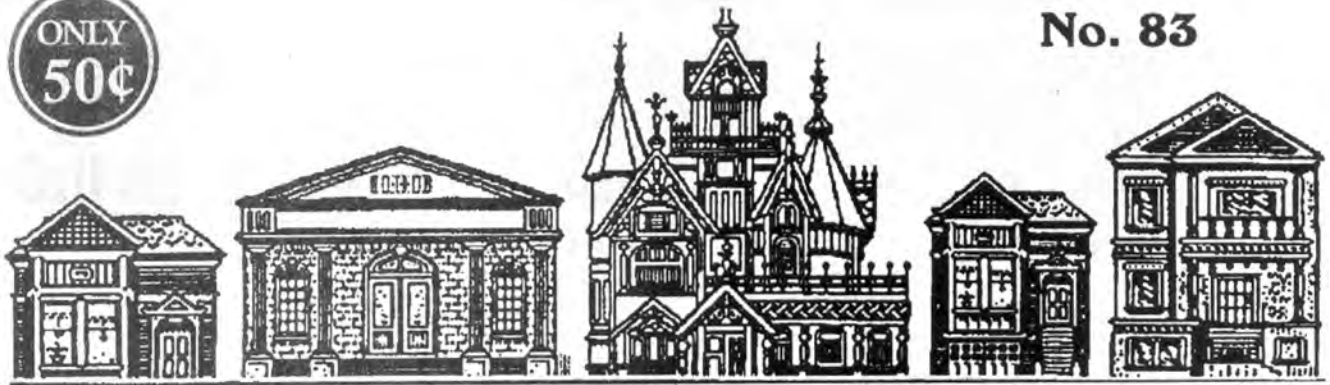


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No. 83



Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY



Damn The State Department!

The Jonestown cult suicides were just another horrible story to most people but when a woman in Huntsville picked up a magazine and saw her son among the bodies it set into motion a chain of events that to this day still have people wondering.

He was her son and she vowed not to rest until his body was returned to Huntsville. A grave site and a tombstone was purchased and a funeral was held. But who did she bury?

Also in this issue: Days of Slavery

Damn The State Department

by Jacquelyn Procter Gray

It has often been said that a mother's love is the strongest bond known to man or creature and such was the case with Marjorie Balisok, and the obsession that drove her to take on the Federal Government.

Our story begins thousands of miles away on November 18, 1978. Rev. Jim Jones ordered the execution and suicide of over 900 people in the Jonestown commune near Guyana, South America. In the weeks that followed, the world learned details of the charismatic madman who started the People's Temple in Northern California. Jones brainwashed a reported 20,000 people to give him their worldly possessions and follow him to a secluded nirvana which he egotistically named for himself. The former director of the San Francisco Housing Authority resigned his post under a dark cloud of controversy to build a society that would relegate everyone to the same social status. Their sacrifices, in the meantime, netted

him millions of dollars in property and cash.

When former members reported cases of abuse-- people held against their will, and others who were killed if they disobeyed Jones, California Congressman Leo Ryan, along with an entourage of newsmen, went on a fact finding trip to Jonestown. Once there, nine cult members pleaded with Ryan to take them back to California. As they loaded into the small plane to return, one member pulled out a gun and opened fire. Truckloads of other cult members swiftly drove in from their hiding place in the jungle to finish off the attack. Congressman Ryan was killed along with four other people.

Jones and the People's Temple were now threatened. In a ritual act that had been rehearsed many times before, Jones ordered that everyone drink poison laced punch. Parents were instructed to give it to their children before ingesting it



Old Huntsville

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themselves. There was evidence, however, that not everyone was willing to swallow the poison; their bullet wounds were not self-inflicted.

Among the millions of people who turned the pages of a *Life* magazine filled with gruesome pictures of Jones' victims, was Huntsville nurse Marjorie Balisok. Suddenly, to her horror, she recognized the lifeless faces of her son, Jerry and his wife. Jerry had been an avid weightlifter, and now as his

mother looked at the muscular torso in the picture she remembered all the hours he had spent working out. She remembered every muscle in his body as only a mother could.

If there had been any doubt in her mind, they were quickly dispelled when she recognized the tank top on the body. It was one she had bought for her son.

Dropping the magazine to her lap, Marjorie Balisok let her mind race over the events that had brought her family to such

a gruesome fate. Jerry was the apple of his mother's eye. His father had died when he was at the impressionable age of 13, leaving Marjorie a widow in her 40's. Jerry's interest in motorcycles led him to start a cycle shop in Huntsville which was financed by a second mortgage taken out on his mother's Pansy Street home. Though at first the business seemed to do well, he soon found himself unable to meet the financial obligations associated with owning a busi-

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ness. With the business failing, and probably unwilling to ask his mother for more help, Jerry started writing bad checks.

Eventually the authorities became aware of his dubious actions and indicted him on thirteen separate counts of forgery. Jerry, rather than face the charges and the possible jail time, chose to flee, leaving his mother to face the consequences by herself.

On the run with his wife and family, the authorities tracked Jerry's whereabouts by phone records and credit card bills. His last contact with his mother was in December, 1977 and he told her then that he was headed to South America with a new identity.

Marjorie Balisok was a short, heavy-set woman who normally did not reach out to people. She was remembered by a former employee of Big Springs Cafe, then located near the Russel Erskine Hotel. Marjorie rode her bicycle to the cafe every morning for breakfast on her way to work, and again stopped for supper on her way home. She was polite, but did not go out of her way to get to know people. All of that changed when she lost her son.

Mrs. Balisok began a David and Goliath struggle with the U.S. Government to allow her to bring her son's body home to Huntsville for burial in the family plot. Every move she made, however seemed to be frustrated by government bureaucracy.


These were the years before DNA testing and government officials were reluctant to release a body without absolute positive identification. The condition of the bodies made this almost impossible and no one seemed willing to simply "take a mother's

word."

When Marjorie was notified that Jerry's body might be released to another family, she intensified her efforts by firing off letters to Senator Howell Heflin, numerous federal officials and news reporters. A 1980 story in *The Huntsville Times* ran the picture she identified, as well as the heartbreak of her struggle. She even suggested that her son's

picture be shown to Jonestown survivors to prove that he was there. Her request was denied on the grounds that officials felt it might be construed as harassment. One by one, she was denied help everywhere she turned. Many people, including Sen. Heflin, wondered how anyone could possibly be identified in the blurry photograph.

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ment on Brandon Street, Marjorie Balisok became an expert on the events of the Jonestown Massacre as well as the life of Jim Jones. Her son Jerry had once called her from Puerto Rico asking for a sum of money that coincided exactly with the amount required by Jim Jones to become a member of his cult. She had already been warned by federal officials not to help him elude authorities in any way. In her research, Marjorie was able to tie Jim Jones to business dealings in Puerto Rico, another connection between Jerry, Jim Jones and the Guyana massacre. Boxes and folders containing her research and handwritten correspondence soon overwhelmed her already cramped apartment.

There were those who coldly accused Marjorie of wanting her son declared dead so that charges against him would be dropped. Some even insinuated that she was after the money from several insurance policies. Others wondered if she was involved in some conspiracy to keep him out of jail.

In reply Marjorie said that she "would have preferred to see him alive and in prison," but there was no doubt in her mind that Jerry was dead. She explained that the insurance policies were to cover his burial expenses.

Marjorie took her battle to wherever she could get public interest and support. She was interviewed by several publications over the years and many wondered how she could be so certain that Jerry was even involved in Jim Jones' cult. In her extensive research, she also must have learned that Jim Jones' cult appealed to people who drifted in no apparent di-

rection. In one interview, she said that she felt Jonestown was the only place her son could go.

Marjorie's tenacity drew the attention of several other interested agencies. Jerry owed American Express \$10,000, along with the many people who had received his bad checks. They were as certain that he was alive as Marjorie was that he was dead. Without positive proof, they wanted the case kept open.

Victims of the Jonestown massacre were taken to Dover, Maryland for possible identification. Because of decomposition, many could not be identified and were taken to Oakland, California for burial in a common grave some six months later. According to a local acquaintance, Marjorie was in California waiting when the victims' bodies were removed from the plane; her intention was to intercept her son's body and bring him home for burial.

Marjorie was determined to bring her son home. She told the officials at Dover that Jerry "wasn't much of a person, but he was my son. I want his body so I can bury him."

Finally, after all of her struggles, there seemed to be closure to the case. In a final act of love for her son, she had a monument placed over his plot at Maple Hill Cemetery. Bitterly angry at the authorities who had caused her so much grief, she had her own frustrations carved into the marble tombstone. The words, "Damn The State Department," serve today as a reminder to everyone of a woman's determination not to give up.

Satisfied that Jerry Balisok was dead, the authorities dropped the outstanding charges against him. A few years later, on May 23, 1983, confident that she

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8. Huntsville Entertains - A favorite cookbook back in print - by Historic Huntsville Foundation (\$18.95).
9. Civilization Comes To The Big Spring - Huntsville, Alabama in 1823 by Sarah Huff Fisk (\$16.95).
10. Hard Times - The Civil War in Huntsville and North Alabama by Charles Rice (\$17.95).

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had done all she could for her son, Marjorie Balisok finally found the peace that had eluded her in life. She was buried next to her son's plot.

There the story might have ended if it had not been for a phone call to the local authorities in the late summer of 1989 inquiring about Jerry Balisok.

"Yeah, we know all about him," was the reply. "He's buried in Maple Hill Cemetery."

There was a long pause on the other end of the phone. Finally, the voice said, "I don't think so. We have him in jail up here in Seattle."

Slowly the story unfolded. A young man by the name of Ricky Wetta in Seattle, Washington had been arrested for shooting a friend, Emmett Thompson, three times in the back of the head and once in the arm while they were supposed to be target practicing in the woods. The twenty-two year old Thompson survived the attack to tell King County Police that Wetta wanted him dead because he knew of Wetta's plot to have his own hotel burned down for the insurance money. Wetta's claim that he shot Thompson in self-defense when Thompson threatened him with a knife was unconvincing and he was charged with attempted murder.

Ricky Wetta's fingerprints were run through the FBI database when it was suspected that he was using an alias. The FBI made the startling discovery that the man held on charges of attempted murder was Huntsville's own Jerry Balisok.

On April 9, 1990, a King County, Washington jury found Jerry guilty of attempted murder in the first degree with criminal intent. He was given a 20 year sentence and fined \$530.02. Al-

though he appealed the verdict, it was reinstated on February 14, 1994.

So who is buried in Maple Hill Cemetery under the tombstone intended for Jerry Balisok?

Despite all the legends, myths and books that have sprung up over the years, the answer is quite different than what most people have always believed. ...

The grave is empty.

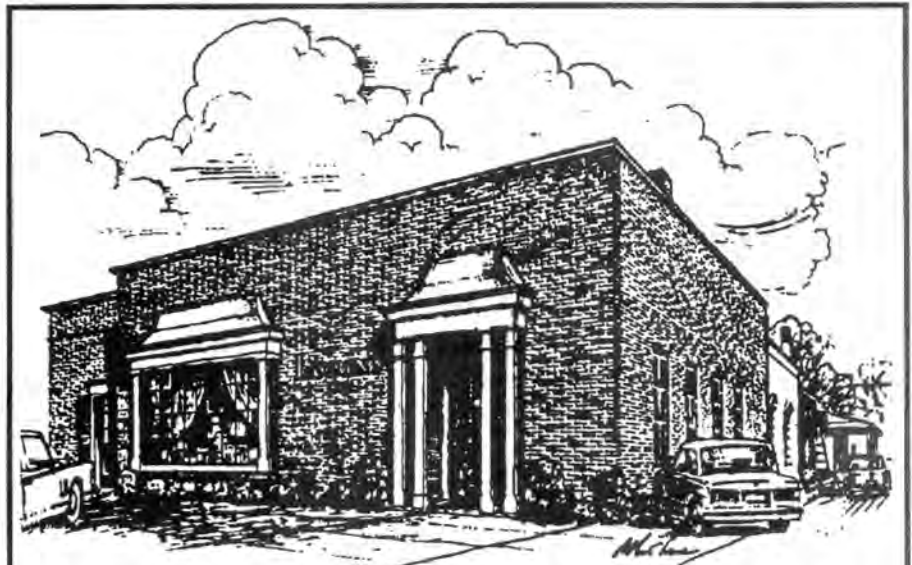
As determined as she was, Marjorie Balisok was never able to convince the authorities that

Jerry's picture was the one in *Life* magazine. Unwilling to have his memory consigned to an anonymous grave in a far away location, Marjorie purchased a grave plot and tombstone, and held her own service for her son.

Frequent visitors to Maple Hill Cemetery reported that Mrs. Balisok often visited the grave, placing flowers and cleaning debris from it. One visitor reported that she acted as though she really believed her son was buried there.

Perhaps she did.

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Farmer Killed For Getting Water From Well

Robert Johnson and Fred Stevens charged with murder, tried before Judge Stewart

from July 4, 1902 Huntsville Herald

News of the killing of John Byrd, a farmer, by Robert Johnson and Fred Stevens, reached the city from the Monrovia precinct Monday morning. The two men came to the city after the killing and surrendered to Sheriff Rodgers, who had no warrant

for them at the time. The sheriff told them to appear for preliminary trial before Judge Stewart in the afternoon, which they did.

It seems that Byrd has for sometime past been getting water from a well on Johnson's place and last Saturday after-

noon when Byrd's boy went for the water, Johnson told him that he could get no more water as the well was getting low and liable at any time to dry. The boy returned home and told his father what Johnson had said to him. Byrd then got a bucket and a double barreled shot gun and said that he would go and get the water anyhow as he must have it. He was accompanied by his wife, son, father and two or three others.

Johnson and his brother-in-law, Stevens, saw the party coming and armed themselves. When Byrd came within hailing distance they told him he must not come to the well. Byrd came on

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and leveled his gun at the two men who were standing in the door of Johnson's home. Johnson opened fire with a pistol, none of the bullets taking effect. Stevens then fired the shot gun and Byrd fell dead, riddled with shot. Some of the shot struck Mrs. Byrd in the arm and badly wounded her. Byrd was shot twice.

Warrants for arrest of Johnson and Stevens were sworn out by the dead man's father and a preliminary trail was held before Squire David Phillips, who held the men for further investigation.

Their regular preliminary hearing was held by Probate Judge Stewart Monday afternoon and Judge Stewart bound the defendants over to await the action of the grand jury. Their bonds were fixed at \$1,000 and were made easily.

All of the parties to the tragedy are well known in the Monrovia neighborhood. They have many relatives in that locality and were all known as peaceable citizens.



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Weird

A man living in England hid in a 21 foot-wide hole under his living room floor, which was covered by a carpet and a sofa. Wanted for an assault charge, he hid under the floor from 1974 until 1982. While under the floor he lost 98 lbs., and had grown a long scraggly beard.

He said upon his discovery in 1982 that he was thinking of what his wife and children were going through. "It was terrible lying there and listening to them talking and playing but unable to let them know I was there."

He was discovered when neighbors reported a vile stench coming from the house.

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Tips from Earlene

To chase your blues away, eat 2 bananas a day. They contain the chemicals Serotonin and norepinephrine, which are believed to help prevent mental depression.

For a great air freshener, buy a bottle of wintergreen (you can

find it at Pearly Gates and Garden Cove) and soak a few cottonballs in it. Lay these balls in closets, bathrooms and hallways for an inexpensive way to freshen up your home.

A very effective makeup remover is Crisco. Just massage a bit of it onto your skin and wipe off with a tissue. Just a tiny bit will do!

If you're like me you will make chili, soup, or other dishes and freeze it in small containers for later, for lunches, snacks, etc. I buy the Rubbermaid containers and freeze the food for later. When I started to run out of containers I didn't want to buy more, I had so many, so I just got out my box of Ziploc Freezer bags, quart size, and put the contents of each frozen container into its own Ziploc bag. I used a laundry pen to mark on the bag what was inside - "White Chili," "Red Chili," "Lentil soup," etc. Now I have all my containers to reuse again, and didn't have to throw away any of my good leftovers!

Never marry anyone who has more problems than you - be it family, financial or emotional.

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

To prevent nightmares from recurring, soak your feet in warm water for 10 minutes. Take half a lemon and thoroughly rub your feet with it, don't rinse but pat dry. Happy dreams!

You couldn't wait to get that perm and now your hair is lifeless and dull. Try this - after shampooing, rinse with a combination of 1 cup of apple cider vinegar and 2 cups water. Your hair will come alive and shine! Or use the vinegar full strength, with a good water rinse afterwards.

If you are selling your home and have some prospective buy-

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ers coming over, try baking a pan of fresh brownies right before they arrive. The delicious aroma of baked chocolate added to the cozy atmosphere may just speed along the decision-making of the buyers.

In the winter I like a good smell always from my kitchen but I don't necessarily always feel like cooking. So I get a small pan of boiling water to which I add: 4 cinnamon sticks, a teaspoon of nutmeg, a teaspoon of ground cinnamon, peels from tangerines or oranges, and a dash of all-spice. Simmer til the water's low, then add some more water.

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

If you get congested at night, try propping up your pillows a few inches more than usual. Also, invest in a cool mist humidifier or warm mist vaporizer.

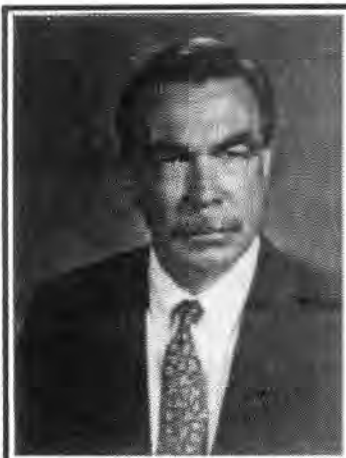
Leather furniture and upholstery may be cleaned with a mixture of one part vinegar to two parts boiled linseed oil, then polished with a dry cloth after cleaning.

Do your shoelaces keep coming undone? Try wetting them next time before you tie them and go out.

For a headache, an old remedy says to wet a piece of brown paper bag with vinegar, coat this with baking soda and tie on the head with something tight.

To clean bottles, put soapy water and crushed eggshells into vases or bottles that are difficult to clean because the opening is too narrow. Shake well and rinse.

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The Legend of Bugger Clark

by Don Lenz

In the latter part of the 19th Century, thieving murderers who terrorized the lower Appalachians were derisively called "buggers." The worst "bugger" of all was a part-Indian, East Tennessee mountaineer named Tom Clark. Before Clark's lynching by the townspeople of Florence, Alabama in 1872, he had murdered, in his words, "nigh on to thirty people."

Immediately prior to the Civil War, "Bugger" Tom Clark was suspected of several unsolved murders and robberies in Lauderdale County, Alabama, but nothing was proven. His unsavory reputation was supported by the rumor that Clark and a brother, Dennis, are

said to have shot their oldest brother in the back for holding out some of the loot from these plunderings.

After having joined, then deserting, the Union Army, Clark surrounded himself with a gang of cutthroats who preyed without mercy on the people of north

Tom Clark said that no one would ever walk over him but today thousands of people drive over his final resting place every day.

Alabama and southern Tennessee.

Perhaps Tom Clark's cruelty is best illustrated by his own confession prior to his hanging. William Rhodes wrote in 1934 that Clark said the only thing that troubled him after murdering a

man and his wife was finding their baby playing at the woodpile. As the baby smiled at him, he ran it through with a bayonet and robbed it of a dime hung round its neck.

Two well-known raids made by Clark's buggers on Florence, Alabama were on April 30, 1865 and September 9, 1872. Early in the morning of April 30th, Clark and about twenty "buggers" rode to the John Wilson plantation. The gang divided into pairs. Two went to the home of George Twiddy, whom they killed before ransacking his home. The rest of the cutthroats held the sharecroppers and slaves at bay while Bugger Tom and a few others went to

the big house.

There, the buggers found Mr. Wilson confined to the bed, being attended by his nephew and grandson. At Clark's command, newspapers were rolled up, doused with turpentine and applied to Mr. Wilson's feet, as

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THE BALLAD OF TOM DOOLEY

Jacquelyn Procter Gray

"Hang Down Your Head Tom Dooley, Hang Down Your Head and Cry..."

The words to this song are familiar to Americans of a certain age as the hit song the Kingston Trio made famous in the late 1950s. What most Americans do not know is that this ballad was first penned some 130 years ago by unknown mountain folk of North Carolina. Based on a true story and a man named Tom Dula, this story is about a man who many believed was executed for a crime he did not commit.

In the late Spring of 1865, residents of Huntsville welcomed home their tired and starving men who fought for the Confederacy. Wilkes County, North Carolina welcomed home the lifeblood of their community, too. Among them was a twenty-one year old man named Tom Dula.

Dula joined the Confederacy in 1862 at the age of 17. He was a private in Co. K, 42nd Regiment, North Carolina Infantry. Dula had been captured by the Union Army and was in the Federal prison known as Point Lookout in Maryland when General Lee surrendered. Like other released prisoners, Dula was required to sign an oath of allegiance to the U.S. Government before his freedom was granted. He signed it two different ways -

Dula, his given name, and Dooley, the name recorded by the Union guard unaccustomed to words pronounced with the Southern dialect. Tom had two older brothers who also bore arms for the Southern Army, but he was the only one of his family to survive.



Tom Dula began his long walk back to the hills of North Carolina with only one certainty in his future, a life of extreme poverty.

"Hang down your head Tom Dooley, poor boy you're bound to die!"

Dula appeared to live a life unencumbered by moral boundaries. He lived with his widowed mother, but spent

much time with a beautiful married woman named Ann Foster Melton. Although Ann had married in her early teens, she carried on an illicit relationship with Dula, to the apparent indifference of her husband. Also involved with Dula was Ann's cousin, Pauline Foster. Pauline moved into James and Ann Melton's home to be near a doctor who was treating her for the pock, a mountain term for venereal disease.

There was yet another cousin of Pauline and Ann whose fate was intertwined with theirs. She was an attractive girl named Laura Foster, who stole her father's mare early one Friday morning to run off and marry her lover, Tom Dula.

"I met her on the mountain, there I took her life. Met her on the mountain, stabbed her with my knife."

What happened that day can only be pieced together by circumstantial evidence brought out in court records.

On Friday, May 25, 1866, Tom Dula made an early morning visit to Laura's house where he woke her before daybreak.

After they spoke softly, he left on foot and Laura quietly dressed and packed a few belongings. She left shortly after without waking her widowed father or four younger siblings. Riding astride her father's mare, she met a woman on the road and explained that she was going to meet Tom so they could go away to get married. Besides Laura's killer, this was the last person to see her alive.

Laura's disappearance ini-

tially invoked her father's anger for stealing his horse. When the horse returned the next day with a broken tether, the community began to realize some growing alarm.

Rumors, speculation, and concerns about Laura's fate settled across the mountain ridge like a cold winter fog. Tom Dula was stoically silent. Men came from miles around to establish a search party for Laura's body. The broken missing half of the horse's tether was found tied to a tree on the mountain ridge near a dark spot on the ground that was thought to be human blood. Attention turned to Tom, who appeared neither worried about Laura nor volunteered to be a part of the search party, a peculiar reaction for a man whose bride-to-be simply vanished.

One month after Laura's disappearance, Tom had his worn boots repaired and walked out of Happy Valley, determined to disappear in Tennessee.

"This time tomorrow, reckon where I'll be, Hadn't it been for Grayson, I'd been in Tennessee."

By the time Tom's boots had worn out again, he was at the farm of Col. James Grayson, a former Union officer, prominent farmer and Legislator. Tom changed his name and worked on Grayson's farm long enough to earn the money for a new pair of boots, and once again began his journey away from his past.

Shortly after Tom's departure, sheriff's deputies arrived at Col. Grayson's farm to arrest Tom for the assumed murder of Laura Foster. Tom's sudden move, and his attempt to hide his identity pointed to him as the prime suspect.

Charges were brought against

Tom Dula and his lover Ann Foster Melton. Although Laura was still missing, authorities felt that there was enough evidence based on an incident related by Pauline Foster, who said that Ann frantically tried to show her Laura's grave in a moment of panic and confusion.

Tom and Ann were held in adjoining cells in the Wilkesboro jail when on September 1, 1866, Laura's decomposed body was found in a shallow grave, ironically by a distant cousin of Tom's. Laura's legs were drawn up to accommodate the hole too small for her body, and her decomposed face looked upward. A six-inch gaping stab wound to her chest was the apparent cause of her death.

The prosecution's case against Tom was pieced together by the testimony of various witnesses who painted a picture of a young man angry enough to kill Laura Foster, the woman he blamed for giving him venereal disease. Ann Melton was charged as the person who put him up to the deed, her motivation caused by jealousy over Laura and Tom's relationship. Although Tom was defended by ex-North Carolina Governor Zebulon Vance, he was found guilty and sentenced to hang, but a legal loophole was

enough to grant him a second trial. The inevitable was prolonged through delays, appeals and witnesses who failed to show up in court, but Tom was again found guilty and sentenced to hang.

"This time tomorrow, reckon where I'll be, Down in some lonesome valley, hanging from a white oak tree."

Nearly two years after Laura's death, Tom Dula, the handsome young exConfederate who had

continued on page 22

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Huntsville Coffee Talk

by Aunt Eunice

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



Well, the holidays are over and they were great! I really enjoyed getting the chance to see everyone in such great spirits. Thanks to everyone who visited with me and have a happy 1999!

John Malone is our lucky winner of the Country Ham Breakfast this month for guessing last month's photo of **Erica Latham**.

I'm really excited about the **Wal-Mart Senior Expo** that the **Senior Center** is hosting at the **von Braun Center** on **May 26 & 27**. There is going to be health screenings, fine food and free admission. The legendary **Boots Randolph** will be performing, but remember, it's just for us Seniors!

Congratulations to my grandson **Benjie** who just got engaged to **Laura Beth**. Best of luck! Also congratulations to my friend **Betty Hubbard** who also got en-

gaged over the holidays to **Mike Kloster**. What a sweet couple!

It was good to see my friend **Bruce Hudson** from **Washington** over the holidays. He hasn't changed a bit.

Christmas really does bring out the romance in everyone. My boyfriend, **Tom Glynn**, broke up with me and got engaged himself! He finally popped the question to **Jeannie Sharp**. I heard the wedding will be in early spring. Good luck to both of you!

All is quiet on the political front. Even **Jackie Reed** has been lying low lately!

Coffee pourer of the month award goes to **Cathey Carney** who spent her Christmas Eve morning helping me wait on tables. If she ever decides to leave **Hewlet Packard** she might have a new career!

Well, I'm not surprised, but **Loyd Tomlinson** of the **Outback**

Restaurant just broke all records for any **Outback** in Alabama for the month of December. Sales went through the roof! Way to go, **Loyd**, I love you.

Oh yes, now you can let go of all that money and buy that sweet wife of yours, **Marcie**, that piano she's been wanting!

My sympathy to **Sara Ann** and family in their loss of **Buster Frank**, a good friend of mine.

One thing about **Ms. Mayor**, she never stops! Besides dealing with the **ice storm** and the **Huntsville Utilities**, she spent part of her holidays working the Christmas light display at the **Botanical Gardens**. Keep it up,

Photo of The Month

The first person to identify the young (13 year old) lady 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: She was a star back then and she still is.



Last month's photo was Erica Latham

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Loretta!

Last month's story about **Paul Bolden**, Medal of Honor winner, created quite a stir at City Hall. Literally tons of people called wanting the city council to name something in his honor!

Well folks, are we going to have a lottery? It will be interesting to see what happens now that there are no elections for a while. Let me know what you think!

Hi, **Liz Hurley**. You sure are looking good! Remember, you are an inspiration to all of us girls. We love you lots.

J.B. Tucker, Mayor of Hurricane Creek, population forty-three, sure is glad Christmas is over! He fed almost forty people at his annual Christmas dinner and they all went to church afterwards.

While we're talking about Hurricane Creek, **Jim and Joanna Tipton** had some special Christmas company. Their son, **Steve** and **granddaughter, Joanna** visited from **Texas**. Talk about proud grandparents!

Our prayers go out to the **Nayman** family for the loss of their father, **Thomas**. Remember that times like this can be hard, but your friends can help you get through it.

My friend, **Susan Kirkland** better watch out! She thinks she's the greatest grandmother in the world but word just got to me that she has competition. **Sandra Steele** is the proud grandmother of a little boy. A welcome also goes out to **Harrison Hayes Morris**, the new son of **Patrick** and **Lori**. His big brother, **Hudson**, doesn't quite know what to think about it yet.

Well, hats off to **Patty Smith**. Patty and I go to church together and she really has bragging rights now that her **Tennessee** team is the **National Champi-**

ons!

If you have not read **Old Huntsville's** two recent books, you have missed a treat. They are full of stories about Huntsville that you will never be able to read any other place.

Also, we hear that Old Huntsville is working on an "**Old Huntsville Book of Photographs**." If you have any old pictures of Huntsville or Madison County lying around, give them a call at **534-0502**. They are looking for all the pictures they can get.

Inside sources tell me that a **World Famous Author** (based in London) is working on a book about a spy-thriller that takes place in Huntsville. They don't want to give out many details now, but I'll let you know as soon as this author comes by for breakfast.

Everybody try to stay warm until next month and remember, I love you all.

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Simple Southern Cooking

Alabama Fried Chicken

1 Fryer, cut in pieces (or just chicken breasts)

2 c. Buttermilk

1/2 c. all-purpose flour

1/2 c. corn starch

1/2 t. poultry seasoning

1/2 t. garlic powder

2 t. seasoned salt

1/2 t. seasoned pepper

1/4 t. crushed red pepper flakes

Shortening for frying

Wash the chicken well, remove skin. Place it in a large bowl and pour the buttermilk over it to cover. Soak this way for at least an hour - you'll tenderize the chicken and add flavor. When ready to cook, melt your shortening in a large skillet. Take a plastic bag and com-

bine the flour, corn starch and next 5 ingredients. Shake well, put your chicken pieces in there one at a time and coat. Place the chicken in the hot shortening. When it's all in the skillet, brown the chicken on all sides, cover and cook for 30-40 minutes. Turn several times.

Tennessee Big Orange Pork Chops

1 small can mandarin oranges (reserve the juice)

3 T. butter

1 t. mustard

1/3 c. brown sugar

6 pork chops

Grease your baking dish, preheat your oven to 375 degrees. Add the butter to the dish

and melt in the oven. When melted, remove and add the mustard, sugar and juice - stir well. Add the pork chops and cook til brown - about 35-45 minutes. Don't overcook. Turn the chops over and pour the oranges on top. Cook another 10 to 15 minutes.

Baked Fruit

1 21-oz. can cherry pie filling

1 20-oz. can pineapple chunks

1 6-oz. package dried apricots

1 12-oz. package dried pitted prunes

2 11-oz. cans mandarin oranges

Place all ingredients in a large bowl to mix, then pour into a large casserole dish. Cover this with foil and bake at 350 degrees for an hour.

Hartselle Oven-Fried Okra

2 pound fresh okra

1 1/2 c. yellow corn meal

1/2 t. salt

1/8 t. pepper

1/2 t. garlic powder

1/2 c. buttermilk

1 egg, slightly beaten

cooking spray



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Wash your okra and trim the ends, cut into 1/2" pieces. Combine the cornmeal, salt and spices in a medium bowl, stir and set aside. Mix the buttermilk and egg together in a large bowl, then stir in your okra. Dredge the okra in the cornmeal mixture and spread it onto a baking sheet sprayed with nonstick cooking spray. Bake at 450 degrees for 40 minutes or crisp, stirring it occasionally.

Onion-Roasted Potatoes

1 envelope Lipton Onion Recipe soup mix
1/3 c. olive oil
1/2 t. garlic powder
2 lbs. potatoes, chunked into medium pieces

Preheat your oven to 450 degrees. Place all ingredients in a large plastic bag and shake until the potatoes are coated evenly. Pour the potatoes into a shallow, greased baking pan. Bake for 40 minutes, stirring occasionally, til they are brown and tender.

Vanilla Wafer Cake

1 c. butter
1 c. vanilla wafer crumbs
3 eggs
1 3-oz. can flaked coconut
1 c. sugar
1/2 t. baking powder
1 c. chopped pecans
Cream the butter and sugar til fluffy. Then blend in your vanilla wafer crumbs and baking

powder. Beat in your eggs, one at a time, then stir in the coconut and pecans. Pour onto a greased 9x9" square baking pan and bake at 325 degrees for 40 minutes. Cool, then cut into squares or wedges.

Strawberry Pie

1 8-oz. package cream cheese, softened
1 8-oz. container whipped topping
1 c. confectioner's sugar
2 c. chopped strawberries
1 graham cracker crust

Mix together your cream cheese and confectioners sugar. Add the whipped topping and strawberries. Mix by hand, then pour the mixture into your pie crust and garnish with more strawberries, if needed (remember how good strawberries are for arthritis?)

Easy, Easy Cherry Cobbler

1/4 c. butter or margarine
1 package White Lily Butter-milk Biscuit mix
2/3 c. sugar
2/3 c. milk
1 20-oz. can cherry pie filling
1/2 t. almond flavoring
Melt the butter or margarine in an 8 or 9" baking dish at 350 degrees. Then take your biscuit mix, sugar and milk and

mix well. Pour the batter evenly onto your melted margarine. DON'T STIR.

Stir the almond flavoring into the pie filling. Then spoon the cherry pie filling over the batter and bake at 350 degrees for 40-45 minutes, and the crust top is brown.

You can always get the truth from a politician after he turns 80, or has given up all hope of ever becoming President.

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Absurd News

Malcolm McClain, truck driver and wrestling fan, was sentenced to five days in jail for attacking a pair of wrestlers at the MidSouth Coliseum in Memphis. According to police reports, McClain entered the Coliseum, jumped into the ring and began to beat on Tojo Yamamoto and Sonny King, professional wrestlers. A free-for-all broke out, but as soon as the police figured out he wasn't part of the show, they moved to restrain

him.

McClain said he watched wrestling every night, wanted to be a wrestler and "didn't think the fans or the Coliseum would mind." The judge released him after he had served three days of his five-day jail term.

In Indiana, after a man charged with beating his wife explained to the court that he'd given her "only a light tap," he met a sympathetic judge who gave him "only a light sentence - 90 days."

The four sons of Mr. and Mrs. Saunders of Oklahoma are named Okla, Homa, Terri and Tory.

A woman and her husband sued the Hotel Gayoso in Memphis for embarrassment. The hotel registered the woman but neglected to enter her husband's name in the registry. When a hotel maid reported that a man was in her room the hotel manager banged on her door demanding that the woman open up and let her illicit visitor out. According to the irate couple, the

manager made such a ruckus that everyone on the floor was awakened and complained.

In Brookwood, Alabama, Ben Lefner sued for divorce on the grounds that his wife refused to live anywhere except a trailer.

Armand Nolette sued his wife for divorce charging cruel and abusive treatment. His grievance: she did not appreciate his jokes, although "she would laugh her head off" if any other man told one. The judge granted his petition.

A California truck driver, Larry Walters, made aviation history when he tied 45 helium balloons to his lawn chair and ascended into the sky. Walters prepared for the journey by taking with him a two-way radio, a jug of water, a parachute and a gun.

He was first seen flying over an L.A. airfield in violation of Federal Aviation Rules (FARs). He then slowly drifted out to sea. Spotted again by two pilots at 11,000 feet, he eventually drifted back over land, dropped altitude and was entangled in some elec-



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tric power lines where he was rescued and arrested. It seems that Walters had taken the gun to blow out some of the balloons to descend, but his plan was foiled when he accidentally dropped the gun after popping 10 of the balloons.

Asked as he was being led away in handcuffs why he did it, he replied, "Well, a man can't just sit around."

In Forrest City, Arkansas, burglars broke into a lumber company office and stole \$500. They left behind a message that said, "Your safe is nothing but a tin can." Months later, they returned to rob the same safe of another \$400 and left another note: "Your safe is STILL a tin can. See you next trip."

In 1897 Governor Robert Love Taylor signed a bill that banned cigarettes from Tennessee. It didn't work.

Mr. George Mann, a highly respected and well-to-do citizen of Unionville who is 70 years old, was a few days ago happily united in marriage to a charming and vivacious young girl of 15, Miss Jackson.

Quite a contrast in their ages, but they are living happily together on the farm of Mr. Mann's on the Little Towaliga River. They seem to be perfectly congenial in the relations.

Another thing, which makes the marriage of this couple more interesting, is the fact that his son, Oscar Mann, several months ago married an older sister of the bride. So you can see that Mr. Mann's son is his brother-in-law and his daughter-in-law is his sister-in-law, and his wife is the mother-in-law of her older sister.

Hearty Beverage Recipes from 1890

Egg Nog - beat the yolks of 12 eggs very light, stir in as much white sugar as they will dissolve, pour in gradually one glass of brandy to cook the egg, one glass of old whisky, one grated nutmeg and 3 pints of rich milk. Beat the whites to a froth and stir in last.

Milk Punch - one pint of milk made sweet with sugar, a wine-glassful of brandy or rum, well stirred together; grate a little nutmeg over the top of the glasses. Serve with a straw in each glass.

Roman Punch #1 - Grate the yellow rind of four lemons and 2 oranges upon 2 pound of loaf sugar. Squeeze the juice of the lemons and oranges; cover it and let it stand until next day. Strain it through a sieve, mix with the sugar; add a bottle of champagne and the whites of eight eggs beaten to a stiff froth. It may be frozen or not, as desired. In winter use snow instead of ice.

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Tom Dooley

cont. from page 15

only three months of formal education and an admirable war record, languished in a jail cell, counting down his final moments. Perhaps the carnage of war or some diminished value of human life brought him to the gallows on May 1, 1868. Up until the night before his execution, he claimed his innocence. In the dark hours of April 30, he wrote a declaration stating that he alone was responsible for the death of Laura Foster. Skeptics felt he was simply performing an act that would eventually free Ann Melton.

On May 1, he rode in a wagon carrying the simple coffin that would bear his body back to Happy Valley. In front of a large

crowd of people, he stood as the noose was placed around his neck. The wagon was moved from under him and because the fall did not break his neck, he slowly strangled to death, taking the whole truth with him to the grave.

"Hang down your head and cry, poor boy, you're bound to die. Poor boy, you're bound to... die!"

John Foster West, who wrote two books on the subject and is a descendant of people who figured prominently in the case, speculated on the actual events based on his extensive research. Pauline Foster was most likely the person who gave Tom Dula venereal disease, and he in turn passed it on to Ann Melton and Laura Foster. There seems to be little doubt that Ann, Tom and

Laura were together on that day, but either Tom or Ann could have committed the actual murder.

Ann Melton died some ten or so years later, possibly as a result of advanced syphilis. In her lifetime, she was held responsible for Laura's death by many who knew them. The site of Laura's murder is now known as Laura Foster Ridge. Tom Dula's headstone, although inscribed with an incorrect date of death, has become an unfortunate target of vandals who have hacked off pieces for souvenirs.

The best thing about getting old is that the things you couldn't have when you were young, you no longer want.

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Natural Remedies for Arthritis

Arthritis, bursitis, gout, rheumatism - this translates to pain, pain and more pain and they have been around for thousands of years. As our age group moves into their 50's and 60's this will become much too familiar to them. There are some natural remedies that are supposed to have worked for years - try a few at a time, or one at a time - maybe you will find the one that makes you feel better.

* Cherries are very effective because they prevent crystallization of uric acid (seems to help cause arthritis) and to reduce the uric acid levels in the blood. Eat them any way you want - frozen, fresh, canned - any kind, sweet or sour. Drink the juice and eat the cherries. Drink several cups of the juice a day for 4 days, then see how you feel.

* Garlic has been used to quiet arthritic pain quickly if you rub a freshly cut clove of garlic on the painful joint. Garlic tablets are very good for your general health as well.

* Alfalfa tabs or tea work very well - but you have to take at least

6 tablets a day - drink the tea all throughout the day.

* Eat a portion of fresh string beans every day, or juice the beans and drink a glassful daily.

* Sometimes the nightshade foods can make the arthritis worse - foods like white potatoes, tomatoes, eggplant and green peppers. Try to maintain a very low-acid diet.

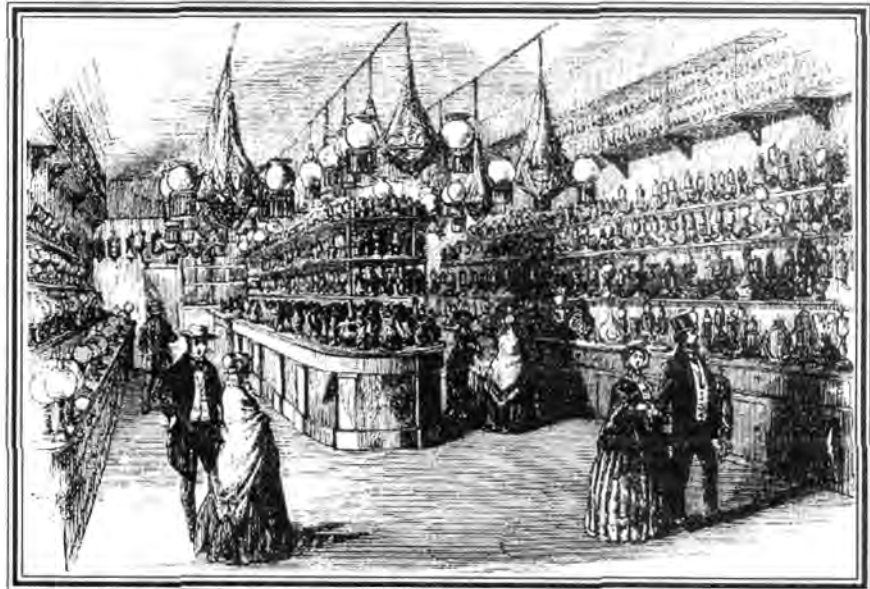
* Celery contains many nourishing salts and organic sulphur. It also can neutralize the uric acid and other excess acids in your body. Eat fresh celery daily, cut it up into salads, juice it if you're into that.

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A Letter Home

Sept. 5, 1861
Huntsville
Camp Jones



Dear Mattie,

This leaves me tola- ble well and I hope it will find you and our darling babe doing well. I was rite sick yesterday. I took my blanket and went out and taken an Eruetic. I believe it done me well as my appetite has returned and I hope by tomorrow I will be all right, though I can not tell for I may have a chill or fever tomorrow. Mr. Martin arrived here yesterday with five recruits from our Co. - which makes us about 100 men of as good material as Cherokee affords. I understand that Sloan of Rome, Georgia rote Mrs. Hall that we are the finest Co. in every respect that had passed through Rome and I understand that the citizens of Huntsville say the same in re-

spect to morale and everything else pertaining to conduct, size, uniform.

I believe that General Nicholson is one of our worst boys so far. The very first night he came here he got a company of our boys and went to Huntsville and taken the finest bar room and drinking saloon that is in the place. Taken it with bowie knives and pistols, so they say, and then marched something like a hundred men in by fours. Made them drink and fall back so as to give room for others. They got a negro hemmed up behind the bar and made him light cigars for the Co. The police of the city were soon present and they had, I am told, a general row, but as good luck would have it none of them were hurt at all and Lump Davis was also in the crowd and it is a pity for him and our company and those that he is connected with that he was in the frolic.

Nicholson lost his watch and it was found in Davis' possession. A court Martial was held and he proved guilty of the

charge. Davis then acknowledged that he was guilty, and he then wore a ball and chain everywhere about 40 lbs., for 4 days and was marched across the encampment once a every day and the rogues march played by all the old drums in the camp following just behind him and was drummed out of the camp this morning. I am sorry I ever new his name.

We have some exciting news of this time from Virginia, it is said that Lee has crossed the Potomac with 40 thousand soldiers to attack Washington City at a weak point and Beauregard has gotten possession of a hill commanding Arlington Heights so we may look out for startling news from that point soon. The yankees have taken 2 forts in North Carolina and several thousand prisoners. Yankees had about 5 to one and our ammunition give out so then our boys had to surrender. Marylanders are gathering to the eastern shore by the thousands and Missouri is overrun with yankees and they have nothing to fight with but I trust we will soon be able to help them.

E.D. Treadwell



History You Didn't Learn in School



Most of us learned in school that Henry Ford invented both the automobile and the moving assembly line. As it turns out, neither one is true. It's probably ironic that Ford is the man who's famous for saying "History is bunk," since, in his own lifetime, he wasn't quite the American hero he's often considered today.

As to who invented the automobile, Europeans were building cars years before Ford. Even in America, the Duryea brothers were building successful cars in Massachusetts before Ford came along. Ford went to work for the Edison Company where he developed a gasoline powered motor. He studied what the Duryea brothers were doing, combined their idea of a cheap car with the simple engine he'd developed at the Edison Company, and started the Ford Motor Company.

It's an interesting footnote that the Ford Motor Company almost went broke its first year. Ford started his company without much money and since his first cars cost over \$900.00, initial sales were slow. He ran out of money and was making plans to shut down the company. For-

tunately, an unexpected check came in from a new dealer. This gave him enough money to keep going until sales improved.

To make his car more affordable, Ford introduced the moving assembly line to his factory. Again, he did not invent this idea. It came from Frederick W. Taylor, an efficiency expert whose ideas were very popular in the early part of the century. Ford did improve on Taylor's ideas though, and pretty soon his factory was turning out a Model T every 24 seconds.

The moving assembly line allowed him to slash the price of the Model T to about \$300 and they were snapped up as quickly as they rolled off the assembly line. By 1914, over half of all cars produced in the world were Fords.

Ford was now a rich man and he boasted about paying his factory workers \$5 a day, double the going rate for skilled labor. But Ford treated his workers terribly. He was rabidly antiunion and used goon squads to beat and tyrannize his workers.

Henry Ford was the father of an entire industry, but as we've lately seen, great men often have great flaws. Ford was no exception.

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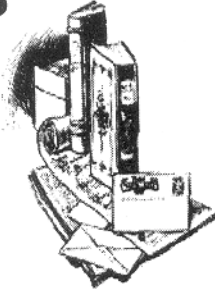
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Letters to the Editor



To the Editor:

I would love to see an article about the "Huntsville Coffee Company, Inc." It sold a coffee called "Twickenham Blend." My old coffee canister has the Twickenham Hotel depicted on it.

Doris Cline
Huntsville

To the Editor:

Your #80 issue with the article on Wernher von Braun sparked some great memories of an exciting time in Huntsville. Between 1951 and 1955, I worked at Redstone Arsenal and was assigned to the Management Improvement Office for the first two years. We were an agency to the Commanding General, Carroll Hudson. General Holger N. Toftoy assumed that position at a later date, somewhere around 1954.

Being rather young and impressionable, I was delighted to see Professor von Braun when he came to Headquarters, which was a frequent occurrence. One day, I saw him in the hall and one of the secretaries said he was on his way to work. He was going to talk to Congress to get money appropriated for a satellite. Much to our disappointment, he did not succeed and it was not until years later that money was made available - until that somewhat humorous remark, "Our German scientists are better than Russia's German

scientists," was refuted by Sputnik.

As I began to know other Germans, I saw a quality I later came to recognize as "Renaissance Men." Not only were they scientists but musicians as well, who physically designed and built their own homes. I realized how inadequate was my one year of college and enrolled in night school at the University of Alabama Extension, taking German. Magnus von Braun, Wernher's brother, was the teacher who taught us, "The lowdown on the 'umlaut'." I still have my notes from that class.

But it was not just the Germans who made up the "Brain Trust" at Redstone. There were at least two Pfc's with Phds from

MIT who were seen having morning coffee with high-ranking officers. As a reporter for "The Redstone Rocket," I had a chance to ask questions and be legally nosy. What fun!

The upshot of all this is that having had even a small part in an exciting and historic period of our missile development influenced my life and expanded my attitudes, especially towards education. I worked at the University of Arizona Music Library for 25 years and received my Masters in 1987. The German I learned from Herr von Braun came in useful in reading and saying titles of German music.

Mona King Frontain
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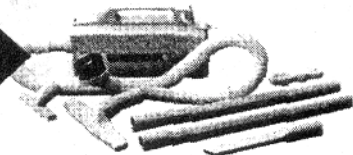


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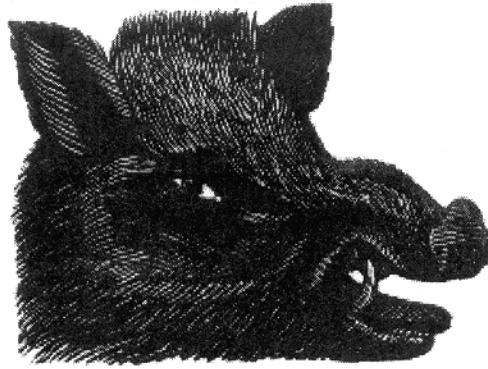
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Hunting for Whisky Discovers Angry Sow

From 1918 Newspaper



Deputy W. E. Yarbrough says that he isn't afraid of the most dangerous bootlegger armed with a rapid fire gun, but that when it comes to fighting an irate mother sow, bent on protecting her litter of baby pigs, he wants someone else put on the job next time.

Sent by the Sheriff yesterday morning to search the premises of a negro woman, under suspicion as a bootlegger on a small scale, Mr. Yarbrough could find no signs of whisky on the premises.

Then he decided to look under the home to see if by chance any liquor might be concealed there. The house was low and built fairly close to the ground, so that the voyage of discovery had to be conducted by wriggling along semi-snake fashion. The woman of the pre-

mises was voluble in her statement that Mr. Yarbrough had better not go under the house, but her insistence only served to increase his suspicions.

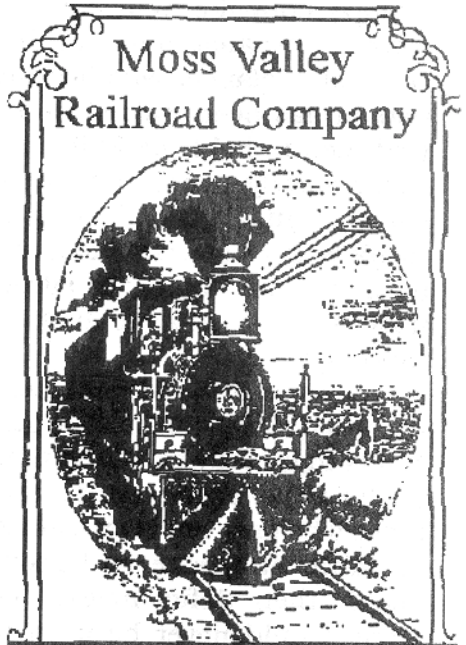
However, in a brief time he discovered not the whisky sought, but a litter of baby pigs and an extremely irate sow, who protested with all the porcine eloquence at her command that she didn't want her family disturbed. When grunts and squeals failed the desired effect, the enraged mother of tiny porkers used her snout for other purposes than noise. In fact, as she became silent, the deputy became vocal and grew loud in his demands for some one to get the animal away.

Finally, Jack Rocco, who was with him, decided to take a hand in the game and going to his companion's rescue, swung on to the old sow's leg while his brother

deputy wriggled out from the scene of his inglorious encounter.

Then, deciding that his search had been thorough and painstaking as well as painful enough for one day, Deputy Yarbrough both metaphorically and literally shook the dirt of the place from his clothes and from his feet and departed. But, he says, give him bootleggers with guns any time when it comes to a raid that involves a scrap with a sow.

Opportunity knocks only once, but temptation bangs on the door for years.



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The Well Bred Diner



from 1890 newspaper

Delicacy of manner at table stamps both the man and the woman, because one can discern, at a glance, whether the person has been trained to eat well; i.e., to hold the knife and fork properly, to eat without the slightest smacking of the lips, to drink without slurping, to make no noise with any of the silverware, and to masticate the food thoroughly.

There is no position where the innate refinement of a person is more fully exhibited than at the table, and nowhere that those who have not been trained in table etiquette feel more keenly their deficiencies. The knife should never be used to carry food to the mouth, but only to cut it up into small mouthfuls, then place it upon the plate at one side, and to the fork in the right hand, eating up the food with it. When both have been used finally, they should be laid diagonally across the plate, with both handles toward the right hand; this is understood by well-trained waiters to be the signal for removing the silver, together with the plate.

Be careful to keep the mouth

shut closely while chewing the food. It is the opening of the lips which causes the smacking which seems very disgusting.

Be very careful not to clatter your knives and forks upon your plates, but use them without noise. When passing the plate for a second helping, lay them together at one side of the plate, with handles to the right.

Soup is always served first, and it should be eaten with dessert spoons, and taken from the sides, not the tips of them, and not sucked into the mouth au-

dibly from the ends of the spoon. Bread should not be broken into soup or gravy. Never ask to be helped to soup a second time.

It is not considered good taste to mix food on the same plate. Salt must be left on the side of the plate and never on the tablecloth. Berries are to be eaten with a spoon. Fresh fruit should be eaten with a silver-bladed knife, especially pears, apples, etc. It is not proper to drink with a spoon remaining in the cup, nor should one ever drain a cup or glass completely.

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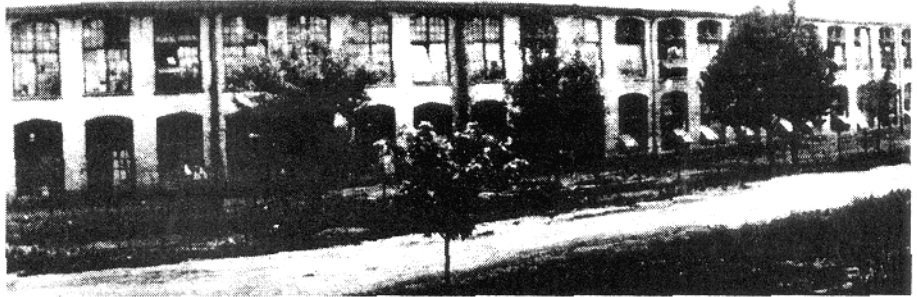
Lincoln Mill Village

By Robert Riddle Baker

There is an area along Oakwood Avenue where it connects with Meridian Street that now boasts a typical Winn Dixie and other assorted stores. If you're not from this area, it probably looks like a rather normal area of any southern town. There's a railroad crossing just after you cross under I 565 going west, then on the left is the shopping center. Modern stores selling everything from diet pills to Oriental food.

What you might not realize is at one time this was the site of a 750,000 square foot cotton mill and when at its height of production during World War II employed over seventeen hundred people. Most of them lived in the area, known as the Lincoln Mill Village.

The mill provided jobs, housing, schooling, a commissary and toilet paper delivered to your door via a horse-drawn wagon in the old days and probably a gasoline powered vehicle later. The commissary building still standing and located at 1216 Meridian Street was built in approximately 1928 and contained a beauty parlor, barber shop, cafe and store. Upstairs was a 6,000 square foot gymnasium



which doubled as a movie theater for the Lincoln Mill employees. The Lincoln Mill had an explosion of growth in the late twenties when the commissary was built, adding the Lincoln School (which replaced another smaller structure) and 600 housing units.

Before the memorial Parkway was built, Meridian Street was the main north and south route through Huntsville. There were over fifty businesses located on Meridian beginning at approximately Oakwood Avenue and continuing all the way "up town."

The mill workers, paid in silver dollars, would sometimes

leave work after getting paid (when their shift ended on Fridays) to meet their families at the entrance gate and walk over to the Blue Willow Cafe in the commissary building. There they would have a late supper of fried ham and other culinary treats of the day. During the day and especially on the weekends, with the housing being rather small and cramped, the workers usually tended to stay busy outside with their gardens or getting haircuts and baths at the commissary building. Indoor plumbing was not common in the mill housing units as far as bathing facilities were concerned so it



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was off to the barber or beauty shop, hopefully more than once a week for most of them.

The late Tillman Hill shared many of his mill memories with us in his book, Mr. Anderson's Monument. It is available at the Hazel Green library for those who want to get glimpses of life in the Lincoln Mill area when it was in its heyday.

Eventually, in 1934, the mill workers joined the unions which kept a close eye on working conditions and handled grievances from its members. In the paternalistic nature of the Lincoln Mill management, a structure was built to accommodate the strike pickets. However, after years of strikes and accelerating violence toward the management and individual workers who refused to join the unions, the final blow came in 1955 when it was decided to close the mill forever.

In 1989 a fire destroyed a huge section of the original mill, where today the Winn Dixie and other stores are located. Ninety-nine percent of the housing once located on the north side of Lincoln Elementary School is now gone. If you drive back into the neighborhood located on the south side of the school, you will

see the original mill housing, many of them now boarded up waiting for who knows what fate. Those remaining show the signs of new roof lines replacing the original Spanish flat style roof they originally sported. All along Meridian Street going south from Oakwood, you'll find new businesses and modern building. There is only one large home on the east side of Meridian left standing and it appears to be falling into total disrepair since the antique shop moved out some years ago.

The remaining portion of the surviving section of Lincoln Mill is still standing, now used for storage and office space, and seems to be pretty well-maintained. The school is still going strong, with well-maintained classrooms and excellent friendly staffing. The commissary building now houses a clinic for the school, a consignment shop, storage space and small dance studio on its lower level and upstairs houses the new Renaissance Theater, Inc. at Lincoln Center and also the Ara Nova School of the Arts, both having opened just this past fall.

The Huntsville Historic Foundation recently met to discuss the mill industry in Huntsville and what remains of it. A grant sponsored the research and architectural renderings of a few of

Know Your Rights



Beware Of Arbitration Clauses In Contracts

If you are buying a car, getting a loan, obtaining insurance, or even starting a new job, you might be asked to sign a contract that contains an arbitration clause. A typical contract clause will require you to pay in advance for arbitration and will prevent you from going to court to enforce your rights under the contract, even though the other party can often choose to ignore the clause and sue you.

Binding arbitration clauses which stop consumers from being able to go to court are barred under Alabama law, but there is a Federal law, the Federal Arbitration Act, which now overrules Alabama law if the contract 'involved' interstate commerce. Even the purchase of a used car within the state has been held by the courts to involve interstate commerce and to render binding arbitration clauses enforceable. Most courts have found that other transactions involve interstate commerce in some way, and are covered by the federal act.

You should carefully read all contracts you sign. If you don't wish to give up your legal rights to use the Courts on your behalf, you should consider refusing to sign a contract that contains an arbitration clause, or 'crossing out' any arbitration clause contained in the contract before you sign it.

If you believe you have already signed such an agreement unfairly, don't give up all hope. The arbitration clause might be ruled invalid. Of course, you might be able to use arbitration and be successful.

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the surviving mill houses and the area as it once existed. So much is gone! A twelve-minute film, made in 1928 and just recently discovered, was shown at the meeting. The film's flickering faded images show the mill management, village housing and busy residents. It also shows the large cats which seemed to be a

part of every office scene. Captured on film, it is a time capsule of a way of life now gone forever.

If you have any information you are willing to share on the old Lincoln Mill, the commissary building or school, in the way of written material or old photos, please contact Bob Baker, PO

page 31
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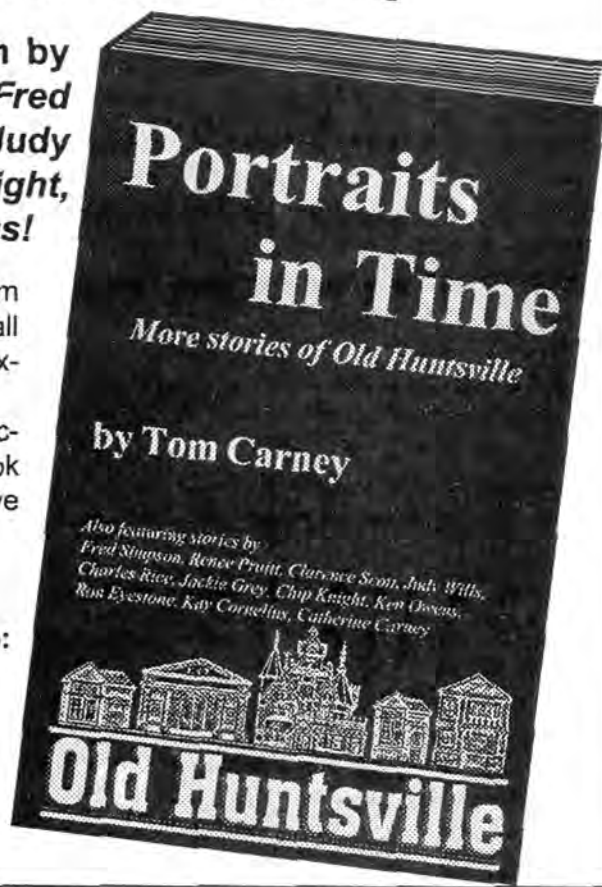
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Slavery Days

The Memories of Thomas Cole



In 1934 the Federal Writers' Project began collecting oral histories of former slaves. One of the people interviewed was Thomas Cole who was a resident of Texas at the time. Cole's story is unique in that it is one of the few narratives ever given by a former slave from this area. Although Cole says he was born in Jackson County, research shows he was most likely born near Gurley, Ala.

I might as well begin back as far as I can remember and tell you about myself. I was born in Jackson County, Alabama, August 8, 1845. My mother was Elizabeth Cole, her being a slave of Dr. Robert Cole. She was a family nurse. She nursed all the six children of Marster Cole. My father was Alex

Gorrand. He was a slave of John Gorrand.

I only had one brother and one sister that I know of, I being the oldest one. My sister's name was Sarah and my brother's name was Ben. I was about three or four years older than my sister, and Ben was still younger than that.

Marster Cole started us out working by totin' in wood and kindling and totin' water and such odd jobs. Then, later on, as we got older, we had to feed the hogs, cows, horses, goats and chickens. All this kind of work was for boys too young for heavy work. Of course, we had to pick cotton every fall, as soon as we got big enough to pick, and put the cotton in baskets. These baskets would hold about seventy-five to one hundred pounds.

Then, when a slave got grown, he was just like a mule.



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He works for his grub and a few clothes and works just as hard as a mule. Some of the slaves on the plantation next to ours didn't have as easy a time as the mules, for the mules was fed good, but the slaves just about starved to death; the marster just gave them enough to eat to keep them alive.

When I was a young boy, some other boys and I would go possum hunting and coon hunting and we would skin them, stretch the hides and the white folks would sell the hides and give us the money. I always gave my money to my mother and she would save it for me. Then, she would go to town with the mistress to Huntsville, Alabama and buy me a pair of shoes, a hat, and a pair of Sunday britches. All these we called Sunday clothes, and we did not wear them unless we went to church. Missus Cole always helped my mother do the buying, cause my mother couldn't count money.

As I done told you, my mother was the family nurse for Dr. Cole's family. We had lots to eat that the other slaves didn't have, as my mother was a nurse and respectable--different from the other Negroes.

In the winter, the marster would always kill from three hundred to four hundred hogs. We would have two killings--the first in November and the last one in January. If the meat runs out 'fore killing' time, we would kill a beef or goats, or some men would be sent out to git some wild turkeys or deer. Once a week, all the slaves had biscuits. There was a orchard of about five or six acres of peaches and apples on the plantation, and we had all the fruit we wanted. We planted pumpkins, and he would let us have 'bout one or two acres

for watermelons, if we would work them on Saturday evenings.

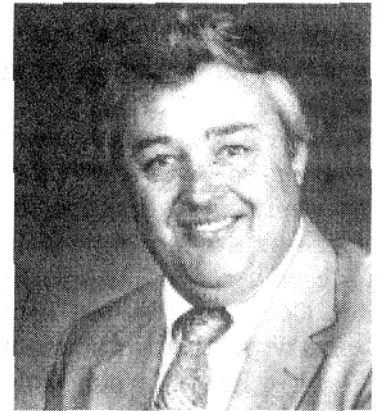
One thing about Marster Cole: he shore seen after his slaves when they were sick And when he starts doctoring' one of them, they usually gits well, too. He never lost but two, and they were old people and ready to die, but he hated to lose them just as bad as he would a young stout man. Marster Cole he had one big, stout, healthy-looking slave, about six feet four inches tall, and weighed around two hundred and ten pounds, that he gave three thousand dollars for. Marster Cole and a man from Mississippi and one from Louisiana was all bidding on this slave, and Marster Cole bid him in at three thousand dollars. This slave shore was a powerful man and was easy to control, too. He shore was glad that Marster Cole bought him.

Marster Cole never sold a slave, if they acted half way right. But if they got unruly, he always carried them off to sell them. He bought six slaves that I knows of, and he gave from four hundred to three thousand a piece



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Marster Cole was a smart man, and he was a good man with it. He was about five feet ten inches tall, blue-eyed and brown-haired, and weighed 'bout one hundred sixty pounds. He treated his slaves like they were human beings, instead of dumb brutes. He allowed his slaves more privileges than any other slave-holder around that part of the country. He was one of the best men I ever knew in my whole life, and his wife was just like him. Missus Cole sure was nice to all the woman slaves. She gave all them a new dress every spring just as sure as the spring rolls around.

Marster Cole hardly ever kept an overseer over two years. The overseer would take his instructions from Marster Cole when he was hired, and then Marster Cole would turn him loose, and when the overseer got a little out of line, Marster Cole would tell him what to do. Marster Cole would tell him a few times, and finally he would fire

him and hire a new one.

The slaves were woke up every morning at four-thirty by a slave blowing a horn. Breakfast was eaten, and the men folks went to the fields, and as soon as the women finished up the house work and took care of the babies, they went to work, too. All the slaves carried their dinner to the field with them. We all worked till noon, then we ate our dinner in the shade and rested about an hour and half, if it is very hot. If it is cold, we rest about an hour, then we go back to work and stays up with the lead man all evening, just like we did in the morning.

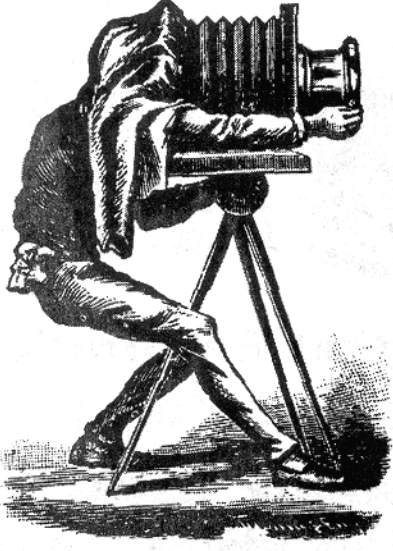
Between sundown and night, we stop work, go to the quarters, and eat supper, and by that time we are all ready to go to bed and sleep. You are always tired when you make a day like that on the plantation.

There never was but one slave whipped on Marster Cole's plantation, and the overseer whipped him 'cause he could not keep up with the driver. The

driver was a big slave who could do four times as much work as the ole slave.

Some of the other plantation owners shore were bad on the poor slaves. There was one slave owner next to us that didn't have but 'bout fifteen working' hands, and he tried to work enough land to need twenty-five working hands. He was beating on some of his slaves all the time. After stripping them off plum naked, he would have them tied hand and foot, and bend them over, and runs a pole between the bend in the arms at the elbow and under the legs at the knees, and whip them with a cat-o-nine tails till he bust the hide in lots of places across their backs, and blood would run off them on the ground. Then he would put salt in those raw places, especially if they made out like they wanted to fight or sass him.

Sometimes the speculators would come around, but they never did stop at Marster Cole's place, for he never did patronize any of them. The speculators was



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white men that sometimes comes around buying, selling, or trading slaves, jest like they do cattle now. They would buy, sell, or trade a baby that was ole 'nuf to wean, and up to the ole slaves. Of course, babies and ole folks did not bring much. Babies was too young to work, and ole folks couldn't do much; besides, they was liable to die at any time. They was mostly considered worthless property, after they got feeble.

Them speculators would put the children in a wagon, usually pulled by oxens, and the other folks was chained or tied together so's they could not run off, and they would go from one plantation to another, all over the country. This was very common, especially in the fall of the year or spring.

Marster Cole was sick for a long, time. My mother nursed him night and day as long as he was sick. They had doctors from all over the country to come, and they all gave him medicine and doctored him, but the Lord had called him, I guess, and those doctors couldn't do him any good, for the next summer he died.

They has a big funeral sermon for him at the plantation, and all the slaves were at the house. We all lined up and marched by the coffin and looked in at him. He just looked

like he was asleep. I guess his soul was in the Great Heaven talking with the angels, for he looked like he had a peaceful smile on his face, just like he did when he was alive and everything pleasing him.

All the slaves cried jest like it was one of their own family dying. We all knew our good times was gone, or maybe we would all be sold. We didn't know what was going to happen to us, but we all knew that we wasn't going to have as peaceable time and have as much freedom as we had when Marster Cole was alive.

One morning', Missus Cole comes up to me afore we goes to work and says, "Well, well, Thomas, what a big, fine strong boy you is. You ought to be big enough to do most any kind of work, now. You ain't a baby no more. Thomas, I'm going' to move off the plantation and let Mr. Antherson, the overseer, run it for me. He is going to move in this house, and I'm going to move to Huntsville. I bought a nice place up there, so I's going to take your ma with me, as she has always been our nurse, but I'm going to leave you out here on the plantation, I'm sure Mr. Antherson will take good care of you, and besides, you will be grown in a few more years." Then she turns roun' and goes in the kitchen and leaves me standing there.

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I thoughts, "Yessum, Mr. Antherson will takes good care of me. He'll give me that cat-o-nine tails the first chance he gits." But I made up my mind right there he wasn't going' to git no chance, because I was going to run off the first chance I got.

About that time, the boss hollers for all of us to go to work, so I told my mother good-bye. That was the last time I ever seen her. She never did get to come back to see me, and I never could go in to see her, and I never seen my brother and sister anymore. I don't knows whether they were sold or not, after they got bigger.

I got my dinner and went on to the field, and the first thing, Mr. Antherson says to me was, "Now Thomas, you got to do as much work as the rest of them." I says, "Yassah," and flies in to it, and I kept at it all the time, but from that day on I didn't have no use for that overseer. He wanted to whip me, and I knew it, but I never did give him a chance.

I worked on, day after day, waiting for a good chance to run off, and finally there was talk about the North and South separating, I don't know how it all happened, but I think the North declared the slaves free, and the South declared themselves free from the North.

We began going to the field earlier and staying a little later each day then we did the year before. Corn was hauled off, cotton was hauled off, hogs and cattle was rounded up and hauled off, and things began looking bad.

That winter, instead killing from three hundred to four hundred hogs, like we had always done before, we only did one killing and killed one hundred and

seventy-five, and they were not all big ones, either.

When the meat supply began to run low that winter the overseer, Mr. Antherson, would send some of the slaves to kill a deer, or wild hogs without any marks or brand on them. One day, he called me up with some of them that had gone before, and told us not to go off the plantation too far, but to be sure and bring home some meat.

When we got to the hunting ground, the leader says, "Now lets all scatter out." I told him me and another man would go north and makes a circle round to the river. I didn't go very far until I turned north. I was going to a free country -- the North, where there wasn't no slaves. I traveled all that day and night, up the river in the day and followed the North Star that night. Several times that night, I thought I could hear the blood hounds trailing' me.

I traveled this way for several nights, hiding in the daytime in the thickets. I would eat all the nuts I could find. I killed a few swamp rabbits and caught a few fish. I built one fire, waited for it to burn down to coals, and then baked some fish and a rabbit. I was shaking all the time, afraid I would get caught, but I was nearly starved to death and I did

not much care if I did get caught.

I traveled on that night following the North Star, and hid

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Huntsville's Newest Theatre

Jan. 9 - 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Theater auditions for upcoming plays. Bring photo and resume.

Also interested in technical people for lights, sound, stage managers and publicity.

Jan. 23 - Special open house to all actors and technical people now involved in Huntsville Theater.

Coming soon!
Feb. 20 -21 Celebration of Black Heritage - Directed by Ginger Beazley.

Feb. 25-28 Alter Boy - by Robert Riddle Baker.

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out the next day and ate the rest of my fish and some more nuts, and traveled all the night again, and hid in a big thicket the next day, and along that evening I hear the guns begin shooting. I was scared to come out and scared to stay in there, and while I was standing there thinking and shaking, I heard two men say, "Stick yo' hands up, boy. Where you going?" I put my hands up as high as I could reach and says, "Ah dunno where I's going. You ain't going to take me back to the plantation, is you?" They said, "No. You want to fight for the North?" I told them I did, cause I could tell by the way they talked that they was Northern men. They was spies for the North.

These spies led me around this place where they was shooting, and we walked day and night, and the next day we got to General Rosecrans' camp, and they took me to General Rosecrans. They thought I was a spy for the South, and they asked me all sorts of questions and said they was going to whip me, that they was going to burn my feet. But I told them the truth, and told it over and over to them, and they finally believed I was telling the truth, and took me out and put me to work. I had to help with the cannons, but I got plenty to eat.

Now, I felt important. I had got off and got me a real man's job, and the rest of the slaves back on the plantation was work-

ing night and day. But just right then, I didn't know what was in front of me. I supposed if I had, I would have run off again.

I helped set these cannons on this Chickamauga Mountain. I didn't even know they was getting ready to fight a battle. I thought we was kinda hiding them to keep the Rebels from finding them. But I had to go to one of them cannons and stay with a man and wait on him. I don't know just what it was he had me doing, or if I ever got it finished. Anyway, the first thing I know, bang, bang, boom. Then things started, and guns was shooting faster then the fastest man you ever saw beating on one of these little drums with two sticks. I was getting' scared. I looked around to see which way to run, but guns was shooting down the hill in front of me, and they was shooting at me, and the men had different colored clothes, and I knew this was war and that they was the Rebels. I looked back and guns was shooting over me, and guns on both sides was popping. I tried to dig me a hole and get in it, but the first thing I know this man was kicking me, and cussing me, and wanting me to help him to keep the cannon loaded. Man, I didn't want no cannon, but I had to help him anyway.

We fought that way till dark; then we quit. I just wanted to git back to the ole plantation and pick more cotton. I would have

been willing to just do anything to git out of this mess, but I was stuck.

There was men laying here and there wanting help, wanting water, with blood running out of them, and men laying around there with the top or sides of the head gone, great big holes in them. I just promised the good Lawd if He would just lemme git out of that mess, I wouldn't run off no more.

But that battle wasn't over yet, for the next morning the Rebels began shooting away at us again. They were killing lots of our men, and General

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Rosecrans ordered us to retreat, and he did not have to tell me what he said, either. The Rebels came after us shooting, and we ran off and left that cannon setting on the hill. I didn't want that thing, no how. We kept hot footing it till we got to Chattanooga, and there is where we stopped.

After the War was over and we was all turned loose, we just scattered out -- no where to go and nothing to do, nobody to go to for help. I couldn't go back South, where I had run off from, to look for work. Up there they called us traitors, and down South, they would nearly kill us, if they knew we had run off to the North to help them fight.

I always did hate that I ran off and left the South, for after the War they called us Southern traitors, because we ran off and came to the North. If Marster Cole had lived, I never would have run off.



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

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

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

"Well," said he, "I will do it. Suppose you and I were traveling together. We arrive at a hotel, and there are only 2 beds for us. In one there is a man and in the other there is a woman. Which bed would you sleep in?"

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

"Well, then, there you are!" He replied, grinning from ear to ear. "So would I!"

From 1880 newspaper

MOON
Over
Buffalo

A fun look at what goes on backstage as two aging actors learn there is a movie producer in the audience

Jan. 29 - Feb. 20

539-PLAY

THEATRE
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Making The Best Vinegar

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the stove or some place that it will be kept warm. Add one pound of sugar to about two and a half pounds of water, some hop yeast, or a small portion of whiskey.

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from 1870 Newspaper



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