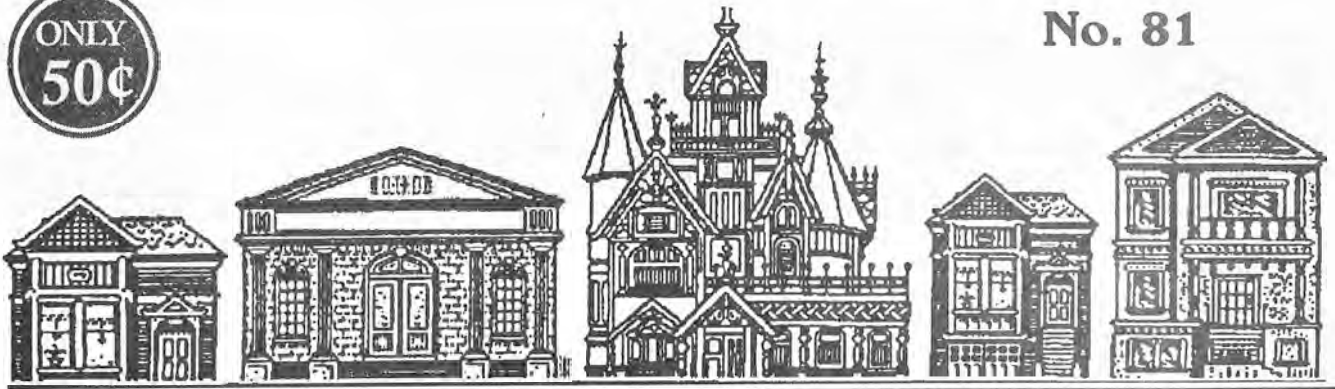


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No. 81



Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY



Aunt Eunice

"We were so poor we couldn't afford to pay attention," is how Eunice Merrill described growing up in rural Madison County. "But my parents taught me that the most precious thing you could have were your friends."

With that thought in mind, she opened up a small restaurant and though she never became a business tycoon, her friends soon numbered in the thousands.

And somewhere along the line, she became Huntsville's favorite Aunt.

Also in this issue: The Sword of Bushwhacker Johnston

AUNT EUNICE

"We were so poor we couldn't afford to pay attention!" is how Aunt Eunice, with a twinkle in her eye, described growing up in rural Madison County.

Eunice Merrill was born into a society, in 1919, that had not changed much since the Civil War. Madison County was still largely agricultural with most people living on small farms and raising cotton as their sole cash crop.

Her father, Joseph Franklin Jenkins, had moved to Madison County in the 1880s with his mother when he was three years old. Known as a hard working and industrious man, he married Mary Madgeline Hornbuckle and purchased a small farm near Piney Woods, now known as Cave Springs. Even for a hard working man though, with little money to hire help, raising 250 acres of cotton with a pair of mules was a backbreaking task.

"I started working in the fields before I was ever old enough to go to school," recalls Eunice. "I remember when I was just a little girl and Mama made me my first (cotton) picking bag out of a flour sack. I never was very good at picking cotton but we were all expected to do what we could."

If Eunice wasn't very good at picking cotton, her brothers and sisters probably made up the difference. In all, there was a total of twelve siblings, six brothers and six sisters.

"My father was a minister and named all of his children after figures in the Bible. My brothers were Phillip,

Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James and John, and my sisters were Martha, Ruth, Mary Madgeline, Naomi and Elizabeth. My friends used to tease me by saying we had the whole Bible sitting at the supper table!

"We had a two-horse wagon when I was young and I remember once when we were coming back from church and Mama started counting heads. No matter how she counted, she kept coming up one short! Finally, Mama made Daddy turn the horse around and go back to church where we found one of my sisters curled up under a bench asleep.

"My father was a deeply religious man who never missed a church service the whole time I was growing up. He and my mother were called on constantly whenever there were sick folks in the community. I remember many times when there would be a knock on the door in the middle of the night from someone needing help. My parents never said no to anyone.

"He performed a lot of marriage ceremonies. I remember one time when a couple, wanting to get married, came to our house late at night after we had gone to bed. Daddy never said a word. He just married them, wished them luck and went back to bed. Another time, he married a couple in a cotton field, at the end of the rows. I've often wondered if they picked cotton for the rest of that day!

"All of us had our own chores and one of mine was helping with the washing. Mama had this big



Old Huntsville

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black wash kettle that we would build a fire under in the backyard, and my job was stirring the clothes with a big wooden paddle. We put bluing in the water to make the clothes whiter. Later, when I was grown and got my first washing machine, I thought that was the most wonderful invention in the world.

"As a family we were pretty self sufficient. We raised most everything we ate and Mama made a lot of our clothes out of flour sacks and fertilizer bags. I

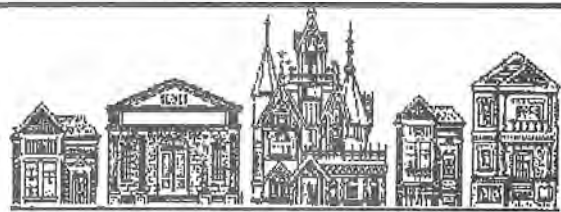
remember carrying lunch to school in a tin bucket. Sometimes, if I was lucky, I would trade a couple of ham and biscuits for a peanut butter sandwich. At that time I thought only rich people ate peanut butter.

"I was twenty years old the first time I ever came to town. It was at the end of cotton picking season and as a special celebration Daddy carried us to the County Fair. I had never seen so many lights and so many people. The thing that really impressed

me the most though was the cotton candy. I had never tasted anything like it.

"I suppose it's difficult for anyone who never picked cotton to understand how happy we were when it was finished. We would get out in the fields at first light, sometimes freezing to death, and work all day long bent over picking cotton. There was no comfortable way to pick it. If you bent over, your back killed you and if you worked on your knees you got gouged by sharp

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rocks and thorns. If I was working for someone else I got paid .50 cents a hundred pounds, or .50 cents a day for chopping cotton.

"The only good times of the day were lunch time and quitting time."

In 1940, Eunice met and married a local farm-worker named Leonard Merrill. Though the couple soon had three children, any thoughts of her becoming a typical housewife soon vanished. The area was still recovering from the worst depression this country had ever known and simply putting food on the table was often a Herculean task.

"I did housework for Mrs. Butler, who lived down the road, and also helped take care of her children. I was paid six dollars a week for six days a week. It doesn't sound like much money now, but we did whatever we had to do back then.

"Later I went to work for my brother-in-law who owned a small restaurant in Farley. I made \$15.00 a week and the first time I got paid I was scared to death. That was the most money I had ever had at one time!"

The restaurant was a popular gathering spot for local politicians and people wanting favors. One local wag claimed there was more business conducted at the restaurant than at the courthouse. For a young country girl like Eunice, it provided a valuable insight on how politics were conducted at the time.

"There was a back room in the restaurant with a big wooden table and every Monday morning the sheriff (Oliver McPeters) would do his business there. People who wanted to pay a fine or wanted a favor, would wait their turn to see him. Of course,

all the business was done in cash. Sometimes the whole front of the restaurant would be full of people waiting to see (or pay) some politician in the back room.

"The first thing I learned in the restaurant business was how to pour coffee and the second thing was how to keep my mouth shut!"

After a few years Eunice de-

cidied to open her own place, called the Butler Grill, across from the old Butler High School.

"I borrowed seventy-five dollars on my life insurance policy to open the restaurant with," recalls Eunice. "I don't think I was ever so scared in my life as I was at the thought of losing that money.

"I opened at 5 o'clock in the morning and stayed open until



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about 9 or 10 o'clock at night. Sometimes I would run out of food before I had a chance to go to the store. I remember late one night when a bunch of rough looking men came in and ordered hamburger steaks. They had been up for several days gambling and you could tell they were all drinking. Anyway, I had to tell them I was out of hamburger steaks. Next they ordered pork chops and again I had to tell them I didn't have any.

"Finally, one of the men grinned at me and said, 'Miss Eunice, you just cook us anything you have!'

"I cooked them the biggest breakfast you ever saw and before they left they told me that if anyone ever tried to bother me, to just give them a call.

"I didn't think much about it until they started to leave and I saw they were all carrying guns!"

Although Eunice worked long hours and tried everything she could think of, she finally realized that if she was going to make a living from the restaurant she would have to find a different location. Its location across from the school proved to be a magnet for the kids during recess and lunch. Though the restaurant was often packed, she simply couldn't make a living on the nickels and dimes the children spent.

The one legacy from the location however, was the addition of "Aunt" to her name. While most of her friends called her Eunice; to a youngster, calling an adult by their first name was unheard of. The kids solved this problem by simply calling her, "Aunt Eunice."

In 1952, Aunt Eunice moved to her present location on Andrew Jackson Way. Though at first her business seemed to

thrive, the new location brought problems she had never faced before. The city began widening the street in front and her customers were forced to run a gauntlet of construction work to get to the restaurant. Whenever it came a hard rain, the nearby drainage ditch would flood, often leaving the restaurant with six inches of water covering the floor.

Thankfully, the city soon finished the road construction, but though it would be several years before the flooding was fixed, her customers solved this problem by simply sitting on the tables when necessary!

Needless to say, by this time Aunt Eunice had built up a loyal following who were willing to put up with such "minor irritations."

Part of her success had to do with the country ham and homemade biscuits she had, by chance, begun to specialize in.

One of her loyal customers was Homer Atchley, who at the time was the Weights and Measurements Inspector for service stations across North Alabama. Many of the service stations, in an effort to make extra income, sold country cured hams which were displayed prominently in their front windows. The fact that the stations did not have a permit to sell food made the practice illegal. According to legend, Atchley also had an insatiable appetite for country ham and biscuits, which at the time, Aunt Eunice didn't sell.

Atchley, allegedly solved this problem by simply confiscating the hams and delivering them to Aunt Eunice; who would then cook him all the ham and biscuits he could eat.

With her business starting to make a small profit, Aunt Eunice decided it was time to take care

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2. Rocket Boys: A Memoir - A young boy builds and launches rockets - by Huntsvillian Homer H. Hickam, Jr. (\$23.95).
3. Huntsville Entertains - A favorite cookbook back in print - by Historic Huntsville Foundation (\$18.95).
4. Wernher von Braun: Crusader For Space - an illustrated memoir by Ernst Stuhlinger (\$32.50).
5. Huntsville - A Timeless Portrait: Color photos of Huntsville and Huntsvillians by Dennis Keim (\$15.95).
6. Alabama Baptists: Southern Baptists In The Heart Of Dixie by Wayne Flynt (\$29.95).
7. Circle Of Years: A Caregiver's Journal by retired Presbyterian minister Houston Hodges (\$8.95).
8. Storied Ground - Facts and Fiction of Maple Hill Cemetery by David Chamberlain (\$12.95).
9. Hard Times - The Civil War in Huntsville and North Alabama by Charles Rice (\$17.95).
10. Glimpses Into Antebellum Homes of Huntsville & Madison County, 8th edition (\$12.95).

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of another problem. She had never learned to drive and had for years depended on other people for transportation.

"I didn't know nothing about cars but I decided it was time to learn. I called Ray's Auto and told them to bring me a car. They must have though I was crazy because when they asked me what kind of car, I said one that I can drive! They brought me a 1956 Buick."

"I talked a friend of mine into teaching me and the first time I got behind the steering wheel she told me to just keep going until I hear glass breaking. When I looked over at her a few minutes later, she was sitting there with her eyes clenched shut and holding onto the door with both hands!"

As the years began to pass, Aunt Eunice and her restaurant became a fixture in the community. It was no longer just a restaurant where you went to eat, it was more like visiting with a favorite member of the family. If you received a promotion on your job, you stopped by to tell her. If you became the proud parents of a new baby, Aunt Eunice was one of the first people you told. For many people, who had moved here from out of town, she became the replacement for the family they left behind.

Politicians began stopping in to take the pulse of the voters and editorial writers visited in search of stories. Astronauts, generals, sports legends and movie stars all ate breakfast and rubbed elbows with whoever might be sitting next to them. For people with out of town guests, Aunt Eunice's Country Kitchen became a place they had to go to.

Most people however, re-

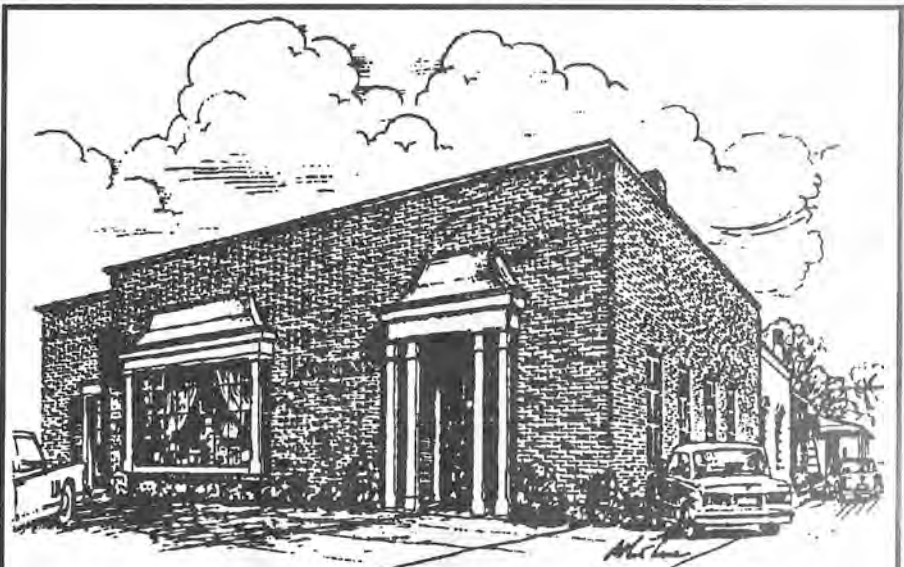
turned time and again for the warmth of the lady who had become everyone's Aunt. Everyone who visited left with a kind word, a smile or a hug.

A devout Christian, Aunt Eunice has made it a practice to treat everyone the same-- a fact that Congressman Bud Cramer can testify to. Shortly after being elected to his first term, Bud walked in one morning and started to sit down when Aunt Eunice stopped him.

"Don't sit down yet," said Aunt Eunice. "Help clear the table off first!"

Jeff Enfinger recalls ordering breakfast one morning, only to have Aunt Eunice tell him that if he's going to be a politician he needs to learn how to pour coffee. With that, she thrust a coffee pot in his hand and told him to go wait on the tables.

Being well-known can also have its pitfalls; a fact Aunt Eunice discovered in the pre-dawn hours of October 19, 1995, when she was brutally attacked and robbed. Though left for dead, she managed to attract the attention of a next-door neighbor who immediately summoned



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help. Within minutes she was transported to Huntsville Hospital where doctors worked to stabilize her condition.

As Huntsville begin to wake up to a new day, the news of the brutal assault on Aunt Eunice was greeted by an incredulous mixture of outrage and disbelief. The district attorney's office and the police department were besieged by phone calls from citizens demanding swift justice. Television crews did live updates from the hospital and newspapers across the country headlined the phenomenon of a woman whom a whole city claimed as their Aunt.

Aunt Eunice recovered from the attack and within days was back at the restaurant, once again greeting visitors with a smile and a hug.

As Aunt Eunice has grown older she has fallen victim to the crippling disease of Arthritis. Partly because of it and partly because of a desire to help others, she has become involved with the local Arthritis Foundation. "I'm too old for them to help me," she said with an impish smile on her face. But after a mo-

ment's serious reflection, she added, "Though I pray they might be able to help someone else."

Probably more so than anyone else in Huntsville, Aunt Eunice has become the symbol of good will for people visiting our city. Hardly a week goes by that she doesn't get a letter from someone who has visited her restaurant. Often times they are addressed simply "Aunt Eunice, Huntsville, Alabama."

Driving down Andrew Jackson Way today you almost have to know what you are looking for to find Eunice's Country Kitchen. Surrounded on three sides by a gravel parking lot, the little brick building is almost nondescript in appearance. If pressed, Aunt Eunice will proudly tell you that she purchased all the gravel herself, a reference to some politician who years ago offered a "favor" in return for her support.

It's only when you walk inside and sit down that you begin to discover the uniqueness that has made it a Huntsville attraction. The chairs are mismatched. You can still get sorghum syrup if you ask for it and if you have been

there at least one time before, you are expected to help pour coffee.

The walls are still covered with autographed pictures of the famous and infamous and there's always a group of people sitting at the Liar's Table.

And, I'll bet you a cup of coffee that you see Aunt Eunice hug someone before you leave.

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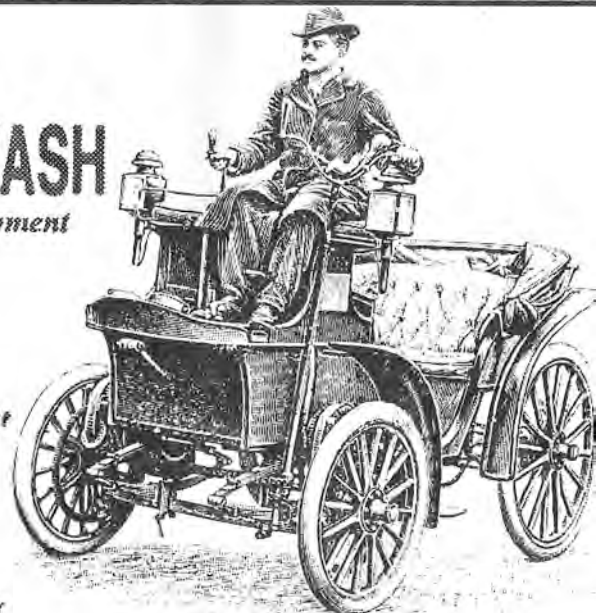
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Dear Editor

Dear Editor,

I have a personal interest in a follow-up article on the Dallas Mill, as the last link I have found for my great grandmother Margaret Cobb was in the Huntsville City Directory for 1916-1917. She was living at #2 Davidson Street at the time. Supposedly there is a store at that corner which was a part of the Dallas Mill area and some of the original houses still stand. But, I was also told that there was a cemetery that was a part of the Dallas Mill immediately behind that store and now there have been houses built on that land with some of the tombstones still remaining literally under the homes. I am wondering if there was a name for this cemetery and a list of the occupants. This links directly in with the request for a list of flu victims for the 1917-19 flu outbreak.

Martha Yount

Dear Editor,

I'd be remiss if I didn't tell you how much I enjoy most of your feature articles - especially so for the one on Wernher von Braun. Jacquelyn Gray obviously did a thorough job of interviewing her resource people. Dr. von Braun was a remarkable man and your article shows him up proud.

Another memorable article was the one on Dallas Mill. Al-

though I never lived in Huntsville, my mother's dad was the timekeeper at the mill for many years. Mother receives the paper as a gift from my first cousin, Mrs. Grace Maynor, who lives in Huntsville today. Mother and Dad were both born in Huntsville and Mother now lives about a mile from us here in Arapahoe, North Carolina. She celebrated her 95th birthday on October 7, and enjoys excellent mental health and good physical health.

She often uses your paper to expand on one of your news bits - the older the better.

Our readership doesn't do much for your ad base, but it is mighty fine marketing for the city of the Big Spring.

Charles Tomlinson - Arapahoe, NC

Dear Editor,

There is one more sidebar to the story of Huntsville's Southwest Molester. At that time I was

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the courthouse reporter for the Huntsville News (back when there was a Huntsville News) and the district attorney's office was part of my "beat."

During one of my routine visits to the DA's office, one of the assistant prosecutors confided that they had been doing their homework on the SW Molester case and ran into a surprising problem: Due to the way Alabama law was written, getting a felony conviction against the molester might involve using an almost-forgotten Reconstruction-era anti-Klan law.

I confirmed the information with DA Fred Simpson. According to state law at that time, burglary was a felony only when it was committed with the intent of committing another felony, such as robbery, theft, rape or murder.

But the molester wasn't doing any of these other things once he broke into his victim's homes. (At least publicly, at that time the police weren't associating the earlier rape with the molester, since rape wasn't part of the

molester's routine.) The physical abuse was classified at the time as assault and battery. Since he wasn't committing felonies inside the houses, the police couldn't get him for felony burglary.

At that point, it seemed, the law classified the crimes associated with the molester as misdemeanors. That's when Simpson or his staff found the anti-Klan law, which was apparently passed during Reconstruction to protect freed slaves. It was called "Whipping While Masked" and made it a felony to wear a mask while whipping another person. Wearing a mask while whipping or physically abusing his victims was part of the molester's "routine" and the DA was serious about prosecuting the molester on "Whipping While Masked" if that was what it would take to get a felony conviction and some serious prison time.

I went back to the office and wrote the story, which ran on page one the next morning. People in Huntsville weren't very happy about that loophole in the

state law. The story stirred up quite an uproar, including something I didn't expect.

The Alabama Legislature was in session at the time and within a day or two after the story appeared State Representative Jim Smith (now Judge Smith) introduced a bill to establish as a felony the crime of "sexual assault." The House passed it the following Tuesday. The Senate passed it on Thursday. I believe Governor James signed it into law on Friday.

From that point on, whenever the Southwest Molester broke into a woman's home and sexually molested her, he was committing the felony of sexual assault AND the felony of first-de-

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gree burglary. And those were the first charges filed against John Dejnozka after he was arrested. The story about "Whipping While Masked" was the only thing I remember writing that led to a law being passed.

Phillip Gentry - Huntsville

Dear Editor,

Enjoyed your article in the #80 issue of "Old Huntsville" very much. It brought back old memories. At White Sands, New Mexico, the German scientists had half of a hanger building to assemble the V-2 and I had the other half to assemble the Nike missile. They were brought each day from Fort Bliss (where I lived) by bus and returned each evening. I was at the El Paso Airport waiting for clearance to continue our flight to White Sands when the V-2 flew overhead and landed in the Juarez cemetery. I didn't see it go over, however.

I'd like to correct a little geography - in the story it said that the German personnel lived and worked north of the Trinity site, but they were south of it. White

Sands is north of Fort Bliss and on the east side of the Organ Mt., and Trinity Site is farther north and on the west side of Organ Mt. Another good article might be one on the families of the German personnel who had to remain in Germany before coming to the states.

Ed Bradshaw - Huntsville

Dear Editor,

I live in Nashville now but I was reared in Huntsville and can't tell you how much I enjoy reading your stories, many of which I remember. Some of these tales pertain to things I vaguely heard about when I was small and it is good to read about them in greater detail.

My nephew Butch Alcock gave me a subscription last year, for which I am very grateful. He also gave me a copy of your book, *The Way it Was* and I was especially interested in the chapter about the strikes in the cotton mills in 1934. I also remember my father being shot. My father was Monroe Alcock, who was president of the Dallas Union. He

developed blood poisoning from the gunshot and almost died.

I am interested in obtaining a copy of your book so that I can send it to a friend in Arizona. She is a descendant of John Hunt. She receives a copy of "Old Huntsville" every month and enjoys it immensely.

Lillian Hawkins - Nashville, Tennessee



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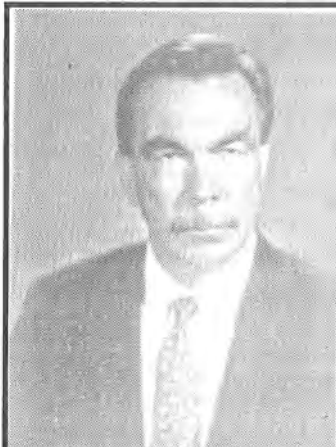
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Death On The Glass

from a 1908 newspaper

No doubt one of the most remarkable pieces of glass to be found in the possession of anyone in the entire county is in the hands of the editor of the DECATUR NEWS. It is a remarkable but eerie picture on a large door glass which was photographed by a flash of lightning a few weeks ago. The picture on the glass tells of an eerie death, graphically portrayed in every detail.

This is the history of the picture. One the afternoon of August 7th, S.W. Goree was standing in the door of his home on Ninth Avenue in West New Decatur, watching an electrical storm. His wife was standing near his side. Almost instantaneously, a stroke of lightning killed Mr. Goree and



seriously shocked his wife. (She recovered.) A bed within the house on which two children slept was torn into kindling wood. (The children were unhurt.)

There was a large glass in the front door, where Mr. Goree was standing when he was killed, and it has just been discovered that there is a perfect picture on the glass which was photographed by the lightning flash. In the picture Mr. Goree is shown with his

head slightly upturned and watching the storm cloud. A large fig bush which stands in the yard is also shown and a portion of the yard fence also appears. A house and a small strip of woods, fully a quarter of a mile away, are shown in the picture as are also two telephone poles about a hundred yards from the house.

Plainer than all is the picture of Mrs. Goree. She is shown with her lips slightly parted as if in the act of speaking. The bolt of lightning which killed Mr. Goree and seriously shocked Mrs. Goree is also plainly photographed on the black glass.

The picture on the glass was only discovered a day or two ago and is now on exhibition at the office of the Decatur News. Hundreds of people have visited the office to see the glass during the past two days. It is regarded by all who see it as one of the greatest phenomena ever known.



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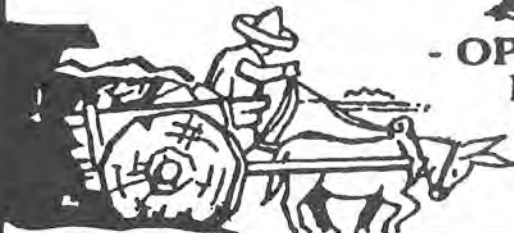
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Absurd News

Police in Nashville, Tennessee interrogated a suspect by placing a metal colander on this head and connecting it with wires to a photocopy machine. The message "He's lying" was placed in the

copier, and police pressed the copy button each time they thought the suspect wasn't telling the truth. Believing the "lie detector" was working, the suspect confessed.

A Memphis man who later said he was "tired of walking" stole a steamroller and led police on a 5 m.p.h. chase until an officer stepped aboard and brought the vehicle to a halt.

A burglar trying to steal a safe was killed when it fell on him. The 600-pound safe was inched toward the stairs by the man but he couldn't contain it as it began its descent down the stairs, with him in front trying to push it back. The safe contained insurance papers.

When two service station attendants refused to hand over the cash to an intoxicated burglar he threatened to call the

police. When the attendants still refused, the thief picked up the phone and called. When the police arrived, they promptly arrested the man.

The Chico, California city council enacted a ban on nuclear weapons, setting a \$500 fine for anyone detonating one within city limits.

A bus carrying five passengers was hit by a car in East St. Louis, but by the time police arrived, fifteen minutes later, twenty-one pedestrians had boarded the bus and were complaining bitterly about whiplash and back injuries.

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Huntsville Coffee Talk

by Aunt Eunice

With pearls of wisdom contributed by the Liar's Table



Hello to all my friends. Well, fall is in the air and it's time for my Arthritis breakfasts. So many of my friends turned out for my first one on October 13. It was wonderful to see you all. My second breakfast will be on October 27 from 6 a.m., to 11 a.m. I hope to see all of you here!

A dear friend, **Mrs. Ruth Dodd** of Decatur just celebrated her 99th birthday on October 6. She's a delightful lady who's still going strong. I think her regular attendance at **Grant Street Church of Christ** might have something to do with her health and vigor. While I'm on the subject, I want to congratulate the guys at **Twickenham Church of Christ** for the great success of the Internet Conference.

We hear that County attorney, **Julian Butler**, is doing a lot of traveling these days. Washington D.C., and Little Rock, Arkansas

all in the same week? If he's not careful he's going to end up on a talk show.

Ms. Mayor stopped by the other morning for a sack of ham and biscuits. She's doing a wonderful job and we're always glad to see her.

Kirk Linback was our breakfast winner for guessing last month's picture. Our little boy pictured was WAFF 48's **Dan "the weatherman" Schmit**.

The politics are really starting to heat up. It won't be long now before we know who the winners... and losers are. So, get out there and vote for your favorite candidates. **Joe Whisante** had a wonderful Bar B Q recently. We should all give a big thank-you to our Sheriff for the hard work and good job that he does.

For all the people complaining about the jail, I have only one

thing to say... **Give our Sheriff enough money to run the jail properly!**

Monica Lewinsky and **Bill Clinton**-- I'm tired of hearing about it, but I don't want to be the only columnist in the country that has never mentioned their names.

Boy, is **Jeff Enfinger** working hard! I see him all over town. He told me last week that he had five events to go to in one day. Keep up the great work, Jeff. We love you.

One of my helpers at the first Arthritis breakfast was **Mrs. Sandra Moon**. She was really impressed with the turnout and support for the Foundation. It made her feel more like she's a part of Huntsville.

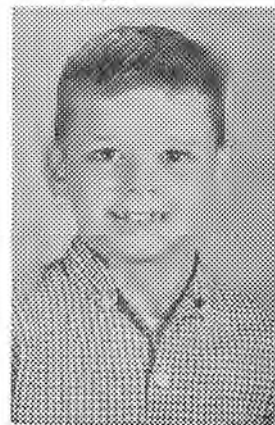
Sandra Rhodes is working non-stop to win the race for Superintendent of Education for Madison County Schools. You guys had better watch her!

Our sympathy goes to our

Photo of The Month

The first person to identify the little boy 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: Civic minded business leader



Last month's photo was Dan Schmit

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friend **Patrick Jones** in the death of his Daddy. Happy birthday to **Byron Laird**-- boy is he white headed. I wonder how old he is?

Whatever has happened to our friend, **John Cockerham**? We haven't heard from him since the city council race. Could this be the quiet before the storm?

A lot of politicians could take a lesson from city councilman, **Glenn Watson**. He actually spends more time working than he does worrying about getting reelected.

On a personal note, I wish they would get that mess at the Veterans Home straightened out. Our Veterans sacrificed a lot for us and they deserve the best we can give them.

Everybody had a great time at the Thai Garden party to send off one of our best local historians, **Charles Rice**. I understand "Chuck" was roasted and toasted until the early hours of the morning. We lost him, but only for awhile, to Thailand where he's teaching English, of all things.

Reba Neaves does a lot of hard work helping me here, but you should have seen her work at the **Jackson Way Baptist Church Health Fair**.

A Great Big Hi to **Liz Hurley**. I sure hope you're feeling better. Pray for her-- she is a super lady.

Bud Cramer sent us his regrets that he couldn't come for my Arthritis breakfast on October 13. He is really working hard for us. But, remember folks, I'm giving Bud a **Party** here on **November 3**. Then we're going on to vote. Hope to see everybody here on November 3. I'm also really proud of Bud for running such a clean campaign.

Keep a close eye on **Nelson Papucci's** race for the State House. It's going to be interest-

ing to see what people believe.

Congratulations to **Glenn** and **Jody Sisk** on their first wedding anniversary. Love you. Also, congrats to my waitress, **Ramona**. She and her husband, **Ronald**, celebrated their sixth anniversary on Oct. 16.

I was really sorry to hear that **Mr. Ed Boston** was leaving Huntsville Hospital. He's a wonderful man and he's done great things for the hospital. God Bless.

My little sister, **Elizabeth Lyon**, recently had heart bypass surgery and I can't tell you how happy I am to say that she's doing well.

I want to tell all you **Senior Citizens** out there that you should consider going to the **Crime Prevention Class**. It is well worth your time!

Once again dear friends, don't forget to **Vote** on **November 3**. Hope to see you soon, and as always, I love you all.

Aunt Eunice

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Potato Soup

- 3 slices bacon
- 1 sweet onion, chopped
- 1 carrot, chopped
- 3 c. potatoes, sliced thin
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1 c. water
- 1 c. shredded cheddar cheese
- 3 c. milk
- 1/2 c. cream

Cook the bacon in heavy sauce pan til crisp. Remove and drain for later use. In the bacon drippings, saute the onions and carrots. Add the water and potatoes, simmer til they are tender. Add the seasoning and milk, let heat to boiling and add cream. When you're ready to serve, sprinkle the crumbled bacon and cheese on top.

Pistachio Salad

- 1 c. cottage cheese or sour cream
- 1 small can pineapple chunks, drained
- 2 small packages of pistachio jello
- 2 c. miniature marshmallows
- 1/2 c. nuts, chopped
- 1 12-oz. container whipped topping

Mix cottage cheese and pineapple in bowl with hand mixer. Sprinkle jello granules over mixture in bowl while beating. When mixed, stir in marshmallows, nuts and whipped topping. Dip into serving bowl and cover. Refrigerate til ready to serve.

Banana Salad

- 1 egg, slightly beaten
- 1/2 c. sugar
- juice of a lemon
- 2 T. sweet cream
- 1 c. roasted peanuts, chopped
- 8 bananas

On top of a double boiler mix together the first three ingredients, place over boiling water and cook til thick, stirring constantly. Remove from the heat and add the cream. Cool totally, slice bananas crosswise into a bowl. Add the peanuts, add the sauce to the bananas and toss. Sauce can be made earlier in the day. Mix together just before serving.

Cabbage Casserole

- 1 medium cabbage
- 1 t. salt
- 3 T. butter
- 3 T. flour
- 3/4 c. evaporated milk
- 1 1/2 c. Cheddar cheese, grated
- 1/2 c. bread crumbs
- 2 T. butter, melted

Discard outside leaves of the cabbage and slice it coarsely into a saucepan. Add the salt and enough boiling water to cover. Boil it uncovered til just tender - about 7 minutes. Drain, save the water. In a saucepan melt 3 tablespoons of butter, blend in the flour, add the evaporated milk



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and 3/4 cup of the water drained from cabbage. Stir and cook the sauce til it boils and thickens. Add a pinch of salt. Place a layer of cooked cabbage in the bottom of buttered 1 1/2 quart casserole. Pour part of the sauce over cabbage and sprinkle with part of the cheese. Repeat til all ingredients are used, ending with cheese. Sprinkle with crumbs that you have blended with 2 tablespoons butter. Bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes and browned.

Favorite Baked Beans

3 32-oz. cans pork and beans
2 lbs. hot sausage cooked, drained and crumbled
2 t. dry mustard
2 T. yellow mustard
1/2 c. molasses
1 c. onion, minced
1/2 c. brown sugar
1 t. ground black pepper
salt as desired

Mix all ingredients together, add more or less seasoning to suit your taste. Cover and bake at 350 degrees for 50-60 minutes.

Grandma's Meatloaf

1 1/2 lbs. ground beef
3/4 c. rolled oats (uncooked)
1/2 c. onion, chopped
1 c. tomato juice
1/4 c. bell pepper, chopped
2 eggs, beaten
2 t. Worcestershire sauce
1 t. salt
1/4 t. pepper

Preheat oven to 350 degrees and combine all ingredients. Place in a greased meat loaf pan and bake 1 to 1 1/2 hours. You may use a regular casserole dish if you don't have a meatloaf pan.

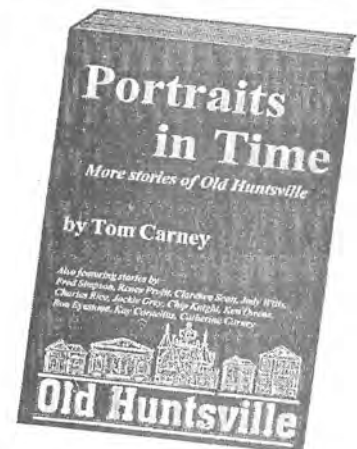
Loaf Bread

2 c. scalded milk
4 T. shortening
2 t. salt
4 T. sugar
1 cake yeast
7 c. all-purpose flour (reserve 1 cup for handling)

Add salt, sugar and shortening to the hot milk; cool to lukewarm. Add yeast and dissolve thoroughly. Add six cups of flour and mix to form very soft dough. Turn onto floured pastry cloth. Use the 7th cup of flour for handling. Knead lightly til smooth. Set to rise in a lightly greased bowl for 45 minutes at room temperature. Shape in 2 loaf pans and allow to rise til light or double in size. Bake 1 hour at 400 degrees.

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An Alabama Heritage

from a 1921 interview with Mrs. Martha Weeden

It is not very often that we are privileged to learn history from the lips of those who helped to make it. Their ranks are thinning 'most as fast as leaves in the Autumn, and precious indeed are the few we are still permitted to honor here for yet awhile. It is one of these few of which we write—a patrician old lady in an old, old home. Although past the allotted three score and ten, she

is very active. Her mind is as clear as it was fifty years ago. She is state historian for her U.D.C., chapter, carries on all her correspondence and does not look to be a day over sixty years of age. True, her hair is snowy white, but her eyes are beautiful as the eyes of youth, and her exquisite face is like a cameo in its beauty—a beauty that seems to borrow the light. That her life has been one of the Golden Rule, there is no doubt. In the fact of the life of the present day, one

can but wonder will our girls of today look anything like the grandmothers of yesterday, when time has checked the years for them?

Let us now go back to a winter evening in 1832, in Huntsville, Ala., when 'mid all the quiet elegance of that faraway day, Miss Jane Locke Brahan, daughter of General Brahan of Huntsville, became the bride of Robert M. Patton, formerly of Monroe County, Virginia, but then of Alabama. Much to the delight of friends and neighbors, they made their home in Florence, where Mr. Patton had prepared a lovely house for his bride. Shortly before the marriage, General Brahan's home at Brahan Springs, near Huntsville, was burned. This house was just above the spring famous for its waters, and which even until this day is known as Brahan's spring.

During the summer of 1832, General Brahan visited Florence, and being attracted by the spring there, he purchased it with 42 acres around it. This spring was known in its Indian name, "Succatania," the translation of which is "Sweetwater," and by that name the place has since been known.



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General Brahan began to build his residence, and had the brickwork up to the windows on the first floor completed when his large planting interests in Panola County, Miss., necessitated his personal attention. On his return he took a severe cold and on reaching Florence, it developed into pneumonia, of which a few days later he died.

He had appointed Mr. Robert Patton executor of the estate, in the division giving the Sweetwater property to Major R.W. Brahan, oldest son of the General, the sons John and Thomas being given the plantations in Panola County, Miss., where they spent their lives.

Major Brahan's wife objected to living in what was then the country, so Mr. Patton exchanged his town residence in part payment to Major Brahan for the uncompleted home at Sweetwater. This Mr. Patton completed in the summer of 1835, moving in at that time. Of the nine children born to Mr. and Mrs. Patton, all save two were born in this old house, and these two (John B., in 1834, and William S., in 1837) were born in Florence. In this house the "Old Master" died in 1885 and "Old Missus" in 1902 went from its portals.

There were seven sons and two daughters born to Mr. and Mrs. Patton, one of which is still living in 1920: Mrs. Martha Hays Patton Weeden. She is the ideal embodiment of antebellum culture, courtesy and kindness, and looks for all the world as if she might have just stepped out of the frame on the wall, where other beautiful pictures are. Mrs. Weeden is the one touch—the one link absolutely needed now, to connect the past with the present, and to make sacred the

old house.

Recently, her reminiscence was so delightful and so full of that not found in books, it is worth of repetition and recognition by those who would know Alabama when the state was young.

Mrs. Weeden is the daughter of Governor Patton and was born, reared and married in the old home she now resides during the summer, and where she spent many years of her happy married life. It is from her lips that we have the story of the house—the house whose walls are 15 inches thick, shutting out summer heat and winter cold. The door and window sills are of solid cedar; the hardwood floors resemble marble, they are so smooth and so white; while mantles and hearths are of Carara marble.

The oil light fixtures are still there, but have been wired for electricity—the same old fixtures that almost a century ago held the lard that was burned instead of oil, for those were the days before petroleum was known. A few of the old locks are still on the doors, and the porches are the very same bannisters, posts and marble hewn steps, just as they were originally built. The long walk and driveway to the gates now is well kept, but in the days gone by it was always kept snow white with Mussel Shoals shells taken from Patton Island. The fountain in the center of the driveway is playing now as it played years ago, and getting water from the same spring.

The ringer, as old fashioned as its name, and the great knobs on the massive front doors are of solid silver. The stairway in the

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old colonial hall is of solid mahogany, as are the appointments of the hall itself all hand carved. The rooms are 23 x 23 feet with the ceilings proportionately high. In these rooms assembled guests who came from end to end of the state and who helped to make the early history of the state.

During the war, at one time twenty wounded Confederate soldiers were there sheltered and cared for, the house being centrally located between the Huntsville and Nashville roads. Its broad lawns were used as camping grounds by both armies.

To the right of the entrance hall is the room where Mrs. Weeden's children were born. The old poster bed—beautiful in its age—has been hers for many years. Originally it was General Brahan's, and is solid mahogany. For a long time this room was Mrs. Weeden's treasure, but now

her two little granddaughters have "moved in" too, and all three enjoy the privileges of a room which to at least one of them is memory shadowed.

"I spend my summers here," said Mrs. Weeden. "I love my Huntsville home almost as well as this one, but this one is just a little dearer, for it was our first home—where we all were reared, and all but two of us born there in that old bedroom, for that was Ma's room. Every inch of it is dear to me," and back she drifted to that other day when memories now were realities then, and feet long stilled made merry through the long halls, and over the stairways where now a younger generation is living life under a different regime.

"The other evening we had a party here," said she, "and how it carried me back to hear the music in the old home. For you

know in this, as one of the homes of the Southland, guests were always so welcome, and times were never dull. We had two fiddlers on the place, and they were always so pleased and proud to play for the company.

"These rooms were the parlors and were always open. Here we had the best of times—and even the shadows of war were not as long as the shadows that fell over the old home when they carried loved ones from its portals. I stayed until Ma went, and then I could stay no longer. The house was closed then until my son, Mr. Weeden, decided to make this his home. I was delighted for it is too sacred for strangers' feet—they would not understand.

"So, you see, these rooms have double associations. My mother danced like a fairy; but father never. Something went out

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of life with the friendship of those olden days—when your trouble was your neighbor's and their joys yours as well—something that has never come back with all the present day things. I have a number of letters written by my father to my mother—and they are so lovely. He wrote her as if she were a fairy queen—just a little above the earthland. Why is it that men do not love women like that these days?

"There in that cellar," said Mrs. Weeden, "there are seven rooms down there: the wine room, preserving room, pantry, wash room, housekeepers'

rooms.

"There were originally 400 acres to this plantation, and the grounds known as the Wilson Dam reservation was at one time part of the estate. The mistress of the plantation had no position of leisure, she had to superintend the cutting room—the sewing of garments and dresses for the family."

As she remembered, there in the corner, the old spinning wheel was standing alone—waiting for the one who was gone to return and finish her work. But, like the guided hands that once worked it, its work was over and its tasks were done.



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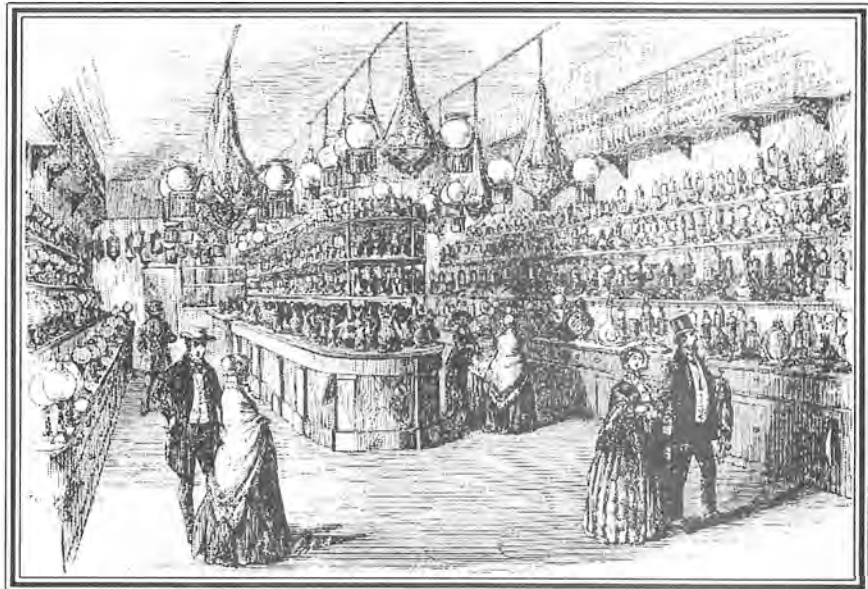
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by Raneë Pruitt

Early History Of Madison County

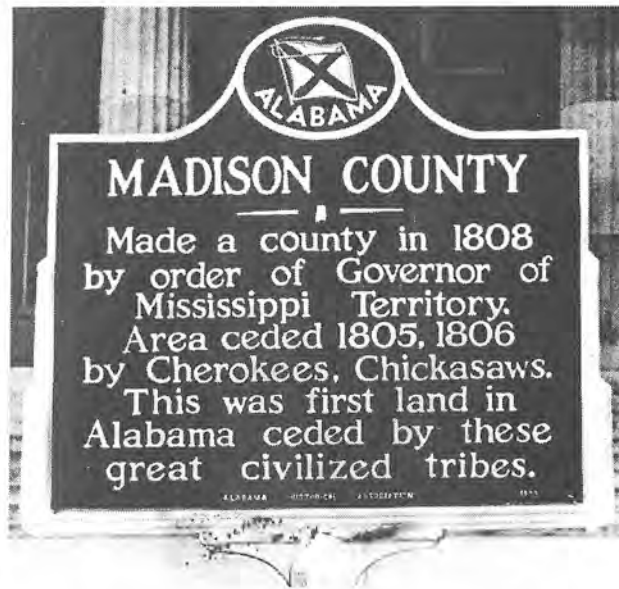
Taken from the forthcoming "Madison County Heritage" book. This book is anticipated to be out around Christmas. If you did not order a copy of the book, you may purchase one in the Huntsville Heritage Room at \$69.25 as long as the supply lasts. All proceeds from the book go to the Heritage Room.

The land in the Great Bend of the Tennessee River got the attention of the nation before 1800. In a way, the recorded history of the white man's claims to the area go back all the way to the first land grants given for North Carolina, which included land "...westward to the Mississippi River." The initial white settler incursions into what is now Madison County were somewhat promulgated by Georgia, which claimed the land to the Mississippi River until it was purchased from that state by the United States and designated as part of the Mississippi Territory. While under Georgia's rule, the legislature of that state had sold huge tracts of what is now northern Alabama for the ridiculously low sums (for example, all of northern Alabama was sold for \$60,000).

The northern Alabama area remained part of the Mississippi Territory (with the capitol at Washington, a small village near Natchez in southwestern Mississippi) until March 3, 1817. At that time it became the Alabama Territory until statehood was attained in 1819. The word "Ala-

bama" literally means "thicket clearers" in Indian language of the area.

In his last year in office (1796) U.S. President George Washington appointed Benjamin Hawkins as Indian Agent to se-



cure the Great Bend against the encroachment of settlers. Protection was denied any white man in the area, and in 1802 Georgia sold all rights to the western lands to the U.S., for \$1.25 million. The Chickasaws gave up their claims in 1805 for the original Madison County lands. The Cherokees surrendered their lands in the original county boundaries in 1806.

On December 13, 1808,

Madison County was created by proclamation of the Governor of the Mississippi Territory. A census was completed in January of 1809 and is still on record. It shows that there were already 353 heads of families, with 1150 free white males, 723 white females, 2223 total whites, and 332 slaves. The county was named Madison in honor of James Madison. The naming of the county was done six days after Madison's election to the Presidency.

There is not always agreement on just who the first permanent white settler of the county may have been. However, most indications point to a trader named Ditto being located on the Tennessee River among the Indians by 1802. The Criners settled in the northern part of the county along the forks of the Flint River around 1804.

In the latter part of that year, the Criners hosted John Hunt and a companion (identified as David, William, or Andrew Bean, depending upon source), who were exploring for the Big Spring that they had heard about. When they found it, they completed a cabin that had already been started and (apparently) abandoned near the spring. Mr. Bean returned to stay overnight with the Criners on his way back home to the Winchester area of Franklin County, Tennessee. John Hunt went back into Tennessee to bring his family back to the spring in early 1805, thus becoming the recognized first settler of what is now Huntsville.

LeRoy Pope garnered the land around Huntsville's Big

Spring at the 1809 sale, displacing John Hunt, who bought land further south, in the area now west of south Memorial Parkway and along Airport Road. LeRoy Pope systematically planned development of his holdings into a town and took steps to assure its growth by providing for public works and spaces. For his actions he became known as the "Father of Huntsville" even though his preferred name for the town was Twickenham. Pope's choice for the town name was used until December 9, 1811, when the Mississippi Territorial Legislature responded to a petition from citizens who wished to honor John Hunt by renaming the town to Huntsville. At that time, Huntsville became the first town in Alabama to be incorporated.

The year 1809 marked the beginnings of county government organization as well as Huntsville's municipal beginnings. Louis Winston was appointed Attorney General for Madison County in March of that year. Clerk of the Circuit Court was Peter Perkins, and Clerk of the County Court was William Winston.

The first recorded duel in the county was between Clement Comer Clay and Dr. Woody Tate. The year 1811 also brought the first water pollution law in what is now Alabama when an act was passed making it unlawful to pollute Indian Creek.

Andrew Jackson became familiar with the area during the War of 1812-14 when, among other times, he encamped his forces in Huntsville on the way

to quell danger from the Indians to the south. President Jackson continued to visit Huntsville over the years to race horses at John Connally's track near his Green Bottom Inn. John Connally built his inn where Alabama A&M University is now located at Normal Alabama. The inn burned years ago.

The year of 1814 is thought to be when Charles Cabaniss set up Madison County's first cotton mill near Hazel Green. About a year later Francis Cabot Lowell established the first cotton factory in the United States to handle the entire process of textile production.

U.S. President James Monroe appointed Dr. William Wyatt Bibb of Huntsville as Governor of the Alabama Territory on September 25, 1817.

Gabriel Moore of Huntsville was the first Speaker of the House, and he was replaced before expiration of his term by Samuel Walker. James Titus continued to vigorously pursue his obligations in the new Council. When none of the other Council Members showed up in St. Stephens, he carried on business as a one man upper house. He called his own meeting to order, answered the roll call of all present (for himself), and proceeded to elect himself as President of the Council. He introduced and voted on bills, made appointments, and finally adjourned the meeting, ending his lonely vigil.

The year 1817 also included a smallpox scare for the county,

as doctors gathered on the east side of the public square in the Huntsville Inn, then known as Talbot's Inn, to discuss control of the problem. On the industrial side of things, Madison County's first steam mill was put into operation on July 29, 1817. By March 2, 1819, the U.S. Congress approved plans for the Alabama Territory to prepare a constitution for statehood.

One report said that 44 delegates came from 22 counties on July 5, 1819, to begin the official Constitutional Convention. Another report put the number of delegates at 48. The first meeting was held in a building at the corner of Gates and Franklin Streets. By August 2, 1819, the task was finished. The constitution had some unusual aspects, especially for the time. Among the more unusual features were a prohibition against importing slaves from Africa, liberal suffrage provisions, and bans against discrimination between rich and poor or religious practices.

On October 25, 1819, the Legislature met in temporary quarters in the Huntsville house of Irby Jones (the Huntsville Inn). The Senate later met in the house of John K. Dunn. By November 7, representatives were meeting in the Madison County Courthouse. The session ended on December 17, which was three days after Congress admitted Alabama to the Union as a state. William Wyatt Bibb became Governor of the state in inaugural ceremonies held at the Madison County Courthouse.

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Huntsville Happenings in 1907

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

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

The city street force and Superintendent Murphy are making improvements in various portions of the city. California Street is being graded and put in good condition. Granitoid pavements are being placed on Locust Street

in accordance with the promise made the realty firm that developed the property further out this street.

Good use is being made of the street force, and the convicts who are sentenced to hard labor are required to do the good work.

The raid made by the police last night on the disorderly house produced good results. Mary White, Ret Wales and Jenny Humphrey were fined \$100 each with the option of working out the fines at the rate of .50 cents the day. Charlie Mason, a young man who was caught in the house was fined \$100. Mary Davison, an inmate of the house, was given 24 hours in which to get out of the city and unless she is gone by that time she must pay a fine of \$100 or begin a term of 209 days labor. Four young men who were caught in the same raid were discharged.

Dave Pointer was fined \$5 for using profane language in the presence of females. Lacy Clemens was fined \$5 for leaving a team unhitched. R. Dervis,

drunk and disorderly, was fined \$20. F. L. Oates, drunk, was fined \$10 and John Sutherfield for drunk and disorderly and for carrying a pistol was given a term of 60 days.

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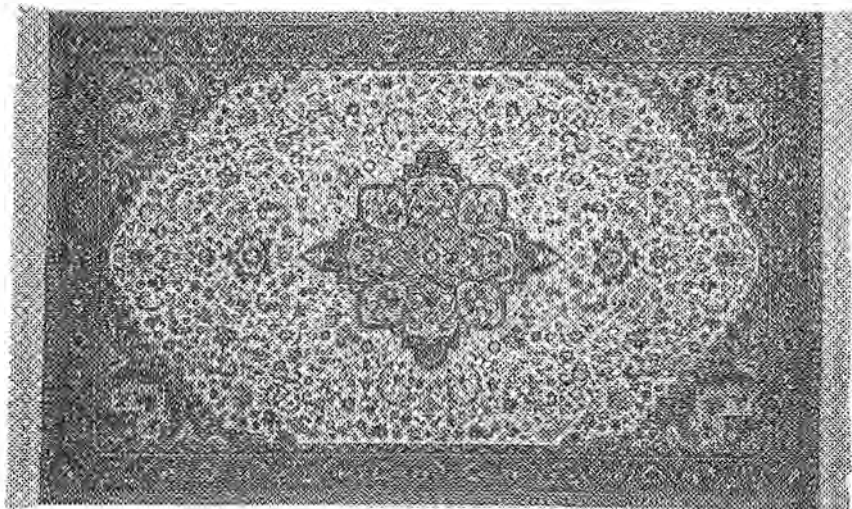
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Thoughts From The Depression

"They called it Black Friday. A flash came over the news that lots of people lost their money, their homes-- everything they had. People lost their fortunes and there were lots of suicides. There was one entertainer, his name was Eddie Cantor, he was one that lost his fortune. He said, 'I made it once, I can sure do it again.' And he did. He helped put the spirit back in the country."
Victor Newby

"When the train crew would see us out there looking for coal, sometimes they'd throw off some chunks for us. Most people who had a job did something to help us out. Everybody was good neighbors back then."
Jody Wilbanks

"Ma would use flour sacks to make our clothes. Our best dresses would be from the flour sacks with the little flowers on the front."
Phyllis Terrill

"I remember waking up on a cold morning to the smell of



breakfast cooking on the old wood burner. My favorite was squirrel gravy. Mom served it up over buckwheat cakes. It was pure ambrosia. What I would give to taste my mother's gravy and biscuits just one more time!"
V. Donovan

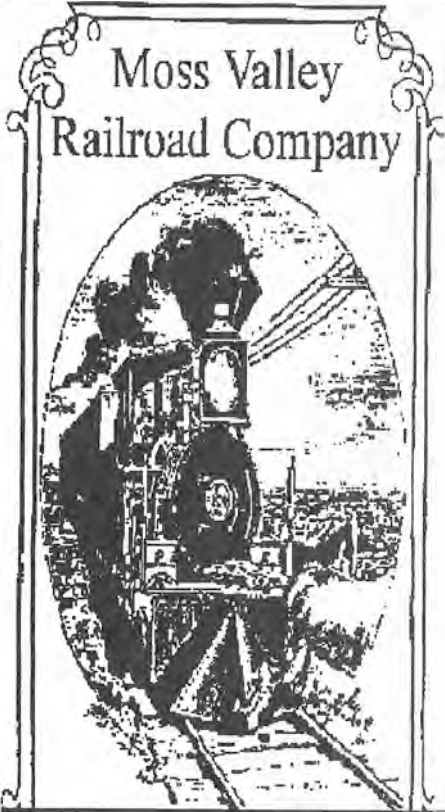
"Quilts were the final resting place for our clothes. When no piece left was big enough to make a patch or cover even a small body they went into the quilt box."
Mary Jo Kennemer

"On Christmas we would get an orange in our stocking. Everybody got an orange, it was the only thing we could afford."
Bennie Thompson

"We ate a lot of beans and mush."
Jeannie Smith

"Gravy was salt, pepper, flour, water and grease if you had it. All drippings were saved for the day you might need them."
Beth Emory

*I was married by a judge.
 I should have asked for a jury.
 George Burns*



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The Youngest Soldier

by Norman Shapiro

Of the many claims that prevailed after the War Between the States as to who may have been the youngest Confederate soldier, Berry H. Binford's chronicle was certainly one of the more valid ones. Berry was a member of the large Binford family who were early and prominent residents of Limestone, Madison and Morgan counties, Alabama. His first

cousin, once removed, Peter Binford, volunteered for the infantry despite being almost forty-four years old and was probably the first person from Huntsville to die in the war when he fell sick and died in Virginia on May 20, 1861.

Berry was born in Limestone County, Alabama, on April 14, 1854. His father, Dr. Littleberry H. Binford, was a surgeon in the Confederate Army. The boy, when about nine years old, struck out to find his father and reported to General Wheeler, who took him to be a Federal spy sent in by some of the Union people. The General kept an eye on the little chap and finally turned him over to Col. Josiah Patterson, Commander of the 5th Alabama Cavalry, who knew Dr. Binford and at once assumed care of the boy. As he would not go back home, a pony was secured for him, a gun was sawed off at the proper length, and he was recognized from that time on to the end of the war as a soldier.

It is said that young Binford and another boy, not much older, undertook to do a little special



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service at one time. They went out between the lines, somewhere up in North Alabama, threw up some small breastworks and awaited the advance of the Federals on the opposite side of a small river. The column came in sight and the boys opened fire as if backed by an army, which the Federals naturally supposed to be a fort. The boys held the fort a whole day and when night came on they scampered off and rejoined their command several miles away.

Berry H. Binford died while on a business trip to Monroe, Louisiana on September 12, 1889. Some years later, Col. Josiah Patterson wrote, "B.H. Binford came to my regiment when a mere child. I would say that he was not exceeding twelve years of age. He was the son of Dr. Binford, a well known physician in North Alabama, whom I knew well. The father, when I saw him, represented that the boy had such a passion for the army he thought it best not to control him because otherwise he might run away and join some other command. Binford was certainly the youngest soldier I ever saw and he performed the duties of a soldier with alacrity. He was a child in arms, but bore himself in an astonishingly manly way."

With regard to "a child in arms," a Mr. W.R. Johnson of Nashville, Tenn., also wrote in 1897 in the *CONFEDERATE VETERAN*: "I am the youngest Rebel in existence; was fourteen months of age when, on the 19th of May 1863, I lost my right arm while held to my father's breast when fighting in the saddle for our dear but lost Confederacy."



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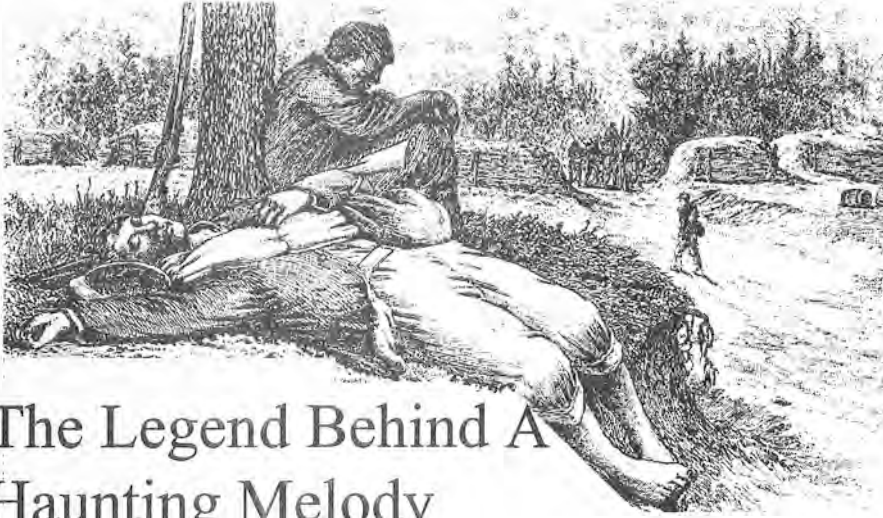


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The Legend Behind A Haunting Melody

by Chuck Yancura, Mayor of Madison, Alabama

Marc Jacobson, president of the Madison City Council and a graduate of West Point, gave me some information he had come across on the history of "Taps," the music that gives nearly everybody chill bumps when they hear it.

The story began in 1862 during the Civil War when a Union Army officer, Capt. Robert Ellicombe, was with his men near Harrison's Landing in Virginia.

The Confederate Army was on the other side of this narrow strip of land. During the night, Ellicombe heard the moan of a soldier who lay mortally wounded on the field.

Not knowing if it was a Union or Confederate soldier, the captain decided to risk his life and bring the stricken man back to his camp for medical attention.

Crawling on his belly through gunfire, the captain reached the stricken soldier and began pulling him toward his encampment.

When the captain finally reached his own lines, he discovered it was actually a Confederate soldier, but the soldier was dead.

The captain lit a lantern. Suddenly, he caught his breath

and went numb with shock. In the dim light, he saw the face of the soldier.

It was his son.

The boy had been studying music in the South when the war broke out. Without telling his family, he had enlisted in the Confederate Army.

The following morning, the heartbroken father asked permission of his superiors to give his son a full military burial despite his enemy status. His request was partially granted.

The captain had asked if he could have a group of Army band members play a funeral dirge for his son at the service. That request was turned down, since the young man died fighting for "the enemy." However, out of respect for the father, they did say that they would give him one musician. The captain chose a bugler. He asked the bugler to play a series of musical notes he had found on a piece of paper in the pocket of the dead youth's uniform. The wish was granted. The music was the haunting melody Americans now know as "Taps," used at all military funerals.

Reprinted from the
Huntsville Times

Know Your Rights



**New Health Insurance
available for low income families**

The State of Alabama has recently announced implementation of a federal health insurance program for children which supplements Medicaid by providing free or low premium coverage for children who live in households with income below 200% of the federal poverty level. It is called *All Kids*.

Under *All Kids*, households with children under the age of 19 who are otherwise uninsured, can apply for free health insurance provided by Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Alabama and/or (in certain counties) by Prime Health, if household income is less than 150% of the federal poverty level. For example, a household of three people qualifies if monthly income is less than \$1,706.26.

If the household income exceeds 150% of the federal poverty level but is less than 200%, household children qualify for *All Kids* upon payment of a *limited fee*. The annual premium is only \$50-\$60 per child for the first 3 children and there is no additional premium for 4 or more children. Additionally, there may be a copay of up to \$5.00 per service.

To qualify, a child must be under age 19; an Alabama resident; a U.S., citizen or an eligible immigrant; not be covered under any health insurance (including Medicaid); not be in an institution; and not be eligible for dependent coverage under state employees' insurance.

Applications are available at the local County Health Department as well as many clinics.

All Kids supplements existing Medicaid programs, including coverage for *pregnant women and children under age 6*, who qualify for free Medicaid if they live in households with income below 133% of the federal poverty level; and for *children between the ages of 6 and 19* who qualify for free Medicaid if they live in households with income below

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.

To make a donation or receive information on how you can help, contact:

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An Official Message

This message was attached to a refund notice that an "Old Huntsville" reader recently received from the Internal Revenue Service as part of their "simplification" process:

"Effective January 1, 1987, the current interest rate we pay, when you overpay your taxes, is one percent less than the rate of

the interest we had charged when you underpaid your taxes. However, if we refund an overpayment to you with interest, and we have to increase your tax at a later date, we'll give special consideration to the interest on these accounts. On a tax increase after the refund, we'll charge the lower refund rate of the interest on the tax instead of the higher underpayment rate of the interest. We will charge the lower interest rate on the new tax up to the amount of the refund for the same period of time we paid interest on the overpayment."

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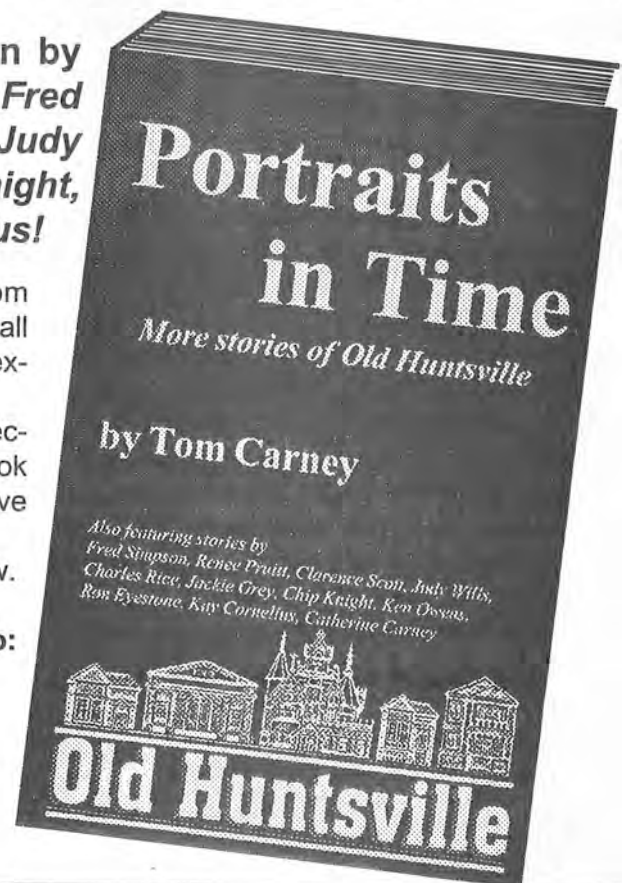
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The Gathering

by Suzie Nolen

Dearly beloved:

We are gathered here today to pay our last respects to the dearly departed.

We are gathered here today and aren't the flowers beautiful?

We are gathered here today because there will be food after.

We are gathered here today because I just saw him last week and he looked fine.

We are gathered here today and thank God for a good baby-sitter.

We are gathered here today and somebody's wearing some high-smellin' cologne.

We are gathered here today and most of the pallbearers look too old to be bearing anything.

We are gathered here today because when I was very young, the dearly departed slipped Wrigleys spearmint gum to me every week during Sunday school and Mother never noticed.

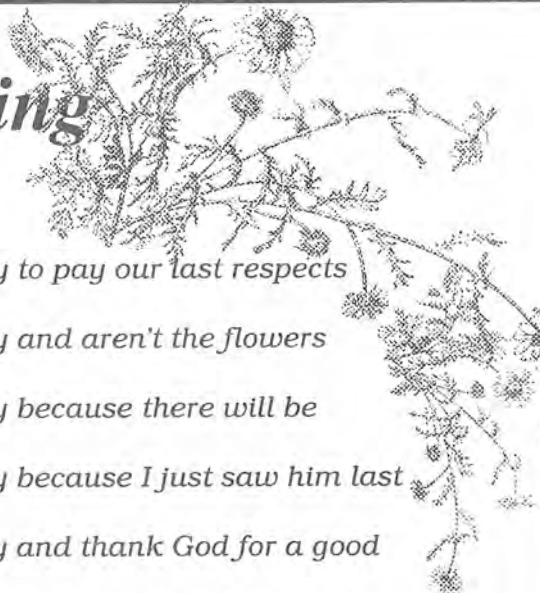
We are gathered here today because I didn't go to the hospital to visit.

We are gathered here today because Buster was the same age as my father.

We are gathered here today to sing the songs, read the scriptures, give thanks for the gathering.

We are gathered here today and I can't read the hymn through my tears.

We are gathered here today because every minute is precious.



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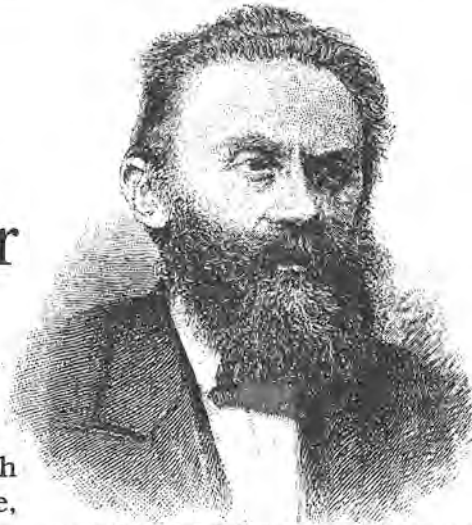
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The Sword of Bushwhacker Johnston

by Charles Rice

War seems to bring out both the best and the worst in people, and the longer a war lasts the more exaggerated the differences become. Yet, few soldiers in modern conflicts have stooped so low as to make war on women and children. It happened in our Civil War however, and right here in Madison County.

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



and [Lt. Col.] Johnston's men are regular cavalry, yet they persist in calling them bushwhackers and, if any of them are unfortunate enough to fall into their hands, they are treated as such!"

Eventually, the Union general commanding in Huntsville would be forced to issue orders forbidding his men to "forage" outside the city.

Mrs. Chadick had correctly identified the Yankee's sore spot: the so called bushwhackers.

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

On Jan. 11, 1865, an addi-



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

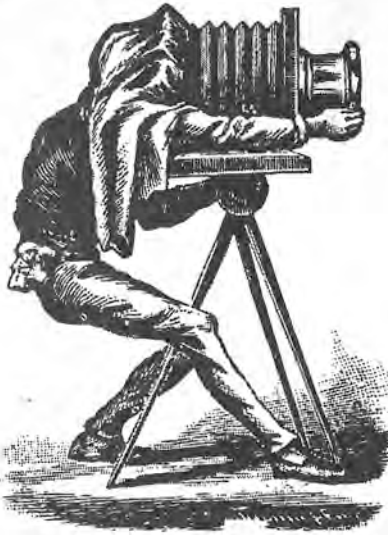
The 101st Ohio had been in Huntsville less than a week when they made the bushwhackers' acquaintance. A forage party of four men with one wagon had been sent out to seize whatever food they could find for the use of their regiment. Lieutenant Elbert J. Squire accompanied the men to keep them under control. Lt. Squire realized that sending so small a party was asking for trouble. Nevertheless, his superiors refused him more men. Sure enough, on the morning of January 17, Squire and his foragers were captured in Kennamer's Cove by a body of men in civilian clothes who

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

An irate Colonel McDonald quickly readied his regiment to punish those who dared to attack the 101st Ohio. Issuing his men three days rations and filling their cartridge boxes, McDonald led them south down Big Cove road. It was 7 o'clock p.m., by the time the regiment started, but McDonald was unconcerned. There would be plenty of time for sleep once these haughty Rebels had been taught a lesson. On the morning of the 18th, McDonald was joined by Lieutenant David C. White and twenty-five men of the 15th Pennsylvania Cavalry. Accompanying White was the notorious Benjamin R. Harris, an

Alabama turncoat who wore a captain's uniform and scouted for the Yankees, but had no official standing in anyone's army. Neither McDonald nor White questioned this villain's dubious credentials. They also were unaware he had the reputation as a cold-blooded murderer. Yet "Captain" Ben would show his true colors soon enough.

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



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

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

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

While Ben Harris might bear the blame for the arson, Colonel McDonald was solely responsible for an act that almost brought warfare to the streets of Huntsville itself. This was the arrest and imprisonment of an inoffensive young wife and mother. Her name was Mary Elizabeth Johnston.

Among the houses burned near New Hope (then called Venna) was that of a Methodist minister named John Hicks Hamer. Rev. Hamer peacefully went about his business of trying to support his family as best he could during the troublesome

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times. Unfortunately for Hamer however, his sons were all in the Confederate army. Furthermore, his daughter, Mary Elizabeth, was the wife of Milus E. "Bushwhacker" Johnston. That was reason enough for the Yankees—and the Hamer and Johnston families had already been burned out twice. The first time the bluecoats destroyed Rev. Hamer's two-story frame house, they forced their way in and one soldier knocked Mary Elizabeth to the floor. The Northern hero promptly struck her over the head with a burning broom, scorching her hair and burning numerous holes in her dress. The plucky Mrs. Johnston seized a poker from the fireplace and flew at her enemy, driving him from the house. Nevertheless, the Yankees burned both buildings before they left, forcing the families to seek shelter as best they could.

"Does it not seem," asked Milus Johnston, "that any set of men, who were right in either heart or head, would have called off their troops by this time, and let the family have a little rest?" Perhaps they might have, had it not been for the hated Tory, Ben Harris. One can easily picture the gloating Harris pointing out the Hamer home and ordering the Pennsylvanians to destroy it. Oddly enough, it had been Rev. Hamer who had married Harris to his wife. No one knows what had made Harris so bitter towards his old friends and neighbors. Probably it was just plain meanness. "The pleadings and prayers of the women availed nothing," wrote Milus Johnston long afterwards, "for the house was set on fire. By an extra effort of the women, while the

house was burning, they succeeded in getting out a part of their furniture, but had to stand with tears in their eyes and see the balance consumed under the last roof they had to shelter their heads. But to cap the climax, the colonel proceeded to arrest Mrs. Johnston, tearing her infant from her breast and forcing her to leave it at home, which was then nothing more than the woods. He then placed her in the saddle and made her ride horseback twenty-five miles through the roughest weather of that winter."

It was late afternoon when McDonald and his men started back for Huntsville, carrying their female captive with them. Overtaken by darkness, they had to spend the night in the Big Cove. Lt. Col. Johnston, "having been on a long scout, was returning, and spent the latter part of the night in the upper part of the valley, perhaps within six miles of his wife," he recalled in 1902. "Had the husband known the condition of his wife, it is probable the Big Cove would have witnessed a scene entirely out of the regular channel of nature," wrote Johnston with barely concealed emotion. "But he did not know." Johnston's deep devotion to his wife is evident in his writing more than thirty-five years

after the event. "It, perhaps, would have been hard to find a more perfect model of woman kind," he remembered. "About the medium height; weighing one hundred thirty-five pounds, she stood erect, with her head always thrown aloft; large dark brown eyes with heavy lashes; her hair almost as black as a raven; while her rosy cheeks showed the pic-

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ture of health."

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

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

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

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

Johnston was fully prepared to do exactly what he said. Fortunately, the suicidal mission did not become necessary, and Mary Elizabeth Johnston was soon freed for several reasons. First, Captain Robert Welch, one of Johnston's company commanders, was then conveying thirty-five Union prisoners to the Confederate authorities. Learning of Mrs. Johnston's arrest, the outraged Captain Welch sent a note to the Union commander threatening to hang his prisoners unless Mrs. Johnston was released immediately. More significant however, was the revulsion most of the Union soldiers felt for Col. McDonald's conduct. John W. Horner, Lieutenant Colonel of the 18th Michigan Infantry, was provost marshal at the time. Horner was a martinet who made many enemies among both the Southern civilians and his own army. Nevertheless, even he was disgusted by the arrest of the

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unoffending woman. Conveniently, Doctor Thomas A. Wright of Paint Rock happened to be in the city at that time. Horner told him, "Doctor, if I knew how to get Mrs. Johnston home, I would set her at liberty." Doctor Wright, an old friend of the Hamers, promptly offered to see her home. The provost marshal wrote out passes for both doctor and mother, and the young woman was soon on her way back to her four month old daughter and her other children. Yet Colonel McDanald was still not out of the picture. With unbelievable arrogance, the Ohio officer halted the pair on the street, tore up their passes and told them, "Mrs. Johnston is not a prisoner of the government, but she is my prisoner." Doctor Wright returned to the provost marshall's office and informed Col. Horner. Seeing his authority threatened, it was the proud Horner's turn to become angry. Writing out new passes, he told the doctor, "Now, you go on and if that fellow interrupts you again report him to me, and I will teach him a lesson he will not soon forget." With that Doctor Wright and Mrs. Johnston left the city and returned home without further incident.

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

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

It is not hard to grasp his meaning.

The Sword of "Bushwhacker" Johnston by Lt. Col. Milus E. Johnston, a 240 page soft bound limited edition with photos and added names on the roster, can be purchased for \$19.95 plus \$2.00 postage from Charles Rice, 118 Calhoun St. NE, Huntsville, AL 35801. It is also available in Huntsville at Shaver's Book Store on Whitesburg Drive. Buy one for Christmas!



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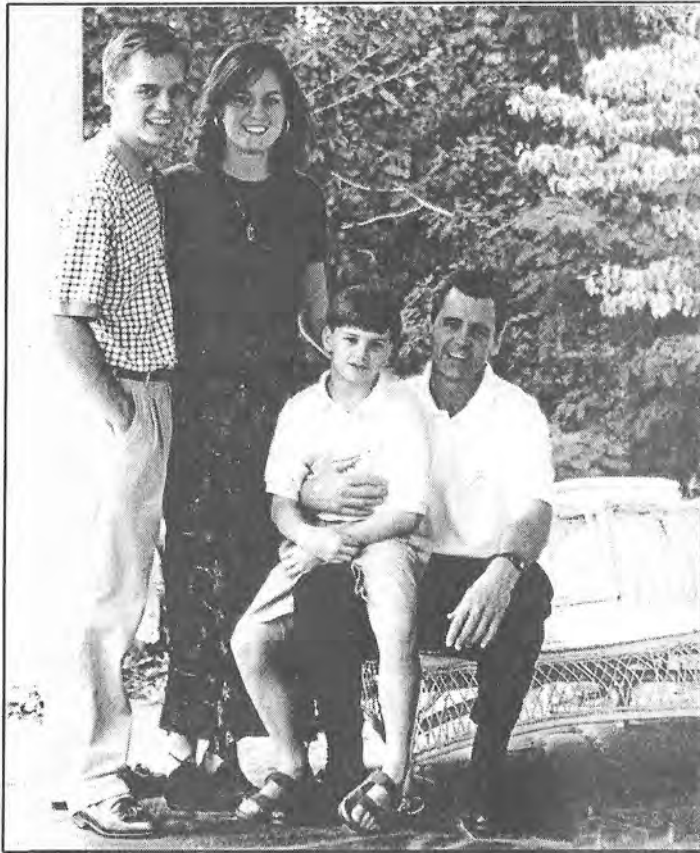
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