauma by having them report in the early predawn hours.

Regardless of the hour, there was still a crowd of tearful wives and families waiting outside the armory as the new soldiers boarded the buses. Even now, three years later, Louise could still see Bill's face outlined in the rear window of the bus as it pulled away and remember how desolate and alone she had felt.

The war in Europe was already winding down by the time Bill was shipped overseas. After Germany's surrender he became part of the Occupation Army, stationed in a part of Bavaria.

Though thankful the war had ended, Louise still missed Bill terribly. Often times she would write 5 or 6 letters at a time, enclosing all of them in the same envelope. Bill was not a "letter writer" and sometimes several weeks would go by before she received any note from him.

The letters he did write were always full of cheer, relating small incidents and telling her how he, "counted the days until they could be together again." Sometimes he would enclose snapshots of himself and his buddies. Her favorite picture was one of him dressed in a German officer's tunic. Though he described it as my "Nazi photo," Louise thought it was a good likeness of him. After carefully trimming the photo to get rid of the uniform she put it in a small frame and placed it on the mantle.

When Bill finally came home in the fall of 1945 the young couple began building a life together. They purchased a small house in a new subdivision on Halsey Avenue and Bill went to work for his cousin selling real



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estate. Bill had foreseen the demand for real estate once the war was over and had carefully saved his money. Now he began purchasing older houses and remodelling them before selling them at a substantial profit.

Everything was perfect, it seemed.

And then that letter came.

Louise tried to put the letter out of her mind. "I really do trust him," she kept telling herself over and over again. Finally, unable to overcome her doubts,

she retrieved the letter from the trash can.

The next morning, after Bill had left for work, Louise carried the crumpled letter to the Red Cross office downtown on Washington Street. One of the ladies who worked there translated it for her. Listening to the lady as she read the letter, Louise tried to read between the lines. There really weren't any hints of a romance or even a strong friendship.

If anything, the letter was

sad. The writer was asking Bill if he had any old clothes or shoes. "...clothes and food are impossible to buy. My coat was (made) from a Werhmact overcoat but the authorities have forbidden us to wear any clothes made from German uniforms and now I do without. If you can see to send something you do not need it would be greatly helpful. May God go with you, Gitta."

"Honey, don't let it bother you," the Red Cross lady said as

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Louise got up to leave. "We get those letters all the time. Those Germans are starving to death over there."

Though greatly relieved at the contents of the letter, Louise still experienced tinges of doubt. She had not been married long enough to feel comfortable in her relationship, and like many other young brides, was wary of any woman asking her husband for help.

After worrying about the letter for several weeks Louise decided to confront the situation head on by writing Gitta. "...Bill is my husband and we are happily married."

Staring at the words she had just written, Louise felt a tinge of remorse at the hardness of them. "Maybe I should lighten it up a little," she thought. She then included several paragraphs about Huntsville and her life growing up here. After gathering up a few old clothes she placed them in a box along with the letter and carried them to the post office.

Louise had almost forgotten about the letter when several months later she received another, this time addressed to her. "...Thank you very much for the clothes. What I could not wear I bartered for cigarettes." The writer then went on, in an almost chatty way, to describe life in Germany.

The reference to bartering cigarettes puzzled Louise until several days later when she was describing the letter to several of Bill's friends who were visiting for dinner. Both of the ex-soldiers burst out laughing at Louise's naivete. "Girl," one of the men explained, "In Germany there ain't no money except cigarettes. For a pack you can get a dinner in a fancy restaurant and

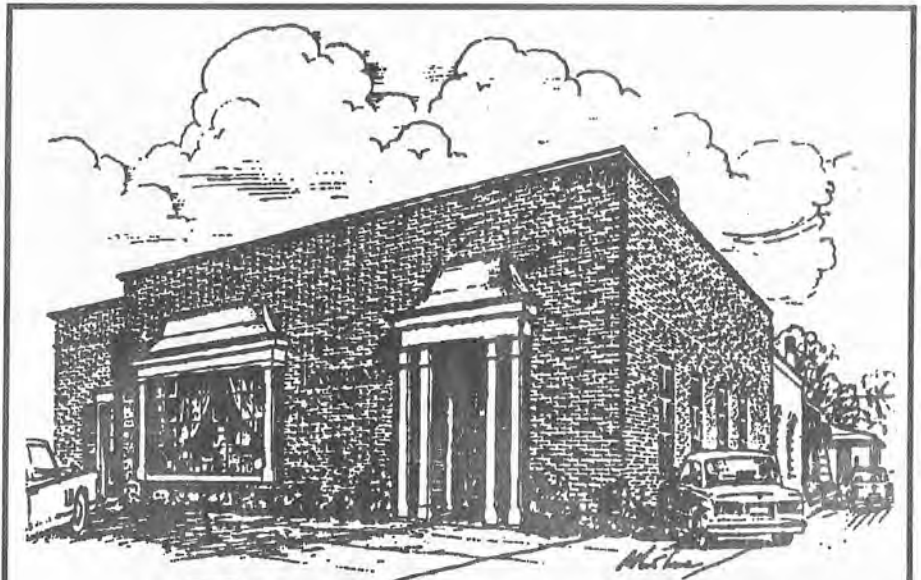
for couple of cartons you could buy a suit of clothes along with a wristwatch!"

Louise was shocked as she listened to her husband and his friends tell callous "war stories" about "Occupied Germany." She had never really thought about the devastation wreaked upon the civilian population and about how much they must have suffered.

The next day she wrote another letter to Gitta. Not knowing what to write about to a complete stranger, she filled the

pages with stories about her neighbors, going to church, cooking and tending house. Along with the letter she mailed two cartons of cigarettes.

A month went and then another letter came. As Louise opened the letter a small lace handkerchief fell out. "...Thank you so much for your kindness. I wish you to have this lace that belonged to my mother. She was a kind person just as you." Gitta then went on to talk about her life and about going to school at night to learn English. "When



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I finish," she wrote, "I will try to get a job with the Ami's and maybe someday I can come to America."

Louise was thrilled to receive a reply. All of her life she had been shy and found making friends difficult. "Now," she thought, "I have a pen pal."

If Louise was happy, Bill was sullen. "She's just trying to make you feel sorry for her. All those Krauts are just alike!"

For the first time in their marriage Louise took a stand against her husband. "She's my friend and I'll write whoever I want to!" Bill reluctantly backed down and an uneasy truce developed that would continue for years. Though Louise would talk excitedly to her friends about Gitta and her letters, she would never again mention them to Bill.

For Bill's part, he never said anything else about the correspondence though he would occasionally display his feelings by giving a loud grunt whenever he saw his wife writing another letter.

Louise and Gitta began writing on a regular basis. Occasionally Louise would send several cartons of cigarettes along with her letter but after Gitta went to work for the Americans it was no longer necessary. Louise befriended the wife of a German rocket scientist here in town who taught her how to write German. Gitta in turn became fluent in English.

Strange as it may seem Louise and Gitta became best friends, often spending hours writing one another and sometimes posting 4 or 5 letters a week. As Louise wrote about her life in Huntsville, Gitta wrote about her life in Germany. Gitta had been married briefly near the end of the war but he was, she wrote, "lost on the Russian front." She had a son, Eric, who was born after her husband's death.

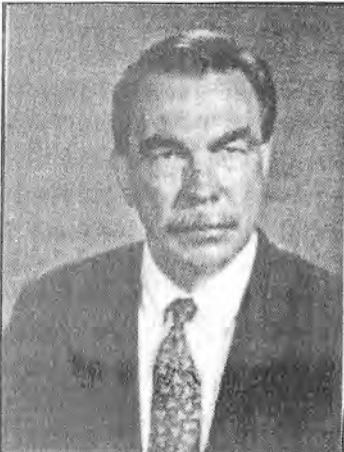
The fact that her best friend had a son thrilled Louise. She had always wanted children but had been unable to. As the years went by with Gitta writing about

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# Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



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our very best wishes  
for a wonderful  
Holiday Season to  
all our good friends  
and loyal supporters  
who help us in our  
continuing efforts to  
help youth.*

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tomorrow, we must  
help and support our  
youth today.*



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Eric's communion or how he was doing in school, Louise began to feel almost as if Eric was her child, too.

Ten years went by, then twenty and then thirty and forty. The letters now filled over a dozen shoe boxes on Louise's closet shelf. Eric had grown up and become a career officer in the German Air Force. Gitta never remarried; she was, she wrote, "too set in my ways for any man to put up with me!"

Bill, the man Louise had married so many years ago, was now a different person. They had nothing in common any longer and had almost stopped talking to one another. The real estate business had succeeded beyond Bill's wildest dreams and he was now involved in building new subdivisions. Unfortunately he also preferred to spend all of his spare time at the Elks Lodge drinking with his cronies. Rarely would he stagger home before midnight. When he was home he seemed to take a bizarre pleasure in verbally abusing her.

When Bill suffered a fatal stroke in the late 1980s while playing poker with his friends, many people claimed Louise was probably better off. Their strained relationship had been no secret to any of their friends.

Though she was now often lonely, she spent her time working with the library as a volunteer and doing charity work. And she still had her friend Gitta to write to.

Louise and Gitta had often talked about visiting one another, but as the years passed and their health began to fail, they both realized they would probably never make the trips. They still tried to write one an-

other every week but the letters came slower after Gitta was diagnosed with cancer.

Finally the letters stopped altogether. After a pause of almost three months Louise received a letter from Eric informing her that his mother had died.

*"...you were my mother's best friend and she asked me to make sure you got all the letters you had written her over the years. I will be in Huntsville for a week at Christmas time and if possible would like to meet you and give you the letters. I will call when I get there."*

The news of her best friend's death devastated Louise. Never in her life had she lost anyone who meant as much to her as Gitta.

Although grief never goes completely away, time has a way of making it easier to bear. By Christmas Louise was eagerly anticipating the arrival of Eric. He was a high ranking officer in the German Air Force now and was scheduled to visit Redstone Arsenal as part of an inspection tour.

Mid-morning on Christmas Eve, Eric called. Apologetically, he explained he had to attend several functions that evening but should be finished around nine that night. "Would that be too late to visit?"

"Please," Louise exclaimed, "Come over any time you can. I was going to midnight Mass tonight and if you would like, you can go with me."

Louise had planned a perfect evening. The Christmas tree was the prettiest she had ever decorated, there was a fire in the fireplace and German Christmas cookies were arranged on a tray. She had even invited two of her neighbors over to meet her best friend's son. She had known them almost as long as she had known Gitta.

No one could have foreseen the reaction, however, when Eric finally arrived. The moment he walked in the door there was a stunned silence. Eric, now 50 years old, looked exactly like Bill, Louise's dead husband. Same blond hair, same clear blue eyes, stocky build, even the same cleft

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in the chin.

It was not merely a resemblance... Eric and Bill could have been identical twins. ... Or!

Louise was the first to regain her composure. Seeing the shocked looks on her friends' faces, she took the coffee cups from their hands and quickly ushered them out the door, thanking them for being so kind as to stop by.

Later, if someone had ever asked Louise what to do when confronted with a situation like that, Louise would have replied, "Act like nothing is wrong." And that's what she did.

Eric had brought a large box of his mother's belongings with him. As they set on the couch going through the old letters and pictures, a lifetime of memories came back. There were pictures of Louise, with paint splattered all over her from when she painted the house back in the early 1950s. There were bundles and bundles of letters from a half century of being pen pals and friends. Other envelopes held faded newspaper clippings about Huntsville that Louise had cut out and sent Gitta.

As they were browsing through the box, Louise spotted one picture and reached for it. Eric saw the photo at the same time and tried to grab it from Louise's hand.

"That looks like Bill... Her voice froze as she happened to glance at the mantle.

The picture she was holding was the same photo that Bill had sent her years ago. The one Bill had called his "Nazi" picture that had been sitting on the mantle for years.

Moments went by with the only sound being the fire crackling in the fireplace. Finally, Louise glanced at the wall clock

and stood up. "Come on," she said. "It's time to go to church."

The short drive to the church seemed like an eternity, with neither Eric nor Louise knowing what to say. Finally, Louise broke the silence.

"How long have you known?"

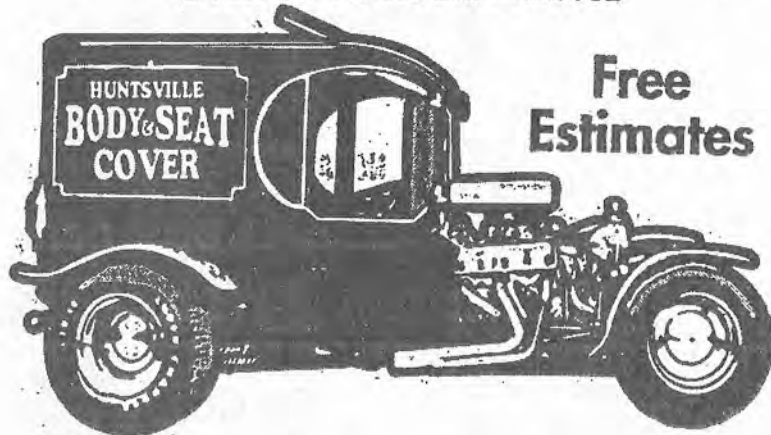
"Since Mother died," replied

Eric in a slow, hesitant voice. "I wasn't going to say anything; I just wanted to know for sure."

Louise had never been much of a church going person but there was something about midnight Mass at the Church of Nativity that had always captivated her. Father George B. Wood was con-

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ducting Mass that night and she always looked forward to listening to his sermons.

Father Wood was a grizzled old ex-army chaplain who had earned fame for parachuting into Normandy, France with his troops on D-Day. Years earlier Louise had privately nicknamed him "the bear," but as she came to know the priest she changed it to the "teddy bear," a name appropriate for the compassionate way he ministered to his flock.

As Father Wood began to preach Louise's thoughts turned to a time long ago when the world was at war. Father Wood was a young soldier in uniform, like Bill. Did they do the same things? Were all the soldiers alike? Why had Gitta never told her the truth?

Suddenly Louise remembered something that Father Wood had told her years earlier when they were talking about the war ... *"a half century ago was a time for war; today is a time for forgiveness."*

Maybe it was the thought of those words, or maybe it was the message of peace and compassion that Father Wood spoke of on that Christmas Eve night, but for whatever reason, Louise suddenly realized the true meaning of forgiveness.

When Father Wood had finished and the choir began to sing, Louise leaned over and whispered to Eric, "Your mother was a very special lady."

"So is my father's wife," replied Eric as he tenderly took the old woman's hand into his own.

*If at first you don't succeed, skydiving is not for you.*

# The Dream

John Cockerham, Bill Kling and Loretta Spencer were having breakfast at Gibson's one morning.

"I had the strangest dream last night," said John. "I dreamed I died and was reincarnated as the most powerful person in Huntsville. I revitalized downtown, got rid of the parking meters and made everyone happy."

"That's strange," said Bill, "I also dreamed I was reincarnated and I solved the sewer and garbage pickup problems."

"How odd," replied Loretta thoughtfully as she sipped her coke. "I had a similar dream but I don't remember reincarnating either of you!"

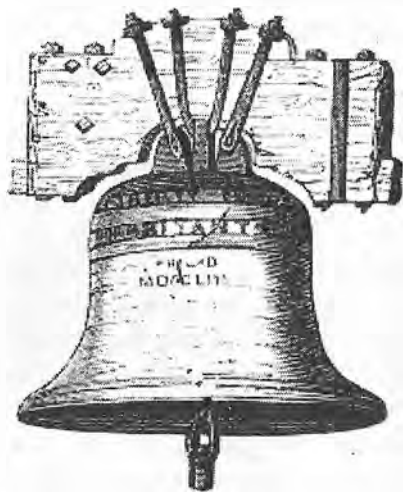


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# The Concord Death Bell

With all the struggle and conflict in the world today, we sometimes forget our neighbors. In times past, in the small communities spread across this great land, the welfare of all depended on everyone working together for the common good.

Today, in a small rural community in North Alabama, there's a country church and cemetery called Concord. In the cemetery a

bell rests upon a wooden frame. Whenever a death occurs in the community and there's a grave to be dug, someone rings the bell. Out across the freshly plowed fields the bell's ringing sounds. A farmer stops and listens, then head his tractor for Concord.

Down the road, several old-timers sitting around rise to their feet and walk slowly out of the store and up the road toward Concord.

Just when the bell at Concord was erected is uncertain. But shortly after the turn of the nineteenth century, about 1830, Robert Donnell, a circuit rider for the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, began holding camp meetings at Concord. The meetings continued there for several years. Shortly before the Civil War, a church building was erected and a graveyard was begun there.

In those days there were few if any roads, and neighbors were few and lived far apart. When there was a death in the community it would take days

to notify everyone. So a small bell (a dinner bell) was hung to summon in the community when anyone died, to help dig the grave and help console the family.

Later, in 1895, because the community was growing and the small dinner bell couldn't be heard by all, George Giles and Andy Isabell, two local church members, went around the community and collected enough money to buy a new bell. They purchased the 350 pound bell that still hangs at Concord, ever ready to ring to summon help if anyone dies in the area. On a clear day the bell can be heard for a radius of five or six miles.

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

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## A Childhood Christmas

by Chip Knight

Christmas was a strange and wonderful thing when I was a little child—it was the most antagonizing time of the year. I wanted all these things, and I knew that I would get some stuff, but I also knew that whatever was under the wrapping paper, it would not be quite as big or quite as pretty as it had been in my dreams. And then there was the Christmas parade.

I believe the City of Huntsville used to sponsor it back then. It wound from wherever it started, through downtown, and eventually to wherever it ended, and we watched it from my father's office, on the second floor of a building on East Side Square, and it was absolutely fascinating.

I remember the Alabama A&M marching band, marching with precision that I found unbelievable and with little lights on their uniforms—and then, there was Santa Claus, parade variety. It sent us into a proper frenzy of Christmas spirit.

I had probably been told about Santa Claus since I had been born, and, I swear, I believed in him with all my heart. He was the one who came down the chimney and left all the presents that weren't wrapped—and they weren't there when I went to bed on Christmas Eve. But I was a skeptical little kid, and I wondered how such a jolly old fat man could get down the flue of our chimney and do that in

eleventy million houses in one night in a sleigh drawn by reindeer, of all things. And I wondered a little more about the toys he left. If his elves made them at the North Pole, why were they the same things we could buy at Montgomery Ward or Sears? I didn't say anything, but the jig was up when I began to see boxes which had held things that Santa had brought at the curbs of my neighbors. My own parents were careful about that; I don't know what they did with the boxes of the stuff

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left at the Knight house. I didn't say anything, of course, being afraid that I would stop the flow.

We used to always put up a cedar tree-- a sticky thing at best. I guess we just didn't have the firs available from all over the place that we do now. They used to sell them in the grocery store parking lots—Hill's, at Brandon Street and Longwood Avenue, Piggly Wiggly, where Whitesburg and California Streets come together, and, of course, at Star Market in Five Points. Somehow we always managed to have at least a seven foot tree in a house with eight foot ceilings, and it's a wonder that the lights we put on them didn't set the things on fire as they were the size of what we now know as night light bulbs, but they would burn you fairly badly if you touched one of them.

Speaking of those little bulbs, one night, not related to Christmas, I, the six year old electrical engineer, took a night light with one of those little bulbs in it and decided to roast a peanut, sort of as an experiment. Not wanting my parents to know about my august experiment, I placed the night light, suitably connected with an extension cord, under my pillow. Later, I was dragged out of bed and water dumped on the mattress to put out the fire. Perhaps I was an evil child. At the very least, I was an experimental one.

We kids always had this thing about when was the proper time to open presents. We opened ours on Christmas morning, which was, obviously, the proper thing to do, but many of my friends told me about opening theirs on Christmas Eve, which seemed a sacrilege to me. That was just not proper at all.

One of my strongest memories about Christmas was my excitability. I would work up to it, prob-

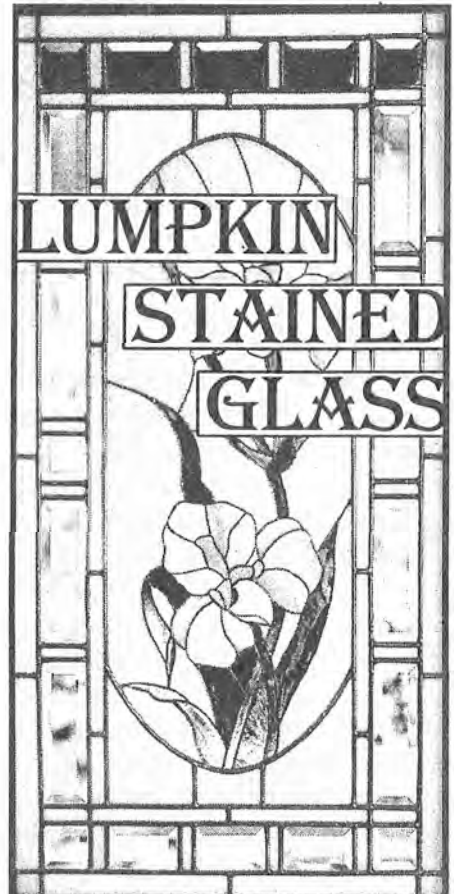
ably from the time of Thanksgiving Day. Finally, we would get out of school for Christmas vacation, about a week before. By the time I was seven, we had a television, a big black and white affair in a mahogany case that looked like a bar when the doors were shut. Everyone who had been in Vaudeville or had otherwise been a popular entertainer in some medium had a Christmas television show. We watched the Perry Como Christmas show, the Jack Benny Christmas show, the Bing Crosby Christmas show, and I believe even Bob Hope had one. All of them were really pretty neat. These people who usually ran around making fools of themselves came together and sang carols and held hands and hugged each other and loved each other. This was really touching to me, because it was really foreign; we didn't do too much hugging in my house. In fact, we did very little of that.

Back to the excitability. Christmas Eve was the one night of the year when I just could not go to sleep. I would lie there, hour after hour, not really waiting for Santa to come, but just wanting to sleep, but sleep wouldn't come. One time, I guess my parents heard me stirring around, and my father came to check on me. He asked, "Chip, are you asleep?" I replied "yes." Enough said.

I guess the high and the low points of the day began when we got up on Christmas morning, usually about six o'clock, and did kind of a random shuffle of trying to get everyone up so we could go into the living room together, as that was where the presents were laid under the tree, and where

Santa had left his stuff by the fireplace. Of course, I had previously reconnoitered the area, at least by sticking my head around the corner of the room, and, if time permitted, by inspecting more closely. The high point was the "My God, it's Christmas morning and the waiting is over," and the low point, the realization that it was just not all that I had built it up to be in my mind. It was both ecstasy and disappointment.

I sound disparaging, but I should not. It was just a matter of being brought back to reality. I always got one really nice present. When I was six, I got a Lionel electric train set. When I



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by Wayne Lumpkin

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was seven, having learned how to ride one, I got a bicycle, a great big one which I used years later to run over a boy who needed to be run over. But the reality was never quite a big as the dream.

We had the morning to play with our new presents, the toys, and to set aside the ones we weren't all that excited about, the clothes. Then we had to get ready for Christmas dinner. We had this little tradition; Thanksgiving dinner was at our house, and Christmas dinner was at my aunt's house on Williams Avenue. It was a great big imposing place, and we dressed up, which meant that I wore a coat and tie, even as a little fellow. But it was wonderful. Dinner was both cooked and served by Ophelia, an elderly gray haired black woman who lived about a block and a half away on Gallatin Street. She would let my sisters and me hang out in the kitchen before dinner was served, and then would serve the Christmas dishes at the table as if we were at the Waldorf Astoria. I have never since had such an elegant dinner to this day.

After dinner was over, we all "retired" to the sitting room, which meant that the adults talked and we children kept our mouths shut. It was usually fairly cold, but we would have wanted to go outside and play, but, of course, we had our good clothes on and couldn't do that. Finally, about two o'clock or two thirty, we would get back in the car and go home and change clothes and begin to play with our now not so shiny toys, and the day would end on a much lower key than it had begun.

# A Sad Case

from an 1890 newspaper



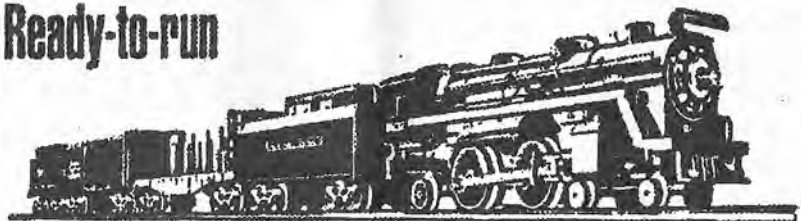
The saddest case of the Enoch Arden kind is that recorded of a Missouri man, which took place lately. One day in the year 1861 his wife sent him out to get an armful of wood, but he walked to town, where he enlisted and went away to the war. When the war closed he drifted away to California and Mexico. His wife waited five or six years; then concluding that he was dead, she married again. The second husband died in 1879, and in 1882 she led another blushing groom to the altar. About a month ago the original husband came lumbering back. But there was no glad smile for him. The wife looked over her shoulder at him from where she sat by the stove and asked him if he had got that wood yet. Then the third husband came in and told him to "make tracks, and make 'em lively." "Alas," exclaimed the first husband, "It has been for naught!" Then he went out, and the second husband's dog chased him to the forks of the road.

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## Tips from Earlene

To get rid of that fireplace soot odor, do the following. After you've cleaned the ashes out of the fireplace, place a shallow pan of baking soda in the fireplace for at least a couple of hours, or overnight.

Storing stale marshmallows overnight in an airtight container with a slice of fresh bread will freshen them up.

Snacks that mix carbohydrates with protein give you the biggest energy boost. Try fruit chunks dipped in yogurt, whole wheat crackers topped with peanut butter, or popcorn topped with Parmesan cheese.

Keep a cardboard box in your trunk of your car. You can put your purchases or other items in it to keep them from rolling around on the way home.

Before going to sleep at night, compile a to do list for the next day. You'll sleep more soundly

and when you wake up you'll be ready to start solving problems instead of spending time remembering what you have to do. You'll find that you are more committed to tasks that are written down.

If you have any plumbing repair be sure and flush out your faucets and showers for 15 minutes immediately afterwards. Banging on old water pipes can reactivate idle bacteria that cause Legionnaires' disease.

Refrigerating cherries will help keep them fresh. It also is a good idea to keep them away from onions and garlic.

The terrible twos aren't that bad. Only 20% of parents with 2 year olds said their toddlers had behavioral problems, one survey reported.

Not eating breakfast can lead

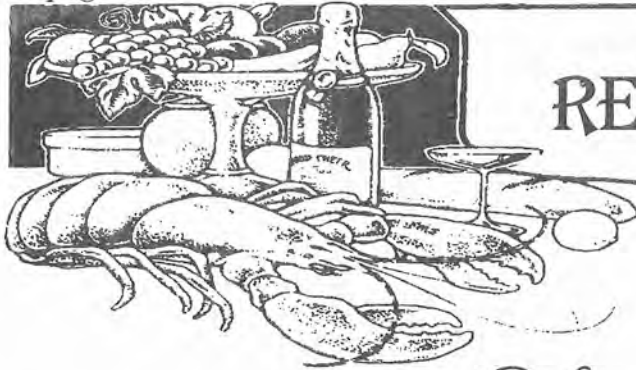
to mental fatigue during mid afternoon, even if you eat a hearty lunch. Start your day with a bowl of cereal with skim milk and a banana, a wheat English muffin with peanut butter, or some fruit and yogurt.

Feeling younger will make you feel happier. In a recent survey, 500 women said they feel young when they play with children, color their hair, sing out loud while driving, gossip with friends, and flirt.

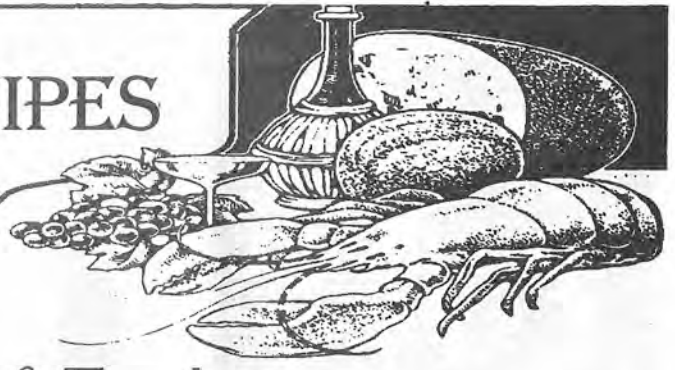
Many women in their thirties and forties begin to go through menopause and aren't aware that it's happening. If you experience unexplained irritability, feel very sad or depressed for no reason, snap at friends and loved ones suddenly and go through other unusual mood swings you may be beginning menopause.



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## RECIPES



### Gifts of Food

#### Pecan Ball

8oz. package cream cheese  
 1/4 c. finely chopped parsley  
 2 T. chives, finely chopped  
 1/2 t. Worcestershire sauce  
 Dash Tabasco sauce  
 3/4 c. pecans, finely chopped

Combine the cheese, parsley and chives with the Worcestershire and Tabasco sauces. Chill til the cheese is firm. Form into a large or several small balls, roll in the pecans and wrap in some pretty colored cellophane wrap.

#### Almond Cookies

1/2 lb. unsalted butter, softened  
 3/4 c. granulated sugar  
 1/2 t. almond extract  
 1 t. vanilla extract

2 c. sifted flour  
 1 c. almonds, very finely ground  
 1 1/2 c. confectioners sugar

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees. Beat the butter and sugar together til they are light and creamy, using an electric mixer. Beat in the extracts, flour and ground nuts. Chill the mixture for 2 hours in fridge til very cold. Take 2 cookie sheets and coat them with butter and flour. For the dough into bite-sized balls and put them on the sheets. Bake in oven for 10 minutes, bottoms should be barely browned. Remove the cookies from the oven right away and transfer them to wire racks to cool. Roll them in confectioners sugar while they are still warm, let them cool and roll in the sugar

again. Store in airtight container, if you can keep them away from your family.

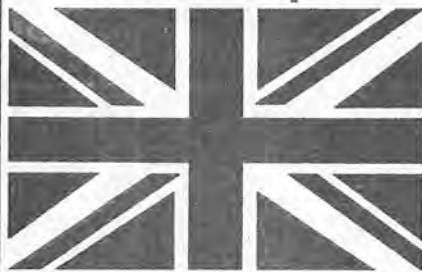
#### Cranberry Relish

2 c. fresh cranberries  
 Grated rind and juice from a large thick-skinned orange  
 1 c. granulated sugar  
 1 t. dry English mustard powder dissolved in a teaspoon of cold water  
 1 T. vinegar

Wash your cranberries and put them in a heavy saucepan. Add the orange rind and juice and the sugar. Bring to boil and simmer for 5 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in the mustard and vinegar. Chill for 24 hours, then pack into jars. Store in your fridge til you give them as gifts.

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#### A Crock of Spices with a Jug of Country Apple Cider

Combine the following in an attractive, airtight container:

12 cinnamon sticks, broken in half  
 1/4 c. whole cloves  
 1/4 c. allspice berries  
 1/4 c. juniper berries



1 t. nutmeg  
Grated rinds of 2 oranges, 2 lemons and 2 tangerines

To make spiced cider, measure a heaping teaspoon of the mixture for each mug of cider. Simmer the cider with the spices in a large saucepan for 10 minutes. Strain before serving.

### Apricot Vodka

This takes 2 months to age, so it's too late now for this Christmas but makes a classy gift anytime:

1 lb. dried apricots  
1 c. granulated sugar  
1 fifth vodka  
3 T. apricot brandy

Cut the apricots into small pieces and put them in a saucepan with the sugar and a cup of the vodka. Slowly bring it to boiling point, then remove from the heat and let cool. Add the rest of the vodka and the apricot brandy. Pour into a glass jar and cover it tightly. Leave in a cool place for 2 months, then strain the liquid into a decorative container.

### Creole Porcupines

3 T. butter, softened  
1 c. firmly packed brown sugar  
2 eggs

1 1/2 c. chopped pecans  
1 c. chopped dates  
3 c. shredded coconut, divided

Cream your butter in a large mixing bowl, then add the sugar and beat well. Stir in the nuts, dates and a cup of the coconut. Cover and chill for at least 8 hours. Shape the dough into 1 inch balls, roll them in the remaining coconut. Place them 2 inches apart on greased cookie sheets. Bake in 300 degree oven for 25 minutes or lightly browned. Remove to wire racks to cool.

### Scandinavian Wreath Cookies

3/4 c. butter, softened  
3/4 c. shortening  
1 c. plus 2 T. sugar, divided  
2 eggs  
2 t. grated orange rind  
4 c. all purpose flour  
1 egg white

Cream the butter and shortening, gradually add in the cup of sugar. Beat til light and fluffy. Add 2 eggs, beat well. Stir in the orange rind, gradually add in the flour. Stir well, chill dough for an hour. Shape the dough into 1 inch balls; roll each ball into a 6 inch rope. Tie each rope into a knot, leaving 1/2 inch ends. Place 2 inches apart on an

ungreased cookie sheet, set aside. Beat the egg white at room temps til soft peaks form. Gradually add remaining sugar, beat til stiff peaks form. Brush the meringue over the cookies and bake at 375 degrees for 8-10 minutes. Remove to wire racks to cool.



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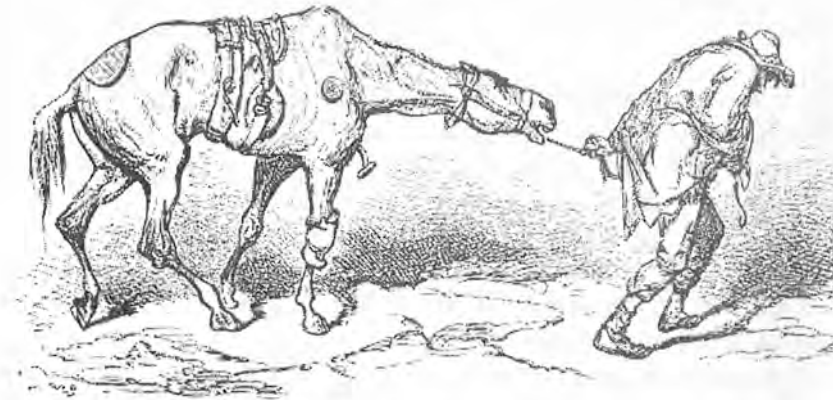
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# Bridging the Years

by Charles Rice

With the end of the fighting, the veterans both North and South returned to their homes. The Union soldiers were hailed as conquering heroes, but no such welcome awaited the soldiers of the South. These men made their way home in small groups or as individuals, and not as military units. For many an ex-Confederate, the sights that awaited them must have been almost as traumatic as the war they had somehow managed to survive.

"As we came west on the train nothing but lonesome looking chimneys remained of the villages and farm houses," recalled John Allan Wyeth of Guntersville. "They were suggestive of tombstones in a graveyard. Bridgeport, Stevenson, Bellefonte, Scottsboro, Larkinsville, Woodville, Paint Rock—in fact every town in northern Alabama to and including Decatur (except Huntsville, which, being used as headquarters, had been spared)—had been wiped out by the war policy of starvation by fire. Farm houses, gins, fences, and cattle

were gone. From a hilltop in the farming district a few miles from New Market I counted the chimneys of the houses of six different plantations which had been destroyed. About the fireplaces of some of these, small huts of poles had been erected for temporary shelter."

North Alabama's development had been set back by at least a generation.

Huntsville and Madison County also continued under Union military occupation for years, only this time the soldiers in blue were often black. The former slaves themselves were in little better condition than the white Southerners, and not much of the promised Federal aid ever came to pass. The Freedmen's Bureau did undertake to set up schools and help prepare the ex-slaves for a life as free men. But the disillusioned African Americans soon discovered that freedom brought little change to their lives. Most found themselves living for some time on government handouts, since white Southerners were too impoverished to employ them. Many soon turned to share cropping to provide at least a degree of independence.

The government run

Freedmen's Bank also became a major scandal, with African American investors losing virtually every hard earned dollar they had put into it. Black Southerners had just one more reason to beware of Northern promises.

Republican "carpetbaggers" from the North and turncoat "scalawags" from the South soon brought unbelievable corruption into the State, though Reconstruction was not as entirely negative as tradition has claimed. Nevertheless, Reconstruction is not a period that anyone can look

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back on with a great deal of pride.

Probably hardest for white Southerners to accept was the temporary loss of their civil rights. "The best white people of the South were not allowed to vote," wrote John Wyeth. "My father, Judge Lewis Wyeth was disfranchised, while Peyton, one of our former slaves, who still lived with us, performing the same service he had done before he was freed, announced himself as a candidate for the legislature!"

Yet defeat for the South was not as harsh as it could have been. There was none of Sherman's notorious colonization plan, with its Cromwellian vindictiveness. And though some ex-Confederates left the country for Mexico or South America, most eventually returned. Fortunately, the Tennessee Unionist Andrew Johnson occupied the

White House at the end of the war, and Johnson kept the Radical Republicans from completely running roughshod over the helpless South. Because of this, the Radicals brought impeachment charges against Johnson and tried unsuccessfully to have him removed from office. They failed to unseat the President by just one vote.

However, there was no Federal aid forthcoming to rebuild the defeated South—as there would be for Germany and Japan after World War II, and the South would take generations to completely recover. In many parts of the South, even marriageable men were in short supply, and women learned to overlook a missing limb or disfigured face when choosing a husband. Thousands of families left North Alabama to seek a new life farther west, many of them going to Texas or Arkansas.

The veterans themselves set about picking up the pieces of their lives and starting over again. For some, such as W.D. Chadick, D.C. Kelly, and "Bushwhacker" Johnston, it was simply a matter of returning to the pulpit. For the average ex-soldier, it was a difficult time of starting from scratch. Men had to rebuild their farms and somehow manage to feed their families until the crops were ready to harvest. Few people realize that charitable food shipments from Northern churches were all that kept many of the people of the South from actually starving that first post-war winter. It was a trying time for Southerners both black and white.

By the 1890s however, a "New South" was being talked about across the nation. The war was now far enough into the past that

*cont. on page 22*

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# Huntsville Coffee Talk

by Aunt Eunice

*With pearls of wisdom contributed by the Liar's Table*



A Big Thanks to all the folks who helped make this year's breakfast for the **Arthritis Foundation** a success. The list of celebrity waiters and vendors who contributed to it is too long to mention everyone personally but I want all of you to know that each one of you has a special place in my heart.

Folks like you are what makes Huntsville the special place it is!

My good friend, **Mike McCord** of **Davtronix** fame, donated one of his custom-built computers to raffle off at the breakfast. **Jeff Enfinger** was the lucky winner and was later overheard saying, "Now how do I plug this thing in?"

You didn't hear it from me but... Rumor has it that **Tony Mason** may become a candidate for Huntsville City Council. Folks at the coffee table are saying it's

time the council sung a different song and Tony knows the tunes that people want to hear!

Good luck, Tony.

"**Judge**" **John Cockerham**, the roller skating terror of Downtown, has thrown his hat in the ring for a run against **Mark Hall** for his seat on the City Council.

Well... It will be interesting.

Our friend, **Mayor Loretta Spencer** is taking a bus load of Seniors to the **Botanical Gardens** to view the Christmas lights. It's refreshing to see a public official taking time from her busy schedule to make other people feel good.

I hope everyone takes note of the kids from the **Twickenham Church of Christ** who will be putting on this year's Christmas program December 12 and 13, at 7:00 P.M. If you want to attend, call for your tickets now! There will be a reception immediately

afterwards. See you there!

**John and Julie Malone** (plus kids) went on a long overdue vacation to Gatlinburg during the Thanksgiving holidays. We know they had a great time!

Happy birthday to my artist friend, **Cynthia Parsons**, who just turned 29.

It was sad to hear that the Federal Government does not believe we need a weather office here in Huntsville. Wonder how they would feel if a couple of tornados blew through Capitol Hill every year?

By the way, **Congressman Bud Cramer** blew his top when he heard the news!

Merry Christmas to my good friend **Loyd** from the **Outback Restaurant**. Rumor has it that he has a special gift for his lovely wife **Marcie**! Next month we'll tell you what it is.

We keep hearing rumors that **David Driscoll** of **Durham Advertising** has political ambitions. Could his moving to the Old Town area mean anything?

**Susan Kirkland**, the gal with the biggest smile in the world, has joined the staff at the **Senior Citizens Center**. We know they will love her as much as we do.

Hats off to City Councilman **Glen Watson** who has been working with school board member **Ann Fee** on the academic

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problems at some of our schools which have been put on alert. Rather than just talking about it, Glen has been donating his time as a substitute teacher in an effort to understand the problems faced in our classrooms.

It would be so nice if our other elected officials would put forth the same effort.

Just a little hint to **Miss Dottie** of the Senior Center: Your secret pal is watching you!

**Dwayne Freeman**, state legislature from Huntsville is questioning **Fob James'** proposal for a tax cut. Is it possible that Dwayne believes we don't need one?

You can tell we are entering the political season. **Don Slegleman** and Fob James are fighting so much you would think they are married.

Our pal **Tim Morgan** says he is going to spend Christmas sur-

rounded by the best presents he has ever received... His family.

It hasn't become public yet but we hear that **UAH** is a beneficiary of a thirty-nine million dollar (plus) estate from a prominent individual in town who recently passed away.

By the way, would somebody please tell me what is the oldest hardware store in Alabama?

Whatever happened to **Jackie Reed**? She's been so quiet lately that people are starting to believe she's up to something.

Special holiday wishes go to **Cecil Ashburn**. He's got more friends than Carter's got liver pills.

And, in closing for this month just keep in mind one thing -- Remember that life is all about loving and caring and sharing. ... So, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you all.

I love you!

*Aunt Eunice*

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## Photo of The Month

The first person to identify the little girl in the picture below wins a breakfast at Eunice's Country Kitchen. So stop by and tell Aunt Eunice who you think it is!

Hint: popular local *Fun* raiser!



Last month's picture was Hon. Judge Lynwood Smith

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much of the animosity had vanished. The Confederate veterans were finally allowed to organize, and the Tennessee Valley hosted several major reunions. Northern veterans, a few dozen of whom had settled here after the war, were invited to take part.

The largest gathering took place in July, 1890, when the 4th Alabama Infantry Regiment and the 4th Alabama Cavalry Regi-

ment held a joint reunion. Even the 4th Alabama Cavalry's commander, Colonel Alfred A. Russel, who had left Alabama to live in Mexico, showed up for the memorable occasion. A. R. Simmons, formerly of the 45th Ohio Infantry, delighted the old Johnny Rebs with a speech on behalf of the Union veterans, noting that his first meeting with Confederates had earned him a

bullet in the ankle. "Besides that," he said, "you licked us like the devil." Frank Gurley did his part by providing an impressive barbecue for one and all.

Also in the 1890s, Joseph Wheeler was elected to Congress, and in 1898 the country went to war again.

President William McKinley, a Union veteran, invited Wheeler to the White House and offered him command of the U.S. troops who would invade Cuba. Wheeler protested that he was too old, but McKinley explained he needed the ex-Confederate as a symbol that North and South were now united. Wheeler accepted and put on a uniform once more, only this time it was a less familiar suit of blue. The Spanish-American War might have been brief, but it showed to the world that America was one nation again.

*The preceding was excerpted from Hardtimes; The Civil War in Huntsville and North Alabama, by Charles Rice. It would make a perfect Christmas present and is available at Shaver's Book Store.*

*The trouble with doing something right the first time is that nobody appreciates how difficult it was.*

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# The Best Christmas Tree for You

The fresher your Christmas tree, the safer. A dried out tree will definitely sustain a flame, but a fresh one won't. So before buying your "treasure," here are a couple of things to look out for when shopping for that great tree: A fresh tree will have:

A trunk that is sticky with sap.

Needles that are green and flexible and don't pull off the tree easily. Bounce the tree a few times on the ground and if a few needles fall off, that's OK. If the tree "snows" needles, go to the next one.

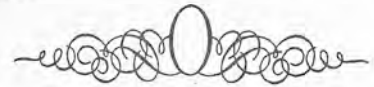
Branches that bend easily without snapping.

Once you get your tree home, it needs lots of water. A six foot tree can drink up to 2 quarts of water a day, larger trees, even more. Once the water supply dries up, the tree will stop trying to drink and begin to die, drying up. When you first bring the tree home, cut a 1 inch slice off the

bottom of the trunk and keep it upright in a large pail of water in a garage or sheltered place, if you won't be putting it up right away. Before you set it up indoors, it's a good idea to cut another slice (1 inch) from the trunk and set it in a tree stand that holds at least a gallon of water. Refill your holder every day. In addition, to keep your tree moist, keep it away from radiators, heaters, fireplaces, televisions or other heat sources. Make sure your tree lights and connections are in good working order, and don't leave the lights on if you leave for overnight.

Don't use real candles on your tree, absolutely. We've all heard the tragic stories about families whose homes caught fire and burned to the ground, leaving them nothing but their lives (the lucky ones). Don't let this happen to you. A little time

and care can prevent a deadly fire.



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# A Klose Encounter with the KKK

by G. Ralph Jones

I was drinking a cup of coffee and reading the morning paper before leaving town on a business trip to Washington, D.C., when my eyes fell on an article causing me no little concern. It seems that same day the Ku Klux Klan had planned a rally in the open field just across the street from my home. They would come dressed in their white robes, make several speeches, and after dark would burn a great cross constructed of telephone poles.

My first response was to cancel my trip and stay home to protect my family. Glenna wasn't nearly as much concerned. After all, neither me nor my family were targeted for the rally; the availability of a large vacant lot on a main highway was the attraction. She reminded me that every law enforcement agency in the area would most assuredly be on hand to keep order.

I have been married to Glenna Dee long enough to know that she is a woman whom God

has blessed with plenty of common sense, but nevertheless I was still worried. I hadn't been in Washington more than a few

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hours before I called home to check on things, and this is the story my wife told me:

The Klan had been arriving throughout the afternoon and our street with filled with pickup trucks, vans and cars. Each man was garbed in the official white sheet, and most of them carried a pistol or shotgun. Some even had the army type rifles in an obvious attempt to demonstrate their firepower. As they gathered, so did the news media on the scent of a good story for a slow news day.

Our home is on a 3 acre tract at the edge of town. It is surrounded by a barbed wire fence about 4' high with a hedge growing around it. Each year we plant a garden, and on this day my wife was out hoeing in her "garden clothes," which consisted of a long apron and an old fashioned, homemade sun-bonnet.


Glenna says she looked up just as a Klansman climbed over the fence into our yard (perhaps to relieve his filled bladder behind our hedge). He did not see

this little lady working across the yard until he heard this excited voice screaming: "GET OUT OF MY YARD! THIS IS PRIVATE PROPERTY AND YOU HAVE NO BUSINESS HERE!"

He jerked his head around to see this infuriated lady running toward him with a hoe in her hand, shouting and making faces at the same time. The contrite Klansman made a beeline for the fence in an effort to get away fast, but in his haste he got both his feet hung up in the barbed wire and went down. He struggled furiously, not letting go of the army rifle he held in one hand, and finally made good his escape. No other dared to come near the fence throughout the day.

The news media had their field day, but failed to see or record this incident. Can you imagine what national TV would have done if they had captured this? Likely Glenna would have been called to relate her story on every talk show; newspapers would be clamoring for an interview; perhaps she could have

written a book by now and be rich. Instead, she called all the grandchildren and invited them to the "show" that night. They sat in lawn chairs in the yard and ate sandwiches and watched grown men make and hoist a huge cross and burn it a few yards away while shouting and waving their firearms. After her afternoon encounter with the climbing Klansman, she had determined there was nothing to fear: she attended the party not even bringing her hoe!



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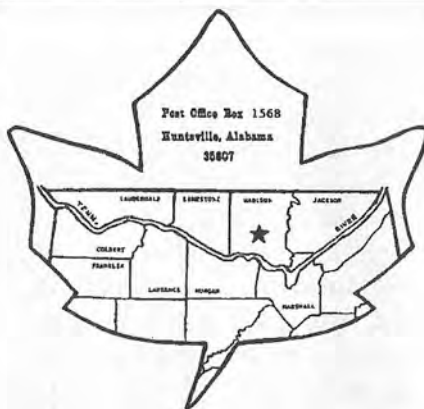
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# Searching For Our Ancestors



*A monthly column provided by the Tennessee Valley Genealogical Society to aid people in their genealogical research.*

## **WALLING (JOHN HENRY)**

Born Madison Co., AL, March 30, 1840. Married **Eleander (Ellen)** (born in AL 1859). Corporal 1st AL Cavalry; Postmaster Gandy's Cove 1880; Doctor, Surgeon, Druggist, Falkville/Vinemont. Cullman Co. Medical Assoc. member/officer. Died April 30, 1935. Buried Mt. Zion, Cullman Co. Seeking wife's and his ancestors names, etc.

*Rodger Walling  
2976 Co. Rd. 1339  
Vinemont, AL 35179*

## **MILLIGAN \* WALLACE**

**Rebecca Milligan** married **Thomas Wallace**. Lived Hawkins (Sullivan), TN before moving to Morgan Co. in 1749. Died when?

*Mrs. Ansel Rahn  
29030 Thornhill Dr.  
Sun City, CA*

## **HANNES \* COFFMAN**

Who are **Elizabeth Hannes** parents? Elizabeth born 1813, TN; married **William Lovell Coffman**, 1837. Elizabeth and Billy lived in Limestone Co., AL until 1869, then moved to Lawrence Co., TN where both died.

*Lois Cowart Kemper  
10601 SW 83 Ave.  
Miami, FL 33156351*

## **MALONE \* BLACKWELL \* COOK**

## **SIDES \* CROWELL \* HESTER**

## **SPARKS \* BLACKBURN**

Would appreciate info. for ch. of James MALONE and his first wife, "Polly" COOK MALONE of Franklin Co., AL. James was b. 1797, NC, d. 1879 Franklin Co., son of John and Anne

BLACKWELL MALONE of NC. Polly was b. 1801, d. 1842, Franklin Co., dau. of John COOK and wife (unknown) of Franklin Co. Info wanted for the following children of James and Polly Blackwell, b ca 1814, NC, m Edney HESTER; Joseph Thomas, b ca 1829, m Mary Jane SPARKS; Nancy, b 1834, m Riley SPARKS; William (known as deaf Billy), b ca 1830, Franklin Co., m Elizabeth (maiden name unknown, but thought to be BLACKBURN), b ca 1833; James G., b 1839; and Daniel E., b ca 1842. William and Elizabeth had two known ch: Mary Jane, b ca 1849 and John Wiley, b 1852 near Pleasant Site, AL d 1897, Franklin Co., m Mary Jane CROWELL (b 1852, d 1939, Sheffield), dau of Harris and Mary Anna "Polly".

*Darse (Malone Fant  
24072 North First St.  
Sycamore, IL, 60178.*

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**SANDLIN \* SWINDLE/  
SWINDELL  
POTEET**

Seek desc of and/or info about Amy Elizabeth SANDLIN, who m Alfred SWINDLE/SWINDELL on 17 Mar 1874 in Morgan Co., AL. Amy's parents are Henry T. SANDLIN and Mary POTEET. Henry was b in AL ca 1834, served in Co. I, 5th AL Cavalry, and d in 1864. He is buried in Hopewell Cem in Morgan Co. Also seek information about him.

Linda L. Sandlin  
109 Van Buren St  
Taft, CA 93268

**RUSSELL**

Seek info on the RUSSELL family of TN, who descend from Levi RUSSELL, brother of Greene RUSSELL, who owned a gold mine in Dahlonega, GA. My great grandfather Russell

had brothers Andy, Thomas, and William, who once owned a sheet metal works in Chattanooga. My grandfather, George Washington RUSSELL, had brothers A.J., Calvin, Clyde, and Orren and sisters Thelma and Edith. He met his wife and married in Chattanooga. My father, Thomas Theodore RUSSELL, his brothers Nelson, Abram, and Leonard E., and sisters Ether and Grace were born in Knox Co. and sister Maude was born in Chattanooga. Any info would be of great help.

Marie Russell Taylor  
3851 Pizarro Rd  
Jacksonville, FL 32217

**MOON**

Seek info on the MOON family ca. 1800-1840 in Madison Co., AL, specifically Moontown, abt 12 miles NE of Huntsville. I desc. from Van Tyson MOON (b

1888 Liberty Co, AR), son of John William MOON (b 1836 Madison Co., AL), son of Jackson MOON b abt. 1814 Madison Co, AL), son of John MOON, Jr. (b abt 1789, PA, d. abt. 1844 in Moontown), son of John MOON (b. PA d. Madison Co., bur. Moontown Cem). Alabama Records lists other names in Madison Co. at the same time. Would appreciate any info. on the MOON family and how they are connected to the above John MOON.

Van T. Moon  
9223 Vickijohn  
Houston, TX 77031

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# Hot Holiday Coffees



vanilla with electric mixer til soft peaks form. Fold this into the coffee mixture, and serve right away.

There's something wonderful about curling up in your favorite chair with a hot, flavorful cup of coffee, either real or decaf, especially during these holiday times. Try some of these either for yourself or to treat your visitors.

Stir constantly and heat just to boiling. Stir in the liquor and top with whipped cream.

## Hot Maple Coffee

- 1 cup half and half
- 1/4 cup maple syrup
- 1 cup hot brewed coffee
- Sweetened whipped cream

Cook the half and half and the syrup in a saucepan over medium heat just to boiling. Stir in the coffee, serve with a dollop of sweetened whipped cream. Sprinkle with ground cinnamon.

## Praline Coffee

- 3 cups hot brewed coffee
  - 3/4 cup half and half
  - 3/4 cup firmly packed brown sugar
  - 2 tablespoons butter or margarine
  - 3/4 cup praline liquor
  - Whipped cream, sweetened
- Cook the first 4 ingredients in a saucepan over medium heat.

## Brandy Coffee

2 (1oz.) unsweetened chocolate squares, 2 cups half and half, 1 cup brandy, 2 cups hot brewed coffee, 2/3 cup sugar, 3/4 cup whipping cream, 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract.

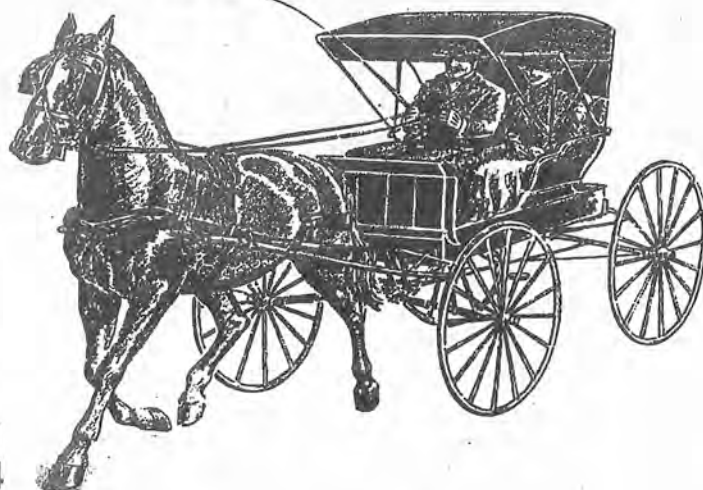
Cook the chocolate and half and half in a large saucepan over medium heat. Stir constantly til the chocolate melts, but don't boil. Add the brandy, coffee, sugar and stir til the sugar is melted, then remove from heat. Beat the whipping cream and

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# Old Huntsville

From The Year 1925

## Traffic Lights Installed Downtown

**Huntsville:** In a highly controversial move, the city of Huntsville has installed traffic lights at the corners of Jefferson and Clinton, Holmes and Washington, Washington and Clinton and Randolph, Greene and Holmes.

Merchants are outraged at the novel experiment and have vowed to form a coalition to remove them. Their anger comes from the fear that drivers will spend less time looking at the window displays of the various stores.

"The streets will be filled with Zombies." Mr. L.D. Carruthers said, "waiting in lines and staring at the lights."

A citizens group has joined in the merchants protest claiming that red and green lights will be

confusing to everyone.

Among the various proposals the city considered before deciding on the lights were whistles, electric gates and crossing police.

The majority of people seemed to be in favor of crossing police but the cost seemed to be prohibitive for Huntsville, a city already deeply in debt.

The first accident was reported yesterday while the lights were still being installed. Mr. Orville Roberts of New Hope lost control of his car and ran into the ladder of a workman installing the light on Clinton and Jefferson.

"I never saw a green light before," Mr. Roberts said later.

## Testimony Denied in Scopes Trial

Judge rules Bible  
is not relevant

**Dayton, Tenn.:** In a sensational effort to end the conflict between science and religion, Presiding Judge John T. Raulston, Tuesday expunged the testimony of William Jennings Bryan from the record of the Scopes trial.

The court said this action was taken because Bryan's defence of his faith in the Bible has no bearing on the issues of the antievolution trial.

The court made the unexpected ruling as a result of a personal appeal from Attorney General A. Thomas Stewart, head of the prosecution, who told newspaper men he would move to expunge the Bryan testimony if the judge did not act.

Bryan is expected to appeal the decision.

## Hogs Found in Rose Garden

Judge Betts promises swift justice

Nine of Mr. Stegall's fine lot of hogs were impounded this week under the vagrant hog law after being found in the rose garden of Judge Betts. Mr. Stegall states that on Saturday night his hogs were secure in their lot and had escaped on Sunday morning after someone removed a board from the fence. He claims the ordinance does not apply when the owner of the hogs does not intentionally let them run at large and has promised to fight his case in court. Judge Betts is expected to preside.

# OLD HUNTSVILLE - YESTERDAY'S NEWS TODAY

## No Gasoline Sales On Sunday

### City Adopts Plan To Put People Back In Church; Also Forbids Boxing In City

At yesterday's meeting of the city fathers a resolution forbidding the sale of gasoline on Sundays was overwhelmingly adopted.

Speaking in support of the ordinance were local pastors who decried the Sunday sale of gasoline by stating it permitted joyriding and encouraged people to engage in frivolous pursuits rather than attending church.

The pastors supported their arguments by presenting figures showing how most people lived within walking distance of a church.

In other actions, the Ku Klux Klan successfully convinced the city to adopt an ordinance prohibiting boxing matches from being held within the city limits. This action came about as a result of a recent match held at the Big Spring which pitted a col-

ored man against a white opponent. The Klan offered arguments that allowing such spectacles would encourage the races to mix.

Huntsville church leaders supported the ordinance.

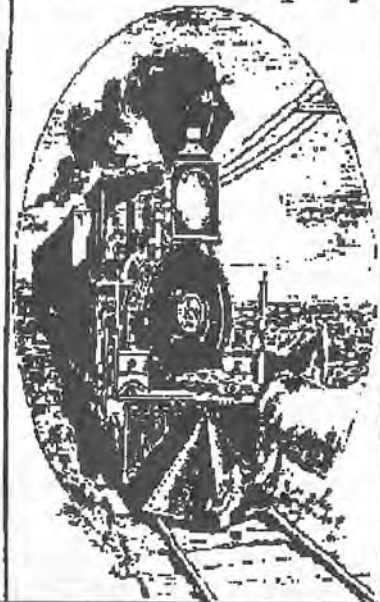
### Dilworth Announces Purchase For Country Club

W.P. Dilworth, president of the Greater Huntsville Country Club, announced today the purchase of the Moss home on Pulaski Pike, along with 225 acres, as the site of the Huntsville Country Club. The company was recently incorporated with \$40,000 capital stock. The club is expected to have the only golf course in North Alabama.

## Sheriff Evicts 9 Mill Families

Officials at Lincoln Mills called the sheriff yesterday to have 9 families evicted from mill homes. Mill authorities said the families had violated their rent agreement by allowing people not employed by Lincoln Mill to stay with them. Other evictions are expected to follow.

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## Heard On The Street in 1885

A Huntsville washer woman was arrested Thursday on a warrant from Judge Richardson for larceny. It is charged that she received clothes to wash, and sold them instead of returning them.

There is a new manufacturing enterprise locating in our city. It is a cigar factory, to be located on Franklin Street, below the post office. The proprietor, J. B. Dierke, of Cincinnati, wisely decided on Huntsville after surveying several other cities. He informs us that he will use only the finest of goods, and his work will be handmade. So we will be seeing cigars made of only purest of tobacco, without the use of cabbage leaves, old rusty pieces of nails and leather.

Stolen last Thursday night

from Thomas Gore near Huntland, Tennessee a black horse mule. A reward of ten dollars will be paid for the return of the mule and ten dollars for the apprehension of the thief. The lucky man can address this newspaper or Thomas Gore in Huntland.

Gas Cooking Stoves - Best of stoves for use by families, hotels and restaurants, supplied with directions for use, gas at reduced prices when used for cooking or bath rooms. See J. W. Murdock, Northeast corner of Huntsville Hotel.

In front of Charley Cumming's grocery store, corner

Holmes and Washington, we notice a very neat invention, known as the "Patent Well windlass." Mr. Cumming's has the county right for its sale.

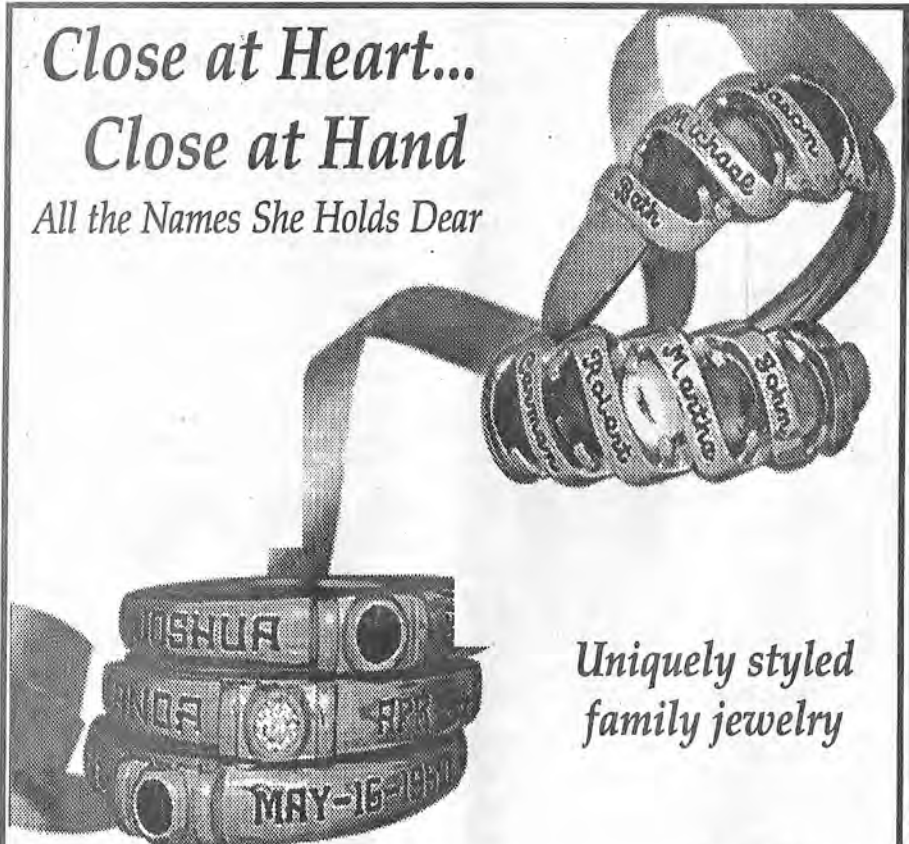
The ladies held prayer meetings at the same hour at the Methodist Church, and we hear that the proceedings were very touching. The good which has been done here cannot be estimated and an impression has been made on the citizens which will perhaps last forever.

The air of quiet which prevails around the Mayor's office, proves that we have either the finest police in the world, or we live in the most law abiding city

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on the continent. If any other city of our population can say as much, we would like to hear from it.

Captain A. B. Jones and family have removed from Monte Sano to the city, in order to make preparations for the opening of the next session of the Huntsville Female College, of which Capt. Jones is the President.

Mr. and Mrs. De Young, formerly of Pulaski, Tennessee and now living in New Market, had a little son Robbie bitten by a rattlesnake about eleven o'clock Sunday morning, while walking on the Chapman place, near the Barracks. The snake hung its fangs in the boy's heel, and as the boy ran he jerked the snake several feet. An older brother witnessed the whole thing and killed the snake, which had one button and no rattle, showing the snake to have been one year old. The little sufferer was treated by Dr. Ridley and is now convalescent. This is the third child to be bitten by snakes in Huntsville this year.

## Dear Editor,

In issue 72 you mentioned Star Market being the first air-conditioned grocery store in town and it brought back a lot of memories. Whenever we had company from out of town, we always went to Star Market to shop. It never failed to impress them!

My grandmother (born 1871) refused to go back in the store after it was air-conditioned. She said it was unnatural and would make you sick. She would sit outside while we shopped; then we had to take the groceries outside for her inspection. After she approved them we would then go back inside and pay for them.

Mrs. Lowell Younger, Nashville, Tenn.



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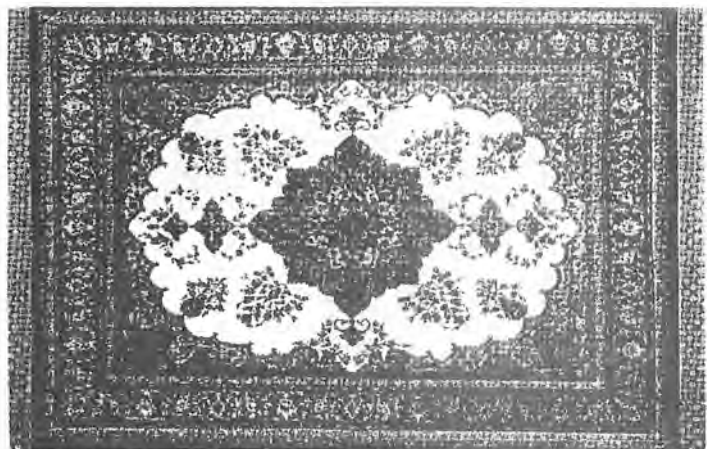
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# They Called It Twickenham

## From "A Dream Come True"

by James Record

As more and more brave settlers trickled into this region from Georgia, Tennessee and other areas of the Mississippi Territory, and the South, more and more settlements sprang up in Madison County.

The Big Spring in present day Huntsville attracted the first settler in 1805. John Hunt had the vision to see the value of the great spring, a natural site for a settlement. It would first be known as Hunt's Spring, but in 1808 was established by legislative act, named Twickenham for Alexander Pope's English estate. Meanwhile, in 1805, another rugged pioneer named John McCartney was attracted to the area that is now Hazel Green.

David Bean, who had accompanied John Hunt, returned to Tennessee and settled Bean's Creek, near Salem.

In what is now Madison County, the great nations of the Chickasaw and the Cherokee still roamed, although they had abandoned war on the white man. Appeasement was the solution to keep the Indians peaceful while settlers nibbled away at more and more of their life-long hunting grounds.

The Chickasaw Indian Treaty of July 23, 1805 included paying Chinubbee Mingo, King of the Chickasaw Indian Nation, \$100 a year for the rest of his life. The United States also paid \$22,000 to George Colbert for land and

services to the treaty arrangement.

Five months, later, January 7, 1806, the United States arranged a treaty with the Cherokees, paying \$2,000, and \$2,000 each year for four years and providing a grist mill and "a machine to clean cotton." An old Cherokee chief named Black Fox was to receive \$100 a year for life.

Establishment of law and order was still on the horizon of the yet to be organized county. Education was not neglected, although early records are non-existent. It is known that a Wyatt Bishop taught a school in Huntsville during 1807.

By December of 1808, the region gained its first public officials. Stephen Neal was appointed Sheriff, as well as Justice of the Peace, along with Thomas Freeman as a Justice of the Peace, on December 19, 1808.

Six days earlier, on December 13, 1808, Madison County finally came into its own, being created by proclamation of Mis-



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Mississippi Territory Governor Robert Williams. He also instructed Thomas Freeman to have a census taken, completed January 1809, showing 353 heads of families, with 1,150 free white males, 723 white females, totaling 2,223 whites. There were 332 slaves. This same Thomas Freeman had previously been appointed surveyor for the Mississippi Territory and had, in 1807, established the Meridian Line, running through Madison County.

The selection of the name, Madison, and the formal proclamation of the new county came

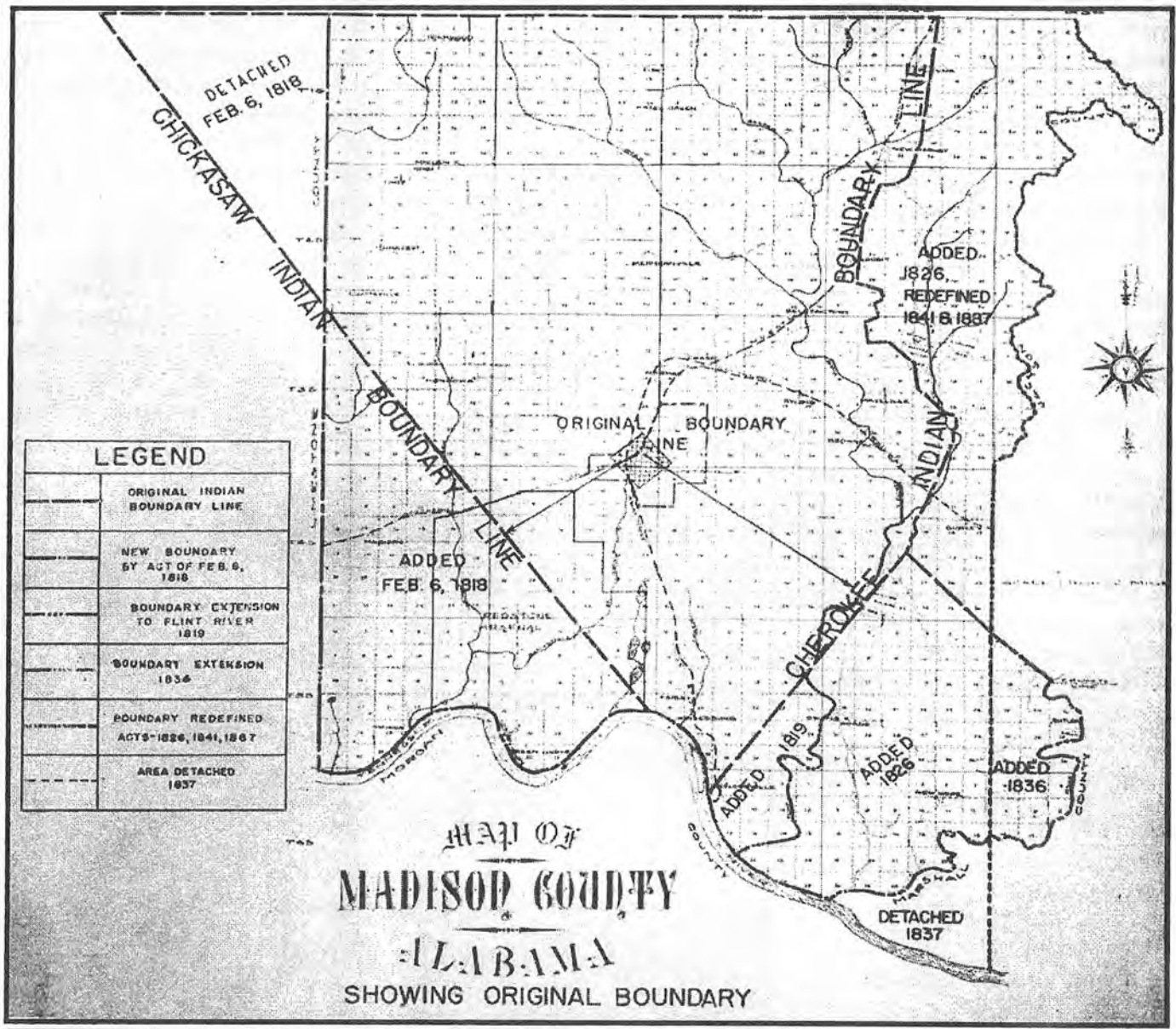
only six days after James Madison, Secretary of State, was elected to the Presidency of the United States.

The area was still a wild frontier where lives were hardly worth a nickel when no civil officers existed. "Considerable lawlessness" existed, as Governor Williams had written Treasury Secretary Albert Gallatin.

Gallatin, on November 15, 1808, had written Williams that President Jefferson figured it was high time that the Governor begin appointing civil officers for the county, not yet organized. On December 11, 1808, Williams,

by letter, pleaded with the Secretary of State for a Judge with jurisdiction in Madison County and stated that he "would send from the town of Washington, Mississippi an active, intelligent officer as Sheriff, who would act in concert with Major Thomas Freeman to ascertain appointments.

The year 1808 was the same year the federal government prepared for selling land in the area. Freeman was given a federal appointment to act as register and in February 1808, Freeman had processed 280 applications for land. He recommended that the



land sales be made in Nashville, rather than Huntsville, and the first land sales were then held in Nashville beginning in August, 1809. William Dickson was the first Register of the Land Office and John Brahan was the first Receiver of Public Moneys.

By August, 1809, Freeman, writing from his surveyors camp on Flint River, informed Gallatin that within the confines of what was to become Madison County, there were three mills, grinding corn that was brought from Jefferson County, Tennessee, 120 miles away.

And pioneers being pioneers, they weren't about to do without their "spirits" either. Freeman said on August 25, 1808, that a distillery was to be in operation in a few days. Settlement by these pioneers was still on the move, as Robert and William Moore from Huntsville settled Mooresville in 1808 and Price's Spring (near present day Jeff) was settled in 1809. The Athens area had been settled in 1805.

Within a year after Madison County was organized, the Mississippi Territory legislature extended the laws of the United States and of the Territory to Madison County. An act of December 24, 1809 called for organization of the circuit and county court of Madison in the same manner as Jefferson, Claiborne, Adams and Wilkinson counties. Laws pertaining to the militia were also extended to the area.

Louis Winston, in March of 1809, was appointed Attorney General for Madison County. Peter Perkins was appointed Clerk of the Circuit Court and William Winston was appointed Clerk of the County Court. John P. Perry meanwhile was ap-

pointed Deputy Territorial Treasurer for the County. All these appointments were made in 1809.

By April of 1809, the Mississippi Territory had directed Sheriff Stephen Neal to hold an election "on the 18th and 19th of the month" for Mississippi Territory representatives from Madison County, the first county wide election to ever be held in Madison County. William Winston and Edward Ward won election.

Communications between the Territorial capital and Madison County proved, at best, to be bad. William Winston, for instance, on April 27, 1809, wrote the Governor he was getting a bit embarrassed about doing a job for which he had not taken the oath of office.

Two months later, on June 14, 1809, the acting Governor replied, "As soon as the Governor arrives, one of us will visit your settlement, as I see no other way in which the county can be organized."

However, Sheriff Stephen Neal finally was designated the

authority to give the oath to Winston. John Carter, appointed as a new Justice of the Peace for the county, had his hands full, too, trying to find men willing to hold public office and passing suggestions on to the Governor. Again, on October 22, 1809, the Governor wrote the Secretary of State of need for a Federal Judge for Madison County.

Money too, proved to be an endless problem in the new county with the pioneers hardly proficient in deciphering values of a half dozen different monetary systems. Up until 1809, much of the monetary circulation medium had ranged from the Spanish doubloons, dollars, halves, quarters, pistareems and picayunes.

To help solve the problem, the Bank of Mississippi, the first territorial bank, was chartered in 1809 as a private company, later becoming a state bank in 1818.

And somewhere along the way, the new residents of the region overlooked, mistakenly or intentionally, the boundaries of the county. They had no qualms in setting up housekeeping on Indian lands, particularly in



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Chickasaw territory to the West.

Thomas Freeman, the territorial surveyor, likely was willing to pull out his hair after completing his survey of all of Madison County in May, 1809. He found several hundred families illegally living on Chickasaw land. He had previously written the Secretary of State on March 4, 1809 to tell him that he had found that the Chickasaws would sell all their land East of Elk River and North of the Tennessee line if the President would move all white settlers off the land west of Elk River. Freeman suggested that the area would "make a well shaped County of Madison."

In June, 1809, Freeman reported that several hundred settlers had been forced to move from their homesteads into Madison County after a bit of arm twisting. A letter from the Secretary of the Treasurer to the President indicated that Freeman, indeed, had carried out the chore.

Soldiers were used to remove 93 of the families from the Chickasaw lands adjoining Madison County, as a letter from

R. J. Meigs to the acting Secretary of War disclosed later. Problems still existed, however, as a letter of October 29, 1809 from the Treasury Secretary to the President stated that a Yazoo claimant named Michael Harrison had promised to move. However, Harrison later denied this and later placed ads warning anyone of purchase of land he claimed. A letter of May 4, 1810, however, from the Secretary of War to General Wade Hampton stated that the settlers were to be removed by spring.

With the land boom on, records showed that some of the first purchasers were LeRoy Pope, William P. Anderson and James Jackson. This trio bought the quarter section containing the Big Spring on August 25, 1809, for \$23.50 per acre or \$3,763.29. The same acreage today, in downtown Huntsville, would be priced in the millions. George Smith would be the first to buy land in the New Market area, while Levi Hinds was first in the Huntsville area and Charles Cabaniss in the Hazel Green area.



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## Know Your Rights



**If Child Support Is Deducted From Your Wages... It may be against the law for your wages to be garnished to pay other debts.**

When an individual is subject to a withholding order or wage garnishment for child support, and then is subject to a second wage garnishment, excessive funds are probably being withheld.

Child support withheld has been held not to be "required by law to be withheld for purposes of the garnishment statutes."

On the other hand, garnishments, including garnishments to recover past due child support cannot exceed 25% of wages.

Many employers in Alabama are erroneously allowing a withholding or wage garnishment for child support to run concurrently with another wage garnishment so that more than 25% is being withheld.

*This column is provided as a public service by Legal Services of North-Central Alabama, Inc., a nonprofit corporation providing free legal help to low income persons in a 5 county area.*

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Ironically, less than 15 per cent of the original settlers bought land. Almost 24,000 acres, however, were sold by October of 1809 at an accumulated price of \$67,520.

As the county grew, administration grew more and more of a problem with Governor Holmes seeking help from both Winston and William Dickson to suggest public appointments. He wrote both of these men in September. It was the same year that the Huntsville Athens road was opened by federal soldiers, improving travel and communications between the two North Alabama settlements, in 1809.

On November 7, 1809, the first county governing body, Justices of the Peace and Quorum, were appointed by Governor Holmes. William Dickson was named Chief Justice. Others were Edward Ward, Peter Perkins, LeRoy Pope and Thomas Bibb. Their first court, the Orphans Court, was held January 4, 1810, probably in the home of John Bunch on Fountain Row. Interestingly, the first minutes referred to the meeting

being held in Huntsville. Actually, the town was still legally Twickenham, until an 1811 act changed it to Huntsville.

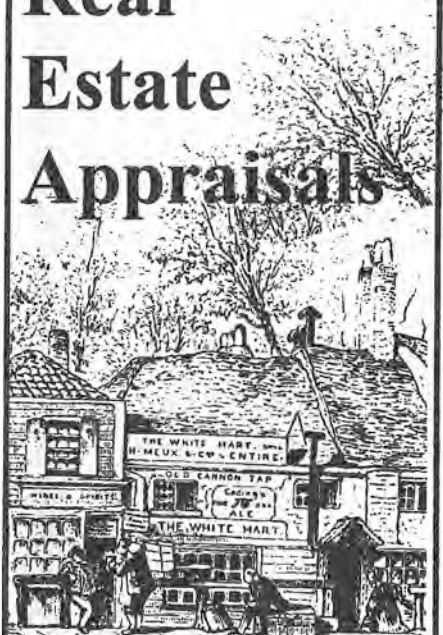
During this year the earliest recorded marriage was listed as that of James McGuire and Elizabeth Thornby on April 3, 1809 and the first will was recorded, that of Joseph York on October 8, 1809 Reverend Robert Donnell also began organizing the Cumberland Presbyterian church in 1809.

On December 23, 1809, a commission to select a site for the first public buildings and to select the county seat was appointed by the Governor. William Dickson, Edward Ward, Louis Winston, Alexander Gilbreath and Peter Perkins, composing the Commission, were authorized to acquire 30 to 100 acres and lay out in half acre lots, reserving three acres for public buildings. The lots were to be sold and the proceeds used for constructing the public buildings. The town was to be called Twickenham and was laid out by surveyor John Coffee, after the commission selected the site of

the town on July 5, 1810. LeRoy Pope, James Jackson and William P. Anderson, owners, employed Coffee. Pope acquired the others interests and sold the town site to the commissioners. Because of this, Pope is referred to as the "Father of Huntsville."

Records of August 1809 show that John Hunt bought two sections near the Big Spring Branch and Brahan Spring. He paid \$80 on one, but by November, LeRoy Pope had taken over the payments. Hunt made two attempts to become a land owner, but succeeded in neither. Possibly his

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large family of eight, plus the expense of keeping up his five slaves, kept him in a financial bind.

By today's standards, land was more than a bargain. Land was sold for a minimum of \$2 per acre and at least 160 acres had to be purchased. Terms were a cash payment of \$3 per quarter, plus interest in two or three years. The sales from August 3 to August 31 brought in well over \$60,000.

The year of 1810 naturally saw a surge of appointments and activity in governmental progress. Among others Gabriel Moore was appointed as the first Tax Assessor and Collector; John Hunt as the first Coroner; David Cobb as the first Constable.

The people of Huntsville were going to the Big Spring frequently in 1810 for water, but some doubts were brought about as to its ownership when, on October 4, 1810, the first deed to be recorded in Madison County (dated July 11, 1808) was filed by Martin Beaty, being a transfer to him by the Tennessee Land Company Yazoo owners, transferring to Beaty 1,000 acres, including the Big Spring, a deed to later be declared fraudulent, on account of previous actions by Yazoo claimants.

The year 1810 found the residents of the county seat beginning to clamor for the name of the town to be changed to Huntsville. Huntsvillians cared not about Alexander Pope, a poet and satirist who would be quoted second to Shakespeare including such quotes as, "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread." Pope was English and the town had been named after his English estate. Anti-English feelings were developing among the new settlers and besides, they wanted to recognize John Hunt as the town's first settler.

## A Strange Case Of Bigamy

from 1897 newspaper



There has developed a queer case of bigamy here. The wife of Oliver Law, a night watchman, left him because he had become intensely jealous.

While consulting with a justice about the matter, the justice jokingly suggested that Mr. Law get another wife.

Acting on this advice, Law hunted up a young girl, Maude Estelle, aged 18, of Jacksonville, while she was visiting. He proposed to her, was accepted and took out a license and married her at once.

After two days of bliss with his new wife, Law suddenly awakened to a consciousness of his unpleasant position with two wives in one small city and stepped out, leaving a note for each.



Last year you got the kids a puppy...

Because they said they were bored and wanted something new to play with. And they swore they would take care of it...

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# Dear Editor,

I am sending you some material and records that will challenge the claim that Harrison Brothers Hardware is the oldest operating hardware store in the state of Alabama.

Loyd's Hardware was started by my grandfather, A.C. Loyd in 1868 and has been in continuous operation by him, his sons and his grandsons. I am a grandson and worked in the store from 1932 until 1992.

An error was made on the starting date of 1865, which the picture shows. The correct date is 1868 for the beginning of A.C. Loyd & Co.

F. Marion Loyd  
Bridgeport, Alabama



**Above left: A.C. Loyd Hardware Co. Located at 424 Alabama Ave., Bridgeport, Alabama.**

**Right and Below: Statements showing where A.C. Loyd & Co. paid for supplies for the store in 1884.**

**Below: A.C. Loyd, founder of Loyd's Hardware in Bridgeport, Alabama.**



Nashville, Tenn., Aug 15 1884  
 Loyd & Co  
 Bridgeport Ala  
 In Account with McALISTER & HOPKINS.  
 To Bal for Stmt 164.453  
 " Your dft 30 for Pencil 500  
 " Cash 2.115

**MONTHLY STATEMENT.**  
 Nashville, Tenn. Nov 13 1884  
 Messrs A. C. Loyd & Co  
 Copied from original  
 To **RANKIN & CO. DT.**  
 DEBTS & CREDITS OF



# Dear Editor,

In answer to your recent inquiry, the Alabama Historical Society has declared Harrison Brothers Hardware to be the oldest hardware store, in continuous use, in Alabama.

As the historical plaque in front of the store states; the business was first sited on Jefferson Street in 1879. It was, initially, an extension of a business began in Smithville, Dekalb County, Tennessee.

Harrison Brothers Hardware has been in continuous operation by my family since its founding up until being deeded to the Huntsville Historical Society in 1984.

I hope this addresses your question,

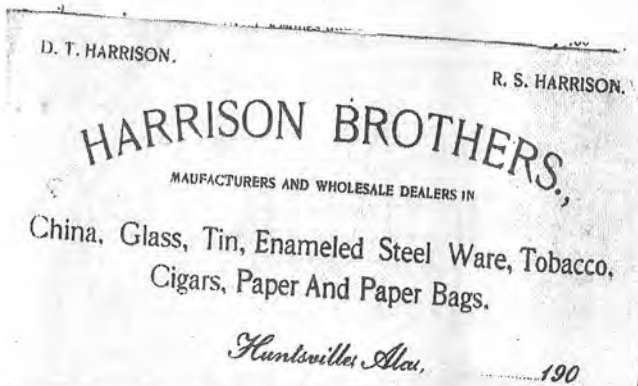
Sincerely,  
Richard A. Smallwood, Sr. CGRS (Certified Genealogical Record Specialist)

Grandson and Great Nephew of the first Harrison Brothers

Nephew and Executor of the Estate of the last Harrison Brother

**Right: Picture of Harrison Brothers Hardware as it looks today.**

**Below and right: Invoices from Harrison Brothers Hardware.**



Quantity	Description	Price	Total
6	Only Flat Hand Crystal Lamps, with No. 1 Bar. & Chim.	.12 Ea	\$ .72
6	" Footed "	" "	" "
2	" No. O Stand "	" "	" "
2	" " O " "	" "	" "
2	" " O " Blue "	.16 "	.32
2	" " A " Green "	.16 "	.32
2	" " A " Crystal "	.17 "	.34
2	" " A " Blue "	.17 "	.34
2	" " H " Green "	.17 "	.34
2	" " B " Crystal "	.18 "	.36
2	" " B " Blue "	.18 "	.36
2	" " B " Green "	.21 "	.42
	" " No. 2 Bar. Chim.	.21 "	.42
	" " " "	.22 "	.44
	" " " "	.22 "	.44



**Left: Robert Harrison and two of his sons in the 1950s.**



# The Trial

by Chip Knight

It really wasn't much of a trial, but it remains well known in Madison County to this day, over 150 years later. The charges didn't amount to much, she had accused him of defamation of character, so it wasn't even a criminal trial. But it did pack the courthouse so that people were flowing out the doors and onto the grounds, and bets were being taken in at least one tavern on who would win. People in Madison County were about

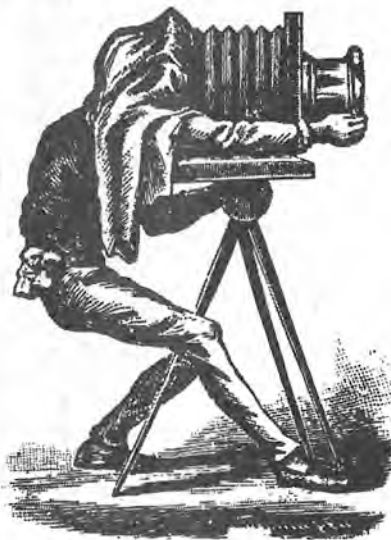
evenly divided in their support of Mrs. Elizabeth Routt, the plaintiff, and Abner Tate, the defendant. Things had gotten so out of hand that fist fights had broken out over the subject, and one shooting had occurred. There had even been talk of imposing martial law, but that was just talk, as there were no troops available for that.

Mr. Tate and Mrs. Routt had gotten into a disagreement which had begun as an argument over loose cattle. Unfortunately, the records do not show whose cattle were loose, but the argument had grown all out of proportion, as neither was the type who could back off once the disagreement had started and the accusations grew. There were claims of crop damage by the loose cattle, and each claimed that the other had shot, or permitted shooting over the other's fields, endangering humans and livestock alike. Whether it was related or not, Tate was injured at one point by a shotgun blast, supposedly fired by one slave or

another who had, again supposedly, been hired by Mrs. Routt.

Tate had finally reached the point where he had openly and publicly accused Mrs. Routt of murder. She had married and buried six men over the space of a few years, and he claimed that a hat rack in the foyer of her home with six old hats on it was proof that she had done them in and was using the hats like notches on a pistol to maintain the count. He was so angry that he wrote a book which he had paid to have published, and which laid out his claims of her foul deeds of murder. When Mrs. Routt heard of, and then read the book, she drove her buggy from her farm near Hazel Green to Huntsville, hired an attorney and brought the charges of defamation of character against Tate.

The trial itself had consisted of insults hurled at each other by the plaintiff and defendant, and then, later, by their attorneys. The judge had not been able to maintain any semblance of order in the courtroom, despite bang-



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ing his gavel and telling the parties involved of the penalties if they continued their misconduct. The judge realized that he had lost control of the case and that he could no longer keep order either in the courtroom or in the county. He finally ordered the case to be continued, hoping that time would permit all the parties to calm down enough to go ahead with the case in a reasonable manner.

Mrs. Routt's maiden name is not recorded, but as a young girl, she had married a man by the name of Gibbons; nothing more is known of him, neither his first name nor his occupation. Mr. Gibbons died a couple of months later under what were called "mysterious circumstances" by the time of the trial. She then married a man named Flannigan, again, nothing more is known of him, except that he died three months after the marriage.

Even today, these things would cause a fair amount of gossip to spring up, most of it rather malicious, gossip being what it is, but in the 1830s, in rural Alabama, and Hazel Green was definitely rural then, it was truly a miracle if one was alive at all. Life was cheap, and nobody knew how to change that. The horror of it was that you were perhaps worse off if you were under the care of a physician, medicine then being in a rather primitive state. Known diseases consisted of consumption, colic, and the like and the treatments were bleeding, usually with leaches, bed rest and various teas, some of which have been shown to truly have healing value and others to be rather poisonous. The basic truth of the matter was that if you survived

long enough to produce children, then you had survived long enough to continue the race of man, and were basically successful in what passed for life in the mid nineteenth century. Mrs. Routt had very bad luck.

Elizabeth's third husband was a man named Alexander Jeffries. He was an early settler of Madison County who had built a log cabin on a five hundred acre land grant in 1817. By 1837 he was a successful planter and had built a proper plantation house about a mile east of Hazel Green. He was quite a bit older than Elizabeth, who was still in her early twenties. Jeffries was, quite naturally, a slave owner, as you couldn't work 500 acres any other way, there being no machinery as we know it today. His house stood for years, and, most unfortunately, burned not many years ago.

Elizabeth Jeffries became the mistress of Mr. Jeffries' plantation, enjoyed the role thoroughly, and, with his teaching, learned how to run the place efficiently and at a profit. She loved the lifestyle, living in a plantation house with its wide verandah and many columns, with its tall ceilings to help cool the rooms in summer, and with an adequate staff to run the place effectively.

This was perhaps the happiest Elizabeth had been in her entire life. It was not so much that she ran the estate - was the boss, but that she had found a tranquil world away from town which was pretty much self sufficient and gave her a great deal of privacy from the gossip and other talk which she knew she generated.

Unfortunately, Mr. Jeffries died before they had been mar-

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ried a year, and was buried quietly on the property. With her marriage to Jeffries, Elizabeth's social status had increased a great deal as had her monetary worth. That, unfortunately, increased her gossip value, for then, as today, those who have not tend to envy those who have. Even then, there were rumors about her having had three husbands, all of whom had died within a short period of time.

Elizabeth's fourth husband was a man named Robert A. High, and he was a state legislator from Limestone County. He survived for about two years, and, of course, the local gossip held that he lived that long because he was often in the Capital and away from home and his wife. He eventually died at the Hazel Green plantation, and was quietly buried there.

She next married Absalom Brown, a wealthy merchant from New Market, a Madison County community not too far from Hazel Green. Almost at her wits end, Elizabeth, who knew that she had done nothing wrong, was trying to find some kind of a man who would not die from just being around her. Brown seemed to be a perfect candidate; he was fairly young and he was a hard working and successful merchant. From all appearances he was in perfect health and was quite active.

Unknown to Brown, much less to Elizabeth, he had apparently damaged his liver at some point in his life; upon his death, it was necessary to bury him immediately, as his body was grossly swollen. Needless to say, a considerable amount of gossip was generated over the neighbors not having even seen the body before it was buried.

Her next attempt at marriage was to Willis Routt. Routt's occupation is not known, so her last husband is nearly as unknown as Gibbons, her first. It is known, however, that he did not live long and was buried quietly.

Elizabeth gave up. However much a woman of the 1840s needed a husband, she finally realized that she was destined not to have one. She supposed that she could go on killing good men in the area by marrying them, but she didn't want to do that. For each man who had died, a part of her had died, and she knew that she did not have much more to give, and that she had better save what was left for herself and for her son.

She had gained greatly in

material wealth, and was, in fact a very wealthy woman with a successful five hundred acre plantation, numerous slaves to work it and a great deal of money in the bank. She was at the point where, without a husband, men would try to call on her who really just wanted to get at her money and she grew more and more bitter and more and more isolated. She began to concentrate on running the plantation, on getting the best crops, on giving her people the best care as she had learned that people well cared for were far happier and that they worked harder and longer.

Elizabeth listened carefully to her slaves, especially to those who worked in the house, with whom she had the most contact

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and, as she understood their plight to a greater extent, she began to understand that, although the law said that she owned them, she did not, could not really own thinking human beings any more than she herself could be owned — and her people were not just thinking human beings — they were smart, and had thought up all sorts of ways to run the place more efficiently. In fact, seldom did a week go by that an idea was not brought by a slave to the manager of the plantation.

She decided that she could afford to experiment, since everything was running so smoothly, so she freed, legally, two of her house servants and offered them wages to continue doing the same work. She asked them to be quiet about it and they were, but, nonetheless, the legal paperwork had to be filed in the Courthouse.

Despite the primitive communications of the 1840s, word spread immediately that Mrs. Routt had freed two of her slaves, and that generated rumors and more gossip. Madison County was really about evenly divided on the issue of slavery. There was a side that realized that slavery was inefficient, and which looked forward to the recent inventions, such as the cotton gin, which would help replace human or other animal power with machines and there was a side which put those thoughts aside and just cherished the legal right to actually own another human being. Both of these sides were, of course, overshadowed by the increasing friction between the northern and southern states. Slavery was not really a primary issue between the two groups, but was often presented as the only real issue.

Elizabeth Routt's freeing of two human beings had just about the same effect as if she had buried a couple of more husbands.

Abner Tate had lived near Mrs. Routt's plantation for quite a few years, and had seen the beautiful young woman over a number of years, both casually, in town and socially at a Christmas party or some other gathering of those in the Hazel Green area who were of a certain social status. He had also noted with some curiosity, the procession of husbands into and out of her plantation home, which she had acquired with husband number three, Mr. Jeffries.

A married man himself, Tate had refrained from paying a great deal of attention to Mrs. Routt or to her affairs even though he knew that he was

strongly attracted to her. He even tried to put aside his strong negative feelings when he learned that she had freed two slaves. As a slave owner he felt that all those who were owners needed to pull together to counter the forces, mostly from the North, which were trying to disrupt the way business, mostly farming, was done in the South.

Abner Tate's wife died about the same time as Mr. Routt and, after a reasonable period of mourning, he began to find his attention turned increasingly toward his neighbor, the widow Mrs. Routt. Actually, he became infatuated with her and believed himself to be falling in love with her, although they had actually had no contact since the deaths of their spouses.

And then some of his cattle got loose and into one of Mrs.

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Rouff's cotton fields. She got into her buggy and drove to Mr. Tate's place and told him in no uncertain terms that his cattle were damaging her cotton and that he must immediately get them back on his property and that he might have to pay her for the damage to her crop. Tate felt that he had been rejected and began to brood and then to grow angry. He was the type of person who either liked you or hated you, or in the case of Mrs. Rouff, loved her or hated her. The incident of the cattle and her response to it turned his love to hate. He resolved to "do her in."

His first claim was that her cattle had damaged his crop, never mind that the opposite was really the case. Mr. Tate was rather savvy, and he knew that local gossip would carry his story quickly, and that Mrs. Rouff tended to be rather quiet so her version would likely not be believed. Not satisfied with the switch in the cattle story, he zeroed in on Mrs. Rouff's former husbands, all now dead, and began to tell tales about how she had actually murdered them. Although there was no evidence to support his claims, the "grapevine" still picked up the story and it spread throughout Madison County. Not yet satisfied, he began to openly accuse her of murder, and, finally, wrote a book laying out his claims of her notorious murders. Those claims, he stated, were supported by her

hat rack with six old hats on it. Needless to say, it did not occur to him that few men would accept the presence of former husbands' hats held out before them.

Elizabeth Rouff finally could take no more of Tate's harassment, and filed a lawsuit claiming defamation of character. She was normally a quiet person, but not one to be taken lightly when she spoke.

It really wasn't much of a trial, and in fact, it was rather ridiculous, and she had found herself shouting in the courtroom like she was a fishmonger's wife. The judge finally continued the trial to her great relief and once again Elizabeth gave up. A short while later she dropped the charges against Tate.

The transfers of ownership of the plantation may be traced in the Courthouse, but Elizabeth Rouff and her son simply disappeared from any recorded history in the Madison County area. Rumor was that they had moved to somewhere in Mississippi.



*Money can't buy happiness  
but it makes misery easier to  
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