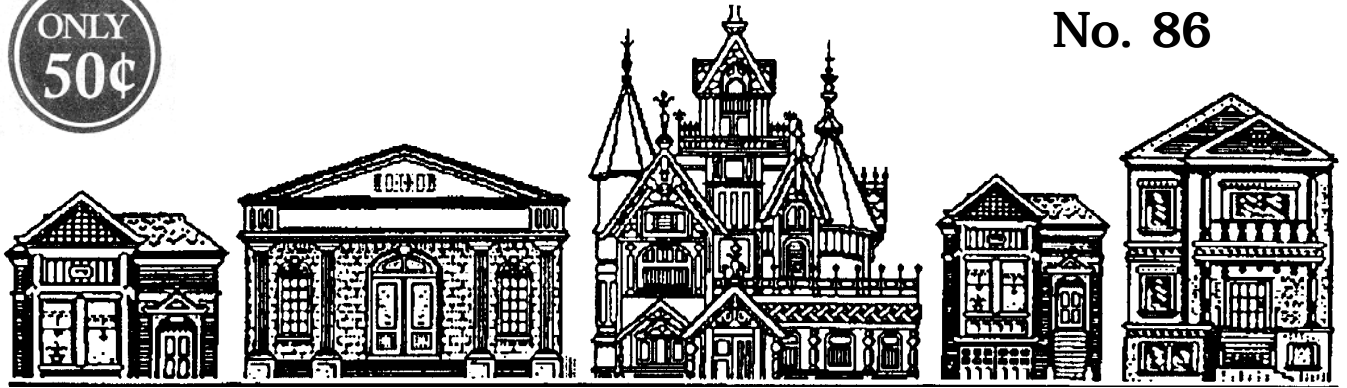


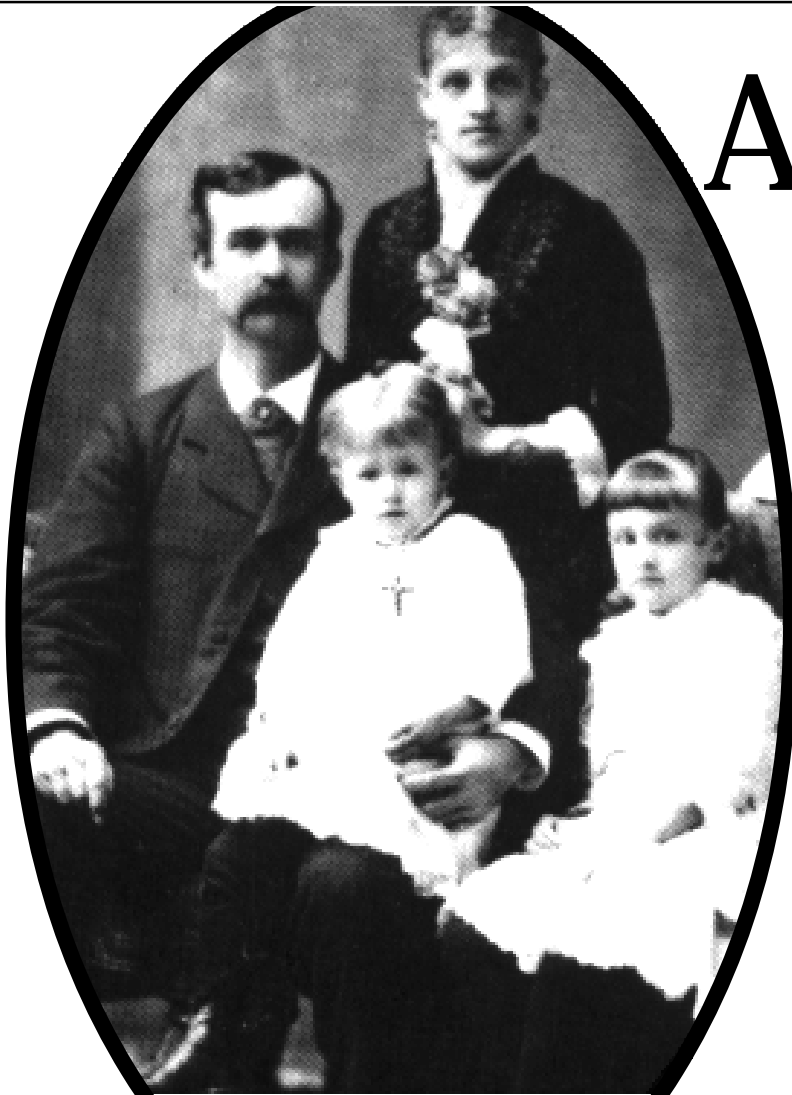
ONLY  
50¢

No. 86



# Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY



## A Private Matter

What does a man do when he sees his fourteen year old daughter beaten by her husband? Does he turn his cheek after watching his home burned to the ground?

For a quiet unassuming man like Robert Gilliam, there was only one choice and by the time he finished the people of Huntsville would be much wiser.

Also In This Issue: The Story of Robert Donnell

# A Private Matter

His name was Robert E. Lee Gilliam but most people simply called him "Gilliam, or 'ol man Gilliam." He was aged beyond his years, a product of a hard scrabble life and trying to eke out a living on a few acres of sun-baked red clay that never seemed to produce enough to keep body and soul together.

Being a truck farmer was not the life Gilliam had chosen originally. He had worked most of his life at a saw mill near Gurley until an accident left his right leg crippled. Unable to find other work, he worked as a sharecropper for a time before the landlord told him he was letting another man, an able-bodied man, take over the farm.

The next several years saw Gilliam moving from farm to farm, each one poorer than the one he had left previously until finally he ended up, in 1943, on a small tract of land near Winchester Road. The land was a virtual rock pile, overgrown with no water supply, and with a dilapidated old house that probably should have fallen down years ago.

Regardless, Gilliam, with his wife and three children, made the best out of a bad situation. Soon

they had several acres cleared and were growing tomatoes, squash and other vegetables. These he peddled from door to door in an ancient pick-up truck he had patched together from parts salvaged from junk yards and trash heaps. On weekends, while he worked his route, his wife and children would spend the day at the Farmers' Market selling the produce to Huntsville housewives who flocked to the stalls in search of bargains on fresh vegetables.

Gilliam's family, to use a cliché, was his pride and joy. His wife, quiet spoken and with jet black hair that belied her Indian heritage, was a perfect help-mate, spending long days toiling in the fields beside him and then going home to cook dinner with never a whisper of complaint. The youngest two children, both boys, were still too young to be of much help, but the daughter Lucy, who at fourteen was already turning into a striking young lady, helped her mother sell produce at the market. Many people, captivated by the young girl's exotic beauty and quiet charm, became regular customers.

The summer of 1946 was an especially hot and dry one. Almost



## Old Huntsville

### Published By

Old Huntsville, Inc.  
716 East Clinton Ave.  
Huntsville, Ala. 35801  
**(256) 534-0502**  
**Fax 539-3712**

### E-Mail

Oldhuvill@mindspring.com

**Internet Home Page**  
www.oldhuntsville.com

### Publisher

Cathey Callaway Carney

### Senior Editor

Thomas Frazier

### General Manager

Clarence Scott

### Special Assignment

Stefanie Troup

### Distribution

Golden K Kiwanis Club

### Copy Boy

Tom Carney



Member

Association of  
Southern Publishers

All material contained within is copyright 1999 (c) and may not be copied or reproduced in any form without written permission from  
**Old Huntsville, Inc.**

All opinions and views expressed in this publication are probably our own.

## Blackwell Land and Title Research

*Over 34 Years Combined Experience - Serving N. Alabama & S. Tennessee*

## Specializing in All Types Of Real Estate Research

*Member of Dixie Land and Title Association*

**Office Fax 533-2439 - Digital Beepers 720-3110 - 707-1536**

# Wanted

## Old Photographs of Madison County

*Old Huntsville* is seeking early photographs of Huntsville and Madison County from the period of the Civil War up until 1950 to be used in a photograph book. If your pictures are selected to be published in the book you will receive a free subscription to *Old Huntsville Magazine* and be credited when it is printed.

**We need all types of photographs of Huntsville  
and Madison County.**

*Below: Unidentified group of workers at one of Huntsville's cotton mills circa 1930*



**Call 534-0502 for More Information**

three months had passed with no measurable rainfall and small gardens that had always produced a bountiful harvest began drying up. Gilliam had always hauled water from a nearby spring for cooking and washing but his work load was increased dramatically when he was forced to begin hauling water for the parched fields.

Every day, and often three or four times a day, he would drive his truck to the nearby spring where he filled large containers with water. Returning to his gar-

den he would use a gourd to pour a certain amount around each thirsty and wilting plant. The work was backbreaking, and with the sun seemingly getting hotter every day, it soon became apparent that something else had to be done.

Calling his family together one afternoon, Gilliam announced a change in the family's routine. He was going to dig a well. His wife would drive the truck on the route each weekend and Lucy would work at the market by herself. The two boys would remain at home

with him, helping haul dirt from the proposed well. Gilliam figured a week, maybe two, would be enough to complete the job.

Though at first the job went well, with the dry, red clay yielding easily to the pick and shovel, a few feet down he began to encounter rock. Even the most casual observer surely realized it was going to take much longer than planned. Gilliam, however, was not a man to give up easily. Every Saturday morning he would help load the truck with produce

# Subscribe to North Alabama's most popular magazine!



If you have enjoyed reading *Old Huntsville Magazine*, we would be glad to send you an issue every month. With *Old Huntsville Magazine* you'll get stories about Old Huntsville that you won't see anywhere else, great down home recipes, North Alabama trivia, humorous and true accounts of the history of the Tennessee Valley and much more.

So don't delay. Subscribe today and be in the know with *Old Huntsville Magazine!*

**Yes, I would like *Old Huntsville Magazine* delivered to me each month.  
I've enclosed \$15.00 for a full year's subscription**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

**If Subscription is a Gift please fill in below:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make check payable to:

Old Huntsville Magazine 716 East Clinton Ave. Huntsville, Alabama 35801 (256) 534-0502

and then return to what many people had already dubbed his "rock hole."

For Lucy, however, it was exciting times. Her mother would drop her off early at the market where she would spend the day selling produce and talking to the other people who worked there. Every day seemed like another adventure to the impressionable fourteen year old girl. Probably even more exciting were the young men who visited the market to flirt with her. Without the stern looks of her mother to warn them off, there was a constant stream of young Gallahads vying for her attention.

One of the men who noticed her was William Roberts. No one disputed the fact that Roberts was a good looking man, well dressed and with a line of blarney that could charm even the most doubtful person. It was the other things about him, though, that made people whisper. Some people claimed he had been married before, although no one was sure what had happened to Mrs. Roberts. He was also rumored to be involved in gambling and was a well-known supplier of bootleg whiskey to the G.I.'s at Huntsville Arsenal. Other people claimed he had a violent temper and was involved in many fights, some of which he resolved with the gun he always carried.

Perhaps the thing he was best known for however, was the "Clip Joint." Some time earlier he had acquired a semi-truck with a 32 foot trailer. On pay days at the Arsenal he would park the trailer close to the gates, and with the help of accomplices, would lure soldiers into the trailer where he had crooked dice tables set up. The trailer had originally been owned by C & J trucking but local wags, after noticing the faded

lettering, quickly dubbed it the "Clip Joint."

Everyone was surprised when Roberts began paying attention to Lucy. Not only was she still a child, she was totally different from the hard drinking, carousing women he normally hung out with in the road houses and gambling joints.

For the first several weeks it was merely an innocent flirtation, with Roberts stopping by the produce stall to tease the young girl. Lucy had already heard of his reputation, ....but he was so good looking. She was also careful not to mention anything about him to her father whom she knew would not approve.

When Roberts appeared at the market one day and proposed that Lucy go for a ride with him she hesitated, explaining that she could not afford to miss any potential customers.

"How much do you make a day?" Asked Roberts.

"Three or four dollars, if I'm lucky," replied Lucy.

Roberts quickly ended the conversation by laying a five dollar bill on the counter.

A pattern soon evolved. Lucy would work at the produce stand every Saturday until lunch time when Roberts would pick up her. Lucy was always insistent on being back at the market before 6:00

when her mother arrived to take her home.

Gilliam, preoccupied with digging the well and trying to support his family, had no idea of the courtship until one afternoon, about the time school let out, when Roberts and Lucy drove up.

Gilliam paused, laying the shovel aside, as he watched the couple walk toward him. He knew something was going on, Lucy was dressed in different clothes than the ones she wore to school that morning.

"Pa, we got married today."

Gilliam, stunned by the unexpected events, stood silently as Lucy explained how Roberts had met her at school that morning and they had driven across the state line where they found a justice of the peace who had agreed to marry them.

By this time the rest of the family had gathered around Lucy wanting to hear every detail. Roberts, not caring much for the emotions of the moment, wandered over to the well Gilliam had been working on.

Gilliam, sensing the need to say something to Roberts but not knowing what, walked over to the well with him. Finally, after what seemed like an eternity, he asked, "You going to take care of her?" It was as much of a statement as it

## Bowling Cleaning

*"Old Fashioned  
Service with all  
the Modern Methods"*



**RESIDENTIAL & COMMERCIAL CLEANING**

Licensed Bonded Insured  
*We Clean The Whole House*  
Competent Trustworthy Dependable  
Weekly / Monthly Service  
Move In / Move Outs

CALL FOR FREE ESTIMATES

**512-9983**



was a question.

"Get serious, old man," Roberts replied in an almost sarcastic manner. Then almost as an afterthought added, "You still working on this rock hole? The rains are going to come soon and you won't need it."

Gilliam, surprised at the sarcasm from his daughter's new husband, was at a loss for words. After a few moments of awkward hesitation he replied, "May as well finish it, might come in handy some day."

That evening, after the couple had left, Gilliam sat on the porch smoking his pipe, thinking about the day's events. If he had his druthers, none of it would have ever happened. "But still, Lucy was almost a grown woman. Her mother was only 15 when I married her and it worked out well. Maybe that boy will take care of her and everything will be all right."

Left unsaid, but in the back of his mind, was the realization that poor people just naturally married young. With no education, no money and no hope for a future, the only thing a girl had to look forward to was getting married.

The first sign of trouble came several weeks later, on a Sunday afternoon, when Gilliam and his wife stopped by to visit Lucy at her new home. Although Roberts was supposedly making good money from his various illegal enterprises, little if any of it went home with him. Most of it went to gambling and drinking. The house where they resided, in Dallas Village, was actually a bootleg joint owned by someone else but the person owed Roberts money and had agreed to let the couple live in the front part rent free while he continued bootlegging in the back.

Lucy was thrilled to see her parents, even in such shabby sur-

roundings. "This is just temporary," she explained apologetically. "We're going to get us a big house just as soon as he gets on his feet."

Even though it was almost three in the afternoon Roberts was still in bed. "He had some business to take care of last night and didn't get in until late."

Perhaps wakened by the sound of voices, Roberts staggered groggily into the room where he dropped heavily into a chair. From his looks it was apparent that he was still suffering the effects from the previous night's "business." Ignoring Gilliam, Roberts abruptly ordered Lucy to get him something to eat. When she didn't respond immediately, Roberts grabbed her arm and shoved her roughly toward the kitchen with the admonition to "make sure it's fit to eat!"

Noticing Gilliam sitting in the corner of the room, Roberts explained sarcastically, "We've still got some kinks to work out but she'll learn."

With Lucy no longer helping her family, Gilliam returned to driving his produce route every Saturday while his wife worked at the market. Still, he continued digging the well, even if only for an hour or two a week. He had struck solid rock and progress was measured in inches as he laboriously chiseled at it with a hammer and crowbar.

The family, knowing Roberts didn't care for their company, stopped visiting Lucy at her house. Instead, several times a month, she would walk the 5 or 6 miles to her parents' home where she would spend the day. When it came time to return home, Gilliam would drive her, letting her out about a block down the street. "My husband doesn't want me to take any favors from anyone and if he sees me taking a ride from

## Shaver's Top 10 Books of Local & Regional Interest

1. Glimpses into Antebellum Homes of Historic Huntsville, Alabama - New 9th edition (\$13.95).
2. Rocket Boys - Homer Hickam and The Big Creek Missile Agency (\$23.95).
3. Sword of "Bushwhacker" Johnston - The Civil War guerilla in Madison and Jackson counties - Edited by Charles Rice (\$19.95).
4. Portraits In Time - A prize winning collection of stories of *Old Huntsville* by Tom Carney. Now in its 2nd printing! (\$17.95).
5. Mid-South Garden Guide - Best guide for zone 7 (That's us) gardening \$17.95.
6. Early History of Huntsville, Alabama 1804 - 1870 by Brig. Gen. E.C. Betts - Edited and revised by *Old Huntsville*, with introduction by Tom Carney (\$12.95).
7. Storied Ground - Facts and Fiction of Maple Hill Cemetery by David Chamberlain (\$12.95).
8. Maps and more maps - Maps of Huntsville in 1865 & 1871, and the 1875 map of Madison County (\$10 ea.).
9. Photographs of the Union encampments at Huntsville during the Civil War. Photos are of the Union Army encamped on the Courthouse Square & in the Big Spring (\$5.95 ea.).
10. My Life From Wagons To Rockets by Gladys McFarlen True (\$20.00).

MAIL ORDERS ADD  
\$2.00 PER/BOOK

Shaver's Bookstore  
(256) 536-1604

2362 Whitesburg Dr.  
Whitesburg at Bob Wallace  
Huntsville, Ala. 35801

someonet he might get upset.”

Despite the many warning signs, Gilliam held his peace. Possibly he was hoping that time would work matters out. Most likely however, he was a product of his time, a culture where no one interfered in another person's marriage and where divorce was unspeakable. Never in the history of the Gilliam family had a couple even separated, much less divorced. Making matters even worse was the fact that most people considered a divorced woman little better than a “lady of the night.”

Lucy's visits became less frequent, but when she did visit there would often be signs of bruises on her arms and neck. “Just an accident,” she would explain. “I bumped into something.” One hot sweltering day she showed up wearing a long sleeved flannel shirt. When her mother insisted, Lucy rolled the sleeves up revealing dark ugly bruises. There were even more bruises on her back and legs.

“It was my fault,” explained Lucy while wiping tears from her eyes. “I made him upset and I shouldn't have.”

Her mother called Gilliam into the room and explained what happened. After examining the bruises himself, he stood silent for a long time looking at his wife and daughter, trying in his mind to verbalize the words he had been putting off for so long.

“You don't have to go back,” he finally said. “We'll go to the courthouse and get papers.”

The words stunned Lucy and her mother. They both realized how hard it was for Gilliam to accept a divorce in the family.

The decision was made by Lucy. “Things will get better, I just know they will and he's expecting me to have dinner on the table so

I have to go.”

That evening Gilliam worked in the well. Long after the sun had gone down he continued pounding the hard rock with a vengeance he had never known before. He was no longer crushing simple rocks, he was crushing his helplessness and despair with a cold rage for which he knew there was no outlet.

The next morning Gilliam drove into Huntsville to talk to Sheriff Blakemore. His second cousin's oldest daughter was married to the sheriff and though Gilliam didn't consider him a

close friend, they had what he called a “passable” relationship.

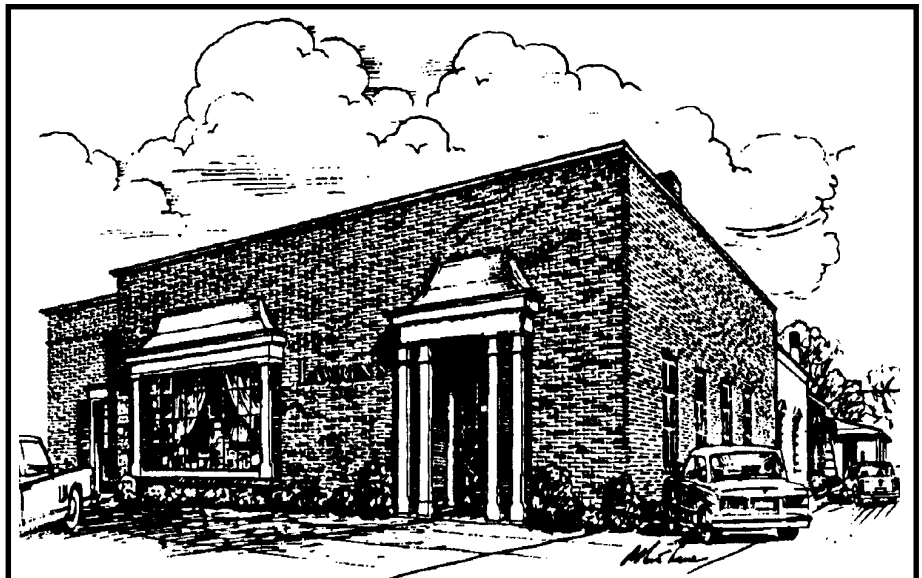
After listening to Gilliam's account of the bruises, the sheriff had but one question. “Will she swear out a warrant?”

“I don't think so,” replied Gilliam.

“There ain't nothing I can do then. It's all up to her.”

Never-the-less, that afternoon the sheriff stopped by to talk with Roberts. Though he had no legal basis for the visit, he was undoubtedly hoping a bluff, or a threat, might accomplish the same thing.

Roberts merely listened to the



# LAWREN'S\*

809 MADISON STREET  
HUNTSVILLE, ALABAMA 35801

## BRIDAL REGISTRY

China, Crystal, Silver, Pewter, Table  
Linen, Cookware.

Decorative Accessories, Invitations and  
Announcements, Lenox China & Crystal,  
Fine Linens & Cottons For Bed & Bath.

sheriff with thinly disguised contempt and then ordered him off the property. "You ain't got no right meddling in peoples' marriages," he shouted. "This is a private matter!"

Several days later Gilliam and his family had just sat down at the supper table and were about to say the blessing when a neighbor stopped by to say he had seen Lucy at the hospital. He had been visiting a relative, he explained, and just as he was leaving, he saw Lucy being treated by a doctor. "I think she's got a broken arm because I saw them putting a cast on it."

Gilliam said nothing but the look of rage on his face made his intent clear. He had just reached for his coat and was about to walk out the door when his wife ordered him to sit back down first. "We are going to say the blessing first and then you can go do what you have to do."

Gilliam rushed to the hospital where the nurses told him that Lucy had been taken away by her husband. Next he drove to their house but even from a distance it was evident that it was vacant. The only other place he could think of was the "Clip Joint." He had never been there but had heard the rumors of the crooked dice games Roberts ran from the trailer.

Even from several hundred feet away Gilliam knew he was at

the right place by the loud music and profanity piercing the night air. Entering the trailer he immediately saw Lucy sitting in a corner. Her arm was in a cast, and her hair hung limply across her face. On her right cheek was a bruise that was just starting to turn a dark purple. "Come on," Gilliam said. "We're going home."

Roberts had been on his knees in the back of the trailer shooting dice when he noticed the old man. Springing to his feet he ordered, "Leave her be. This is a private thing between her and me!"

Gilliam paused for a brief second, eyeing all the men in the trailer before letting his gaze rest on Roberts. "Boy, I ought to kill you right now but I'm not going to. I'm going to take my daughter home and you can go on about whatever you do. Just don't never let me see you again."

Something about the unarmed old crippled man; something more than the barely controlled wrath in his voice caused the men in the trailer to freeze in their footsteps as they watched him escort his daughter out.

If Gilliam had hoped that would be the end of it, he was sadly mistaken. In the morning's early hours, before the sun came up, the family was awakened by the sound of an automobile and loud cursing. Gilliam quickly grabbed his overalls and started

for the front door when he was startled by the sound of breaking glass followed almost instantly by a wall of flames.

Even with all the noise and confusion of the inferno, the whole family swore they heard Roberts laughing as the car drove away.

Although no one was hurt in the fire, the house was destroyed and all of their meager possessions lost. After salvaging what little they could from the ruins, Gilliam drove to the Huntsville bus depot where he put his family on a bus to Chicago where his wife's sister lived.

Word of the fire and of Gilliam sending his family to Chicago had spread throughout the community. Several neighbors, though taking great pains not to get involved, stopped by the ruins of the house to see the carnage from the night before. The first thing they noticed however, was Gilliam with a pick and shovel working in the well.

# Humidor Pipe Shop, Inc.



2502 S. Memorial Parkway

- Cigars
- Pipes
- Pipe Tobacco
- Accessories
- Lighters
- Pipe Repairs



Robin R. Morgan - Owner/Tobacconist

(256) 539-6431



**BAKERY, EATERY  
& BREWERY**

*A Huntsville Tradition  
Governors Dr.*

**534-4455**



Trying to make conversation, one of the neighbors remarked, "That well will come in handy next summer won't it?"

Without pausing in his labor, Gilliam replied in a barely audible mumble, "Ain't going to need it. Going to Chicago."

Many townspeople were even more puzzled by the fact that Gilliam had not showed up at the sheriff's office to swear out a warrant for the arson. Until he made a complaint there was nothing the authorities could do.

That same night an unidentified person threw several sticks of dynamite under the "Clip Joint." The trailer was totally destroyed and its occupants, cut and bruised, barely escaped. People assumed that Gilliam was responsible, probably as a last measure of revenge before joining his family in Chicago.

"If he was responsible," people theorized, "that boy had it coming." Almost everyone had heard of Roberts' abuse of his child bride and of the arson. For many people there was even a certain amount of wishful reminiscing about the "old days when the Klan took care of that kind."

Gilliam had not left town, though. The next morning he was back at the well working at a feverish pace. Neighbors, curious at his strange behavior but still not wanting to get involved, stopped by several times during the day trying to draw the old man into a conversation. Gilliam, after politely acknowledging their presence, continued digging, refusing all attempts at conversation.

Late that afternoon neighbors saw him sitting on top of the huge pile of dirt next to the well. Something about the way he sat silently staring into the hole made it apparent that the well was finally finished.

That evening, about 9 o'clock, Roberts was sitting at the bar in the White Castle, a notorious speakeasy located near the intersection of Meridian Street and Winchester Road. With all of his cronies gathered around, he was basking in his new notoriety as he told of running the Gilliam family out of Madison County. "No one, absolutely no one, crosses me and gets away with it," he boasted.

Most of the patrons, however, tried to ignore Roberts. The incidents of the past few days had

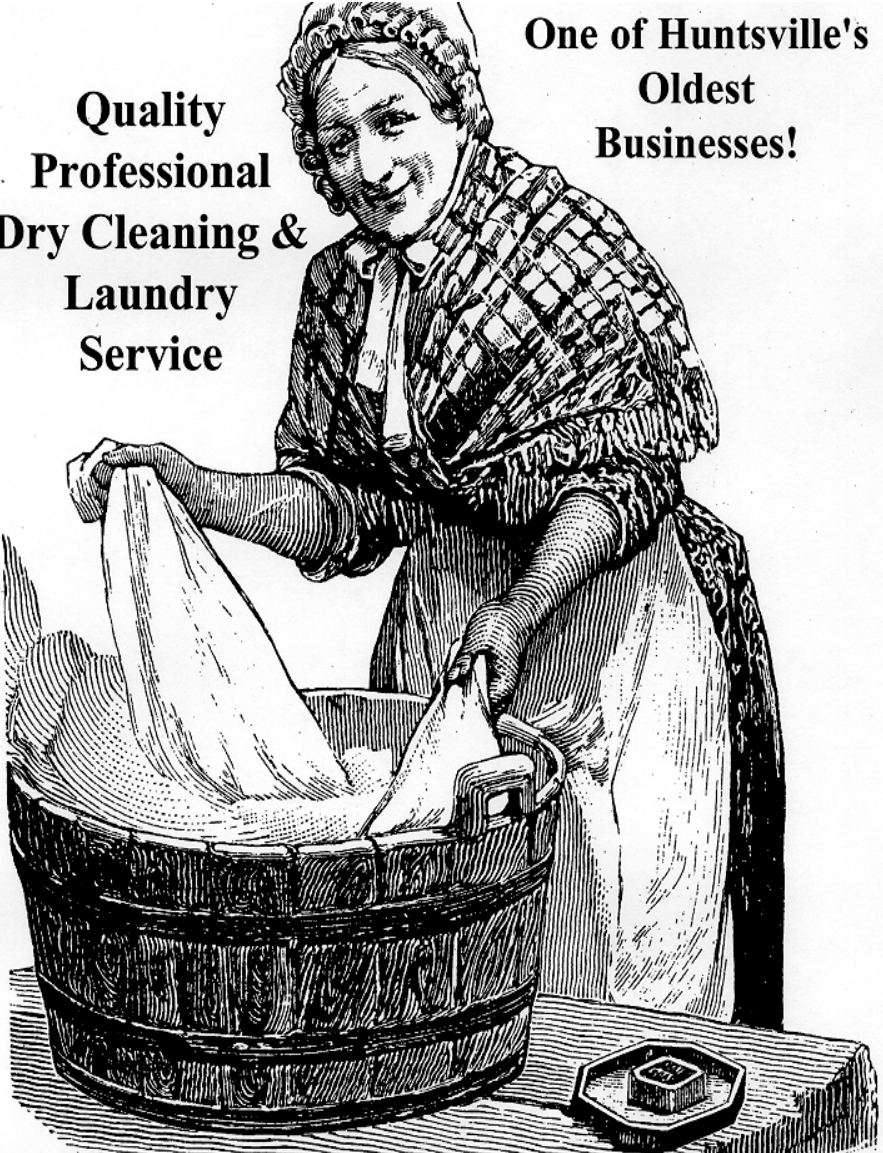
disgusted them. Probably what bothered them the most, though no one would say it out loud, was the fact that they had let it happen without doing anything.

Suddenly the whole place got quiet as people focused on a solitary figure standing in the doorway, holding a shotgun leveled at Roberts. Some people said it was 'ol man Gilliam, but other people, probably wiser, said there was no resemblance.

Without saying a word, letting the motions of his gun give the

**Quality  
Professional  
Dry Cleaning &  
Laundry  
Service**

**One of Huntsville's  
Oldest  
Businesses!**



**SANDERS**  
**1215 Jordan Lane 837-6072**  
**7538 Mem. Pkwy. S. 828-0106**

orders, the figure directed Roberts outside. A backward glanced insured that no one would follow.

Some people claimed to have heard a gunshot moments later. Others, perhaps wiser, insisted it was just a car backfiring.

Much later, when the bar patrons finally ventured outside, there was no sign of Gilliam or Roberts. Although some people later remembered a pool of blood in the gravel parking lot, they insisted it was from a stray dog that had been run over.

By the next morning almost everyone in Huntsville had heard of the evening's strange events. Neighbors of Gilliam, embarrassed from not going to his aid, drove by the burned out homestead. The place looked much the same as it had the day before with personal belongings scattered across the yard and partially burnt timbers swaying in the wind. There was no sign of Gilliam though.

The only sign that someone had been there since the day before was the well. It had been completely filled up, with a mound of

dirt rounded off on top, almost like a ...

Roberts was never seen again. Some people in Huntsville, perhaps a lot wiser than most, said he probably left town suddenly due to "unexpected business."

A person would almost have to be a native Huntsvillian, with roots going back many generations, to understand how people suddenly "forgot" the whole affair. Possibly they felt, as Sheriff Blakemore was later quoted saying, "It was a private matter."



# The Dogwood Cafe



Serving Breakfast & Lunch

Breakfast Plates -

The best in Huntsville

Lunch Specials Daily!

Try our Philly Sandwich & Reuben Deli plus all your favorite burgers.

Open 7:00am - 3:30pm

Saturday - Late night hours

1:00am - Till

539-7331

121 Northside Square  
across from the courthouse

## EVERY MONDAY IS FAMILY NIGHT!

**EVERY  
MONDAY  
IS  
FAMILY  
NIGHT!**

new North Parkway  
store (Hwy. 72 east & N.  
Pkw.)  
852-9882

# Gibson's

BAR-B-QUE  
SINCE 1956



## Kids Eat Free

EVERY MONDAY NIGHT  
KIDS EAT FREE

One child, 10 and under, eats free from our new kid's menu with each paid adult entree. Offer good for Dine-in only.

3319 MEMORIAL PKWY., SW 881-4851  
Dine in or carry out & our famous breakfast

8412 WHITESBURG DR. SOUTH 882-0841  
Dine in or drive thru & our famous breakfast

# Gibson's

BAR-B-QUE

YOUR HOSTS: THE SANFORDS & HAMPTONS



for the night wearing hair nets, metal curlers, cellophane mittens and cosmetics

Mr. Tift of Dover, New Hampshire said you can't miss something you've never had. What Mr. Tift "never had" was a first name. He explained that his father disliked his own first name, Alanson, and decided to permit his son to choose his own first name. "I grew up without a first name, and have never felt like appropriating one," Tift said. "However, I've gotten along just as well without one."

## Absurd News

In a Meridian, Mississippi courtroom, the two defendants sat listening as the prosecutor asked the victim in a loud voice, "Are the two men who robbed you in this courtroom today?" The whole court looked on in amazement as the two defendants slowly raised their hands.

A.I. Whitehead, public utility executive, wanted to divorce his second wife because, he declared, she spoiled 26 years of happily married life with Wife No. 1. Whitehead charged that Pansy Whitehead "practiced her feminine charms and wiles" upon him while his first wife was away on a visit. He obtained a divorce, only to learn, he said, his new love lacked affection for him. Not only that, he complained, she retired

In the late 1950s, NASA realized that they needed a way for astronauts to write in space, and that gravity-fed pens wouldn't work in zero gravity. A task force of engineers developed a pressurized pen that would work in space. All the research and the initial run of 60 pens cost just over a million (1960) dollars. The Russians realized they had the same problem. They solved it by giving their cosmonauts pencils.

Howard Dell, of St. Louis, purchased a pistol to commit suicide with. When the gun misfired he sued the manufacturers for a total of 10 million dollars using the argument that the defective gun deprived him of his rights.

**Advertise in  
Old Huntsville  
534-0502**

**H.C. BLAKE INC.**

Plumbing, Electrical  
Heating,  
Air Conditioning



**SERVICE  
IS OUR  
BUSINESS  
SINCE  
1884**

Hall B.  
Bryant, Jr.  
Proprietor

**534-0781**

## Hartlex Antique Mall

1030 Old Monrovia Rd  
830-4278

**100 plus Dealers!**

Across from Madison Square  
Mall, next to Saturn



# ROBERT DONNELL

## *A Man Of The Ages*

by Jacquelyn Procter Gray

Robert Donnell must have had an amazing amount of faith. What family property and possessions weren't destroyed by the British at the Battle of Guilford County Courthouse, was later destroyed by hostile Indians at Nickajack in the Tennessee wilderness. Any normal man would have become embittered, but Donnell knew his purpose early in life and his conviction never wavered. He came to the wilderness now known as Alabama, fell in love with the people and the land, and left an imprint that will not soon be forgotten. As a minister for a time at the Mooresville brick church, Donnell caused a furor with the residents of the community that caused one man to angrily swear that he would "tear out the bricks with my own hands" if Donnell refused to vacate the pulpit.

Robert Donnell was born in 1784 in North Carolina. His parents were part of the Nottingham Colony that came from York County, Pennsylvania to settle there in 1753. His father farmed in Guilford County, North Carolina when the Revolutionary War upended their lives. The Battle of Guilford County Courthouse destroyed his property, but he fought to protect his family and home as a private in the North Carolina



militia. For serving under Nathaniel Greene, the British placed a bounty on his head in the amount of 200 pounds.

After the Revolution, the family migrated to Wilson County, Tennessee, and watched helplessly as Indians destroyed what little they had left as their posses-

sions floated down the Tennessee River. Robert's father died of fever in 1798, leaving the 15-year-old young man as sole support for his mother and four sisters.

Robert inherited an endurance that was forged by centuries of ancestors who knew nothing but a harsh and violent life. He was a

# DISCOUNT

## painting

RESIDENTIAL & COMMERCIAL

**THE ONLY ONE YOU NEED**



**WE PLACE OUR GREATEST EMPHASIS ON THE INTEGRITY AND QUALITY OF OUR WORKMANSHIP, AND TO PROVE IT -**

**We Guarantee It!**  
LICENSED & INSURED

- Interior & Exterior
- Pressure Washing
- Waterproofing
- Sandblasting
- Caulking
- Carpentry
- Drywall Repair
- Privacy Fencing
- Wallpaper
- Texture Ceiling

**PROMPT SERVICE  
FREE ESTIMATES**

Jim Atchley  
Owner

**512-9983**

Pager  
#720-6138

*Make friends  
one gallon at a time*





ing a godless ministry with unconverted ministers in the pulpit. An inevitable schism was created in many churches.

For Americans of that time, the church was an all-important part of their lives. Before the days of modern distractions, the church provided a social outlet as well as a place for repentance. The minister was an important and respected person in the community. The wilderness colonies that were not so lucky to have a full-time minister, may have to wait as much as three months for their circuit-riding preacher to come around to perform wedding ceremonies and after-the-fact funeral services.

The Presbyterian Church cautiously endorsed the Great Revival at first, but time and again, attention was called to an especially fervent pocket of Presbyterians who lived in the Cumberland region of Tennessee and Kentucky. Even before the church was organized, they were referred to as "those Cumberland Presbyterians." When the new church was offi-

cially formed in 1810, they simply formalized the name. Robert Donnell was converted during this time of religious fervor, and although he felt the call to preach, his lack of education was an obstacle. He prayed for some sort of opening, and the guidelines of the newly formed Cumberland Presbyterian Church provided that opportunity for him.

The first Cumberland Presbyterian ministers, which included Robert Donnell, were dismissed by ministers of other faiths who were generally older, educated in the classics, and owned finer clothing. These early C.P. ministers often swam the rivers wearing homespun clothing made by their mothers or wives to come to the newly-settled frontiers in this area. They slept on the ground or if lucky, on the floors of settlers' homes. In this area of the country, they had little competition with other ministers, who felt that their ivy-league education entitled them to permanent churches, a steady income, and more affluent church members.

# CARNEY PAINTING CO.

- \* Residential
- \* Commercial
- \* Minor Repairs
- \* Licensed
- \* Insured

*Over 30 Years Experience*

*Call Now For Your Free Estimate*

## 828-2396



## DISCOVER THE FLAVOR OF OLD MEXICO!

OUR MOTTO *"The Best Mexican Food In Town"*



### EL MEJICANO RESTAURANT & LOUNGE

*"SERVING HUNTSVILLE SINCE 1973"*



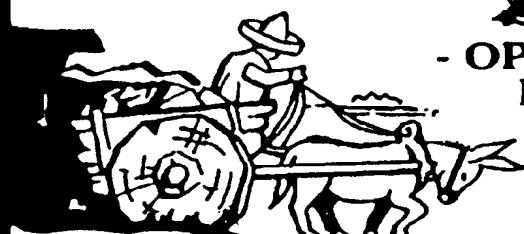
Delicious Mexican Food In A Friendly Atmosphere  
All Menu Items Prepared Fresh Daily  
Banquet Room Facilities

**- OPEN FOR LUNCH & DINNER -  
DINE IN OR CARRY OUT**

Closed Mondays

## CALL...534-2371

2713 PATTON RD. S.W.  
- BETWEEN BOB WALLACE & DRAKE AVENUES -



In his book, "The History of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church" published in 1888, B.W. McDonnold quotes a man who said, "The first generation of Cumberland Presbyterians were the most intensely spiritual people that I have ever known....Those people lived nearer heaven than ordinary Christians do now." Their young ministers were described as "flaming fires" and their converts to Christianity were many in number. Among the first ministers to this area, Rev. Thomas Calhoun preached a sermon from Huntsville namesake John Hunt's home in 1808. Calhoun's good friend, Robert Donnell, held the first camp meeting in Huntsville. Accounts disagree on which of these two men was the first to arrive in this area, but Robert Donnell is credited with starting many churches in North Alabama that still stand today. As a moving force in this area's religious life, he arrived so soon after the settlers, that several churches were founded as the land was being cleared for the very first crop.

It was customary in those days for a young minister to travel with an older minister, for the purpose of fostering the education of the young man and assessing his qualities as a future leader in the church. They discussed lessons, doctrine, and the Bible during the many hours they traveled together. Rev. Donnell had a special cane made that contained an inkwell in the top so that he could ride horseback and record his thoughts at the same time.

Life for early settlers in this territory was dangerous as they tried to co-exist with sometimes hostile Indians. Donnell had the advantage of knowing the Cherokee language and customs. He and his cousin Rev. Robert Bell were among the missionaries who con-

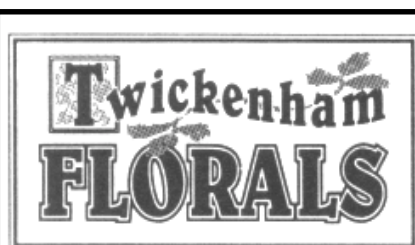
verted many Indians in this area to Christianity.

Though Donnell was immersed in the religious life of this area, exhibiting what has been described as an astounding endurance, he spent much time traveling in search of more converts. In 1817, he was in Jackson County, Tennessee conducting a camp meeting when he was invited to stay at the home of James Webb Smith, a wealthy plantation owner. Donnell met and fell in love with Smith's daughter Ann Eliza, and they were married in March, 1818.

Robert and Ann Eliza enjoyed a happy marriage as they settled into life in this exciting time in Alabama's history. Their bliss was short-lived however, when they suffered the devastating loss of four of their five children in the next few years. Donnell was traveling through North Alabama when he received word that his daughter died in Tennessee at the home of his father-in-law. His hand trembled in grief as he wrote through eyes clouded by tears to his beloved Ann Eliza, "My wife must weep alone while I am trying to comfort other bereaved mothers." After only 10 short years of marriage, death claimed the frail Ann Eliza at the age of 32.

A few years later, Robert Donnell was visiting Reverend Dr. Jacob Lindley in Ohio, when he made Donnell promise to look in on his daughter who was a teacher in Lawrence County. The meeting was arranged, they fell in love, and in 1832, Donnell married Clarissa Lindley. Although they had no children together, what emptiness they may have felt was filled in

*continued on page 20*



**Full Service Florist and Gifts**

**fruit baskets - balloons - live plants - weddings - funerals hospitals - fresh and silk flower arrangements**

**We Offer a Complete Consultation to Plan Your Perfect Wedding**

Alice Fryman      Diann Burgess  
Owner                      Designer

**256-536-8599 / 888-842-8599**

**804 Wellman Avenue  
Huntsville, Ala. 35801**

## **PAMLI JEWELRY & GIFTS**

10k & 14k Black Hills Gold & Silver Jewelry

Copper jewelry with and without magnets

Turquoise, Pewter, Sterling Silver, Western jewelry

**Love Bracelets - Celtic Jewelry**

Navajo, Apache, and Cherokee Indian items

Located in the Limestone Flea Market Across from the Main Concession

Highway 72 - 1 mile west of County Line Road

Open Saturdays and Sundays (256) 536-4411 - [www.pamli.com](http://www.pamli.com)

**QUALITY MERCHANDISE AT FLEA MARKET PRICES**

# Huntsville Coffee Talk

by Aunt Eunice

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



I want to thank **Cathey** and **Tom Carney** for giving me the privilege of writing this column. Every time I go someplace, people tell me that they're glad that I do so they can keep up with what's going on. And I want to thank all of you people for reading *Old Huntsville Magazine*.

My dear friends, **Philip P. Mullins** and his wife **Edna** celebrated their **50th** wedding anniversary on April 10. Congratulations, I love you.

This **Mothers' Day**, I was closed and I got to go to church. I go to **Twickenham Church of Christ**. Brother **Eddie** preached on Love - The greatest lesson we all can learn is to love one another. I love you.

Happy birthday to my granddaughter, **Donna**.

Last month's photo was **Jan Davis**, Huntsville's own astronaut. Our lucky winner really enjoyed

her breakfast.

Thanks to everyone who came out and supported my breakfast and gave for **Special Olympics** with **Chief Moses** - he's doing great work!

For all of you folks who want some good bargains, be sure to attend the **Kiwanis (Golden K) White Elephant sale on May 28 and 29**. Not only will you find some good bargains but you will meet one of the nicest groups of retired men in Huntsville.

Everyone needs to mark their calendar for Wednesday, **May 26**, and Thursday, **May 27** from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the VBC South Hall. The big event is the **Wal-Mart Senior Expo**. It's free admission, free parking in the South Hall parking area with local entertainment, door prizes, free food, a cooking school by **Chef Kurt Lineback**, a travel program and our special entertainer,

**Mr. Boots Randolph!!!** There will be something for everyone and my dear friend, **John Malone** will be the M.C. I'll be there and I hope to see you there.

I sure am proud of **Senator Jeff Enfinger** who recently announced that he was dividing up his senator's pay to give **\$2500** each to several **nonprofit organizations**. Now this is a great politician, who cares about his community!

I sure will miss my good friends **Susan** and **Jim Kirkland**. They're off to Australia and New Zealand at the end of May - have a good time.

**Kirk Shubert** visited me recently from Nevada. The first time he came in several years ago I mentioned him in my column and an old friend of his from New Mexico, **Jackie Gray**, saw it and

## 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: "In the news"



Last month's photo was astronaut Jan Davis

## A Helping Hand

- \* Grocery shopping
- \* Last minute shopping
- \* Laundry & dry cleaning pickup or drop off
- \* Post office visit
- \* Parcel pick-ups
- \* Carry pets to veterinarian
- \* Flower or gift delivery
- \* Standing in line
- \* Waiting for delivery or repair person
- \* Help with parties



**...or tell us what you need! Call 534-8037**



contacted him. It was the first time they had heard from one another in years!

Well, I wish everyone could eat a meal like the one I had May 5. We closed the **Crime Prevention Academy** with a cookout by all our local dignitaries and top law-dogs. I believe they could open a restaurant if they had a mind to. The next Academy will be in the fall. Be sure and sign up for it because it really teaches you how to watch out for scams and how to be safe in your home and out in public. There's lots to learn, so sign up for the next one, limit 50 per class (**NO COST**).

All this talk about Huntsville's schools disturbs me. Are we going to let the schools raise our kids or should we take that responsibility?

I went to eat at the 2nd best restaurant in town (**mine's #1**) the other night - **The Outback**. **Loyd Tomlinson** knows how to treat his staff because that's the friendliest and most efficient service that I've ever seen! As I told you last month, he's now got 3 parking spaces on the side for his **new takeout service**. Just call ahead, park in one of those 3 spaces reserved for you and you never have to leave your car!

**Wedding bells** rang on May 15 for my good friend **Tom Glynn** and his new bride **Jeannie**. Y'all have a great honeymoon in the Bahamas.

Ex-city councilman **Mark Hall** was spotted the other day tooling around town in a convertible. Looks like being out of politics is agreeing with him!

Congratulations and welcome to my new neighbors **Clayton** and **Jennifer Jones**. They got their house completed and they're all moved in. I'm proud to have them for neighbors. I just want to say to my dear friend **Liz Hurley**;

you're looking great! What a million-dollar smile that gal has.

Rumor has it that **Terri Morris** at **Prudential** might be getting a visit from the stork? Good luck.

My friend **Susan Kirkland** was so happy to see her favorite **Aunt** last month, **Kat DaBov**. Susan says she is the sweetest person in the world.

I sure am glad to hear the city council decided to honor **Paul Bolden** by naming a military museum after him. Paul was a native of Madison County who won the Medal of Honor during WW II. Isn't it sad that it took a half century for us to recognize one of our own?

I want to close by saying that I sure lost a good friend and my sympathy goes out to **Clyde** on losing his sweet wife, **Jerri Blankinship**-- one of Huntsville's finest.

Everyone take care, come see me and remember, I love you all.

**One Meal,  
One Customer  
at a time.**



*A Franchisee*

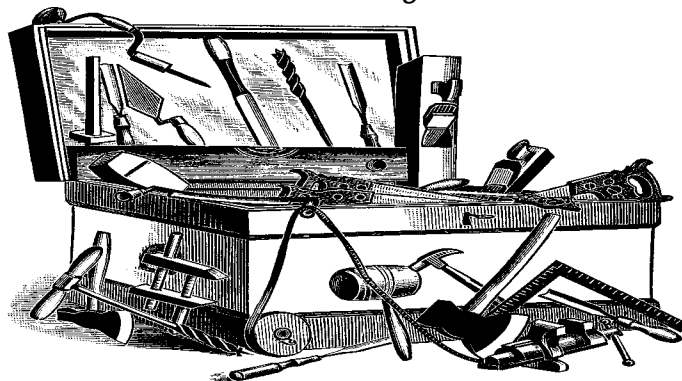
**NO RULES.  
JUST RIGHT.™**

4777 Whitesburg Drive  
Huntsville, AL 35802  
Phone: 205-882-6283

*Over Service*

## **Hardware**

*Home of Pocket Knives, Red Wagons & Cast Iron Skillets*



*Come by and let us assist you for all  
your Hardware & Plumbing needs*

**Serving Huntsville Since 1962**  
**536-2616**  
**2402 Mem. Pkwy. NW, Huntsville, Ala.**



# Light My Fire!

## Hot Pear Relish

- 1 peck pears
- 5 green peppers
- 5 red peppers
- 3 hot pepper pods
- 5 large onions
- 5 c. vinegar
- 5 c. sugar
- 1 t. salt

Grind up the pears in your pepper grinder, drain off the excess juice. Then, put the peppers & onions through a grinder. Combine with vinegar, sugar and salt. Bring to boiling, cook for 20 minutes. Seal in hot, sterilized jars.

## Blackberry Jam

Pick ripe blackberries, wash them well. Mash them up. Add a cup of sugar to each cup of the berries. Cook over low heat til it jellies in a saucer. Pour in jars & seal.

garlic powder. Spoon on your biscuits (my husband tells me "Biscuits, not Rolls!").

## Fried Cucumbers

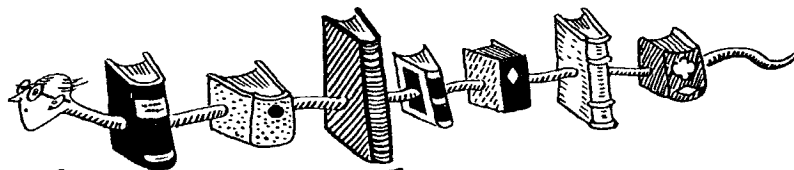
Pare the cucumbers and slice them about half an inch thick, lay them in ice water for about 20 minutes. Drain, then wipe each piece separately, season them with black pepper, salt, flour and cayenne pepper. They just need dusting with the mixture. Get your skillet good and hot with butter, drop in the slices and fry til light brown.

## Spicy Chicken Gravy

Pour off most grease from your fried chicken. Brown a little flour in the bottom of your skillet, add salt and pepper to taste. Pour in milk, or water, or a mixture of the 2. Stir and pour off. Add a few dashes of cayenne pepper and

## Scrambled Eggs with Cheddar

In a skillet melt a couple of teaspoons butter. Add about 1/4 cup chopped onions and cook til onions are brown. Add a tablespoon of chopped green onion. Beat 4 eggs with a fork and add to the mixture in pan. Sprinkle some grated cheddar cheese over the top. Cook til the eggs are done, flip once. Top with some crumbled bacon and serve.



## The Book Legger

"The Reader's Bookstore"  
Paperbacks - Hardbacks

Good Selection of used & out of print Paperbacks. Used & remaindered Hardbacks. We sell or trade Paperbacks at half price.

**895-0082**

Mon - Sat 10am - 6pm  
Sun 1pm - 5pm

4001 - C Holmes Avenue Huntsville, Ala.

## Hot Pintos and Rice

2 c. dried pinto beans  
 4 c. water  
 1 small onion, chopped  
 coarse  
 8 slices bacon, uncooked  
 1 T. garlic powder  
 2 T. beef bouillon  
 1 T. Tabasco sauce  
 Salt & pepper to taste

Wash your beans, pick out rocks, soak overnight in water. Drain the beans and put them in a large pot with fresh water. Add the onion, bacon and spices. Add the bouillon. Simmer uncovered til the beans are done, at least 2 hours. Add water as necessary. Serve hot over steamed rice with chow-chow (relish for you Northerners).

## Fried Ham with Red-Eye Gravy

4 large slices country ham  
 1 T. all-purpose flour  
 1 c. cold water  
 1 t. strong black coffee

Put your ham slices in a hot skillet and fry over medium, turning a couple of times. Cook for 10 minutes til browned. Remove ham from pan and keep warm on platter. Leaving just a tablespoon of fat in the pan, toss in the flour raise the heat, and stir til it browns. Pour in the cold water and coffee. Bring to a boil, stirring real well to get all

that good stuff off the pan. Lower the heat and simmer for about 5 minutes. Throw your ham back in if you'd like. Get you some really fresh biscuits and start soppin' up that good juice.

## Buttermilk Pie

3 eggs  
 1 c. sugar  
 2 T. flour  
 1 c. buttermilk  
 1/4 c. melted butter  
 1 t. vanilla

Beat your eggs slightly and add your sugar A flour. Add the melted butter and mix well. Add the buttermilk X vanilla, pour into an unbaked pie shell. Bake at 325 degrees til custard is set.

## Divinity

3 c. sugar  
 2/3 c. white corn syrup  
 pinch salt

Let the mixture boil til it forms hard balls in water or threads from a spoon. Pour slowly into thoroughly beaten whites of 3 eggs. Add one or 2 cups of chopped nuts and beat til all thickens. Pour into pan with wax paper and cut inot squares when cool.

## To all Cooks & Genealogists!

*Old Huntsville* has a brand new website that includes 42,000 people who are buried at Maple Hill Cemetery. Also included are listings of many local cemeteries. But that's just for starters! You'll get delicious recipes, Baby Boomer tips, Old Superstitions, Household Remedies, and much more. You'll also find Classic *Old Huntsville* stories to read and enjoy-- all at no cost! The feedback we've gotten has been tremendous, so check us out at:

"[www.oldhuntsville.com](http://www.oldhuntsville.com)"



505 East Airport Road  
 Huntsville, Alabama  
**883-7656**

Country Cooking  
 Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner  
 Mon. - Fri. 6:30 am - 9:00 pm  
 Closed Sundays

*Linda's*  
 Printing Service

Special - Continuous - Ad Specialties  
 3308 7th Ave. S.W.

**534-4452**

# Donnell

*continued from page 15*

later years with the laughter of the many children of Donnell's only surviving child, James Webb Smith Donnell.

Donnell's influence as a dynamic minister was not without controversy, however. The Mooresville brick church, which still stands, was built in the early 1800's as a community church. The understanding was that each year, a new minister would occupy the pulpit, representing a different denomination. When Robert Donnell came in 1835 as a Cumberland Presbyterian minister, he amassed an immediate following, and at the conclusion of his year in the pulpit, he refused to give up the church. An angry outlash by residents was not enough to force him out, and in the end, the foothold established by the Cumberland Presbyterians prevailed.

Rev. Donnell grappled with the moral aspects of slavery his entire life. Although he grew up knowing hard work and hardship, he inadvertently became a slave-

owner as a result of his marriage to his first wife, Ann Eliza.

By Alabama law, he was prevented from freeing his slaves, and although he offered to pay for their passage to Liberia, none would go. He turned down the chance to pastor a church in Memphis because he would not take his slaves so far from their families on neighboring farms. Donnell prayed to God for answers to this situation. He called the slaves into his dining room twice daily for prayer, and tolerated his overseer as he chastised him for keeping them from their work. Donnell informed him that his concern was for their souls, first and foremost.

By 1845, Donnell's house in Athens was completed, and he and Clarissa settled into a comfortable and pleasant life together. While conducting an outdoor camp meeting near Huntsville in 1853, Donnell became ill. At first he shrugged his illness off, but over the next few months, his condition worsened until his death in 1855.

His good friend, Rev. Thomas Calhoun, preached the funeral sermon. As the mourners gath-

ered, an ominous thunder cloud approached carrying with it torrents of rain. Calhoun raised his arms heavenward and in a pleading, yet commanding voice, he asked God not to let the rain disturb their worship. The scene was remembered and retold for years to come. A drenching downpour accompanied by thunder and bolts of lightning swept swiftly toward the huddled crowd. Hard rain fell all around the crowd, but the mourners, as well as their tethered horses nearby, remained dry. Those who witnessed it felt that it had to be a tribute to the man who devoted his life to God. The Civil War arrived with death, destruction, and the end of slavery. Donnell's son and his family lived in the Athens home when Yankee soldiers camped around it during the Union occupation of Athens. One soldier complained that someone in the house emptied a chamber pot from the second story window onto their supper, which was cooking over the campfire of these most unwelcome guests.

With the enthusiasm of their new freedom after the war, former slaves of the Cumberland Presbyterians formed their own denomination, now called the Cumberland



## INTIMATE LINGERIE

*Area's largest selection of elegant lingerie  
for that special person in your life*

Novelties and gag gifts for special parties.  
Exciting line of humorous greeting cards.  
Swimwear.

***Celebrating Our 10th Year Anniversary as  
Huntsville's Oldest Intimate Apparel Salon***

# 539-9106

504 F Jordan Lane (Preston Plaza - Corner of Holmes & Jordan)

Presbyterian Church of America. The national headquarters of this historic denomination is in Huntsville, Alabama. Because the histories of the two churches have parallel paths, they still maintain and enjoy a connection today.

Long-time curator of the Donnell home, Faye Axford, is herself a distinguished historian who has thoroughly researched and written about Rev. Robert Donnell as well as Limestone County. Faye's dedication to the preservation of history can be credited for saving the Donnell home from destruction when it was condemned in the 1970's, and for its beautiful restoration.

In 1906, a crushing blow was dealt by the national General As-

sembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church when it ordered that all C.P churches unite with the Presbyterian U.S.A. Church. Many worshipers arrived on Sunday morning to find a padlock on their church, along with the notice that it was now the property of the Presbyterian Church. Approximately one third of the former Cumberland Presbyterians obeyed the order, another third of the churches simply ceased to exist, and the remaining members rolled up their sleeves and began rebuilding new churches, and continued calling themselves Cumberland Presbyterian in defiance of the order. There are many Presbyterian churches of both denominations

in this area, that were founded by Rev. Robert Donnell.

Today, many of these pre-1906 C.P churches are still standing. Because many had the initials "CP" carved somewhere on the structure itself, some changed their name to Central Presbyterian Church. Robert Donnell's church in Athens was burned during the Civil War, but the church built to replace it still bears the "CP" initials although it is now part of the Presbyterian U.S.A. denomination.

Surely, Robert Donnell would be proud to know that nearly 150 years after his death, the presbytery which governs several churches in North Alabama, was named in his honor. The strength of this Scotsman's faith lives on.

# FREE LIVING TRUST SEMINAR

## Find Out How to Transfer Your Estate to Your Family Quickly—Without Probate

ATTEND ONE OF THESE FREE SEMINARS

**Tuesday, May 18, 1999**

10:00 a.m. Holiday Inn,  
3810 University Drive

7:00 p.m. Radisson Suite Hotel,  
6000 S. Memorial Pkwy.

**Wednesday, May 19, 1999**

2:00 p.m. Radisson Suite Hotel,  
6000 S. Memorial Pkwy.

7:00 p.m. Holiday Inn,  
3810 University Drive

**Thursday, May 20, 1999**

10:00 a.m. Radisson Suite Hotel,  
6000 S. Memorial Pkwy.

2:00 p.m. Holiday Inn,  
next to Madison Square Mall

*Free Refreshments Served.*

**Attend one of these seminars and you'll receive a FREE, one-hour, private consultation to answer any questions you have about setting up your personal Living Trust (\$175 value)**

**You'll Find Out What Will Happen With a Properly Funded Living Trust...**

- Your estate will transfer *quickly* to your family upon your death, without the expense of probate.
- If you're married and your estate is worth less than \$1.3 million, there will be no federal estate taxes to pay.
- You'll avoid a conservatorship if you become incapacitated—so your estate will be run as *you* see fit.

**You'll Find Out What May Happen Without a Living Trust (even if you have a will)...**

- Your estate may go through probate, which could take months or even years, and the costs of probate could be substantial.
- If you're married and your estate is over \$650,000 net, without proper planning your family may owe federal estate taxes of 37%-55%.
- If you become incapacitated, or unable to sign documents, a court may assign a conservator to run your estate as the *court* sees fit.

**Sponsored by: The Ryan Law Firm.** Attorney L. Thomas Ryan, Jr. is a frequent speaker on living trusts & estate planning. Mr. Ryan's law practice is devoted primarily to estate planning, and he is a member of the American Academy of Estate Planning Attorneys.

The Ryan Law Firm  
L. Thomas Ryan, Jr.

2319 Market Place, Suite B - Huntsville, AL 35801

**Seating is Limited, So Call Theresa at (256) 533-1103 Now!**

*(Phones open 24 hours—Say you want to make reservations for the living trust seminar)*

No representation is made that the quality of the services to be performed is greater than the quality of legal services performed by other lawyers.

# Congressman Scalped On House Floor

by Don McDaniel

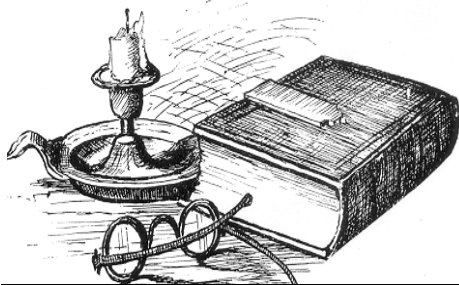
quote

As the United States crept closer to the War Between the States, the House of Representatives turned into a tense, angry arena. Congressmen from North and South shook fists at each other, shouted insults and curses, and even whipped out pistols and knives to make their point.

In 1858, when the House was debating the admission of Kansas to the Union. Laurence Keitt, a fiery congressman from South Carolina, insulted Pennsylvania's Galusha Grow, who shot back, "No slave driver shall crack his whip over me!"

The two charged each other, and within seconds their friends joined in. More than a dozen congressmen were kicking, beating, punching and wrestling on the floor of the United States Congress. Amidst all the cursing, confusion and mayhem, the Speaker of the House and the Sergeant-at-Arms tried in vain to stop the fighting. The battle raged on until one congressman grabbed another by the hair and yanked. To his surprise, he pulled a wig off his opponent's head. "Hooray, boys!" Shouted the congressman, "I've got his scalp!"

Everyone started laughing, and the fighting quickly came to a happy end - happy, that is, for everyone except the man who lost his wig.



## Hard of Hearing? 100 Years Ago, This Was State-of-the-Art Technology



### Today There's **MIRACLE-EAR**

*Hearing loss can occur at any age. Don't miss out on hearing your child's school play. Don't miss out on hearing your favorite symphony. After all, it's the little things that count the most.\**

**FREE Hearing tests\*\***  
**Call or come in today.**



**Two locations in Huntsville to serve you:**  
**Miracle-Ear Center, 900 Bob Wallace Ave. - 539-4009**  
**Sears Hearing Aid Center (Madison Square Mall) - 830-8529**

\*Hearing aids won't restore natural hearing. Individual experiences may vary depending on proper fit, severity of hearing loss, accuracy of evaluation and ability to adapt to amplification.

# Know Your Rights

## Beware Of Giving Up Your Legal Rights

Consumers often lose legal rights under the Constitutions of the United States and the State of Alabama and under state and federal law, by not reading or understanding what they sign.

Many contracts contain clauses, often in small print hidden on the back side of the form, stating that the consumer "waves his/her right to \* \* \*." If you see "waive," "waives" or "waivers" in a contract, **WATCH OUT.** If you sign such a contract, you may be 'waiving good-by' to a trial by Jury, or to claim property as exempt, or to be represented by an attorney, or to be sued in the county where you live. You might unknowingly be agreeing to pay attorney fees for the other party, or to settling disputes through arbitration rather than the Courts.

Fortunately, you are protected some of the time, because some waiver provisions in contracts have been made illegal. For example, it is a violation of a Federal Trade Commission Rule to

include a clause waiving the right to claim property as exempt in a consumer credit contract. It violates Alabama law for a contract to provide for suit in a county other than the county where you live or the county where you signed the contract, or to provide for a 'confession of judgment' which amounts to a waiver of right to contest a contract dispute in a court of law.

Even with these protections, some hospitals in Alabama now ask their patients to sign admission papers which contain clauses whereby the patient waives the right to claim property as exempt. Some lease agreements and land-sales contracts contain similar clauses. And beware, because the Alabama Supreme Court has upheld contract clauses that provides for the waiver of right to trial by jury as well as a clauses that provide for arbitration.

These details in the contract seem unimportant unless a dispute arises between the parties. Your best protection is to carefully read all contracts. If you see a clause that provides for the waiver of a right, you can refuse to sign the contract, or you can line through and initial the provision in the contract that you object to. If you have any questions, you should consult with your lawyer before you sign the contract. Anyone can get a 30 minute consultation with an attorney for only \$20 if you call the Lawyer Referral and Information Service (Madison County), telephone 539-2275, or the Alabama State Bar Association Lawyer Referral Service (outside Madison County), telephone 1-

800-392-5560 for a referral to an attorney who advises on contracts.

*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:*

**Legal Services  
of North Central AL., Inc.**  
2000-C Vernon Drive,  
P.O. Box 2465  
Huntsville, Alabama 35804  
(205) 536-9645

## RENAISSANCE THEATRE at Lincoln Center

### Huntsville's Newest Theatre

*On stage in April*

## Holy Ghosts

A play by  
Romulus Linney

*Belonging to a cult may call for you to handle things that others might take as a test of faith or a test of sheer courage.*

**A Stunning Comedy!**  
April 10, 14, 16

Tickets available at  
Pratt Ave. Antique Mall  
or call 536-3434

**Opening in May**  
Mollie Sweeney  
Directed by Bob Baker

1216 Meridian Street  
with Free Parking!

Resolve to be honest at all events; and if in your own judgement you cannot be an honest lawyer, resolve to be honest without being a lawyer

...Abraham Lincoln in 1850 offering advice to young lawyers

# The Story of a Swiss-California Dreamer!

By Robert Riddle Baker

Several old dusty diaries which I have in my collection of sometimes interesting but only historically of any real value, tells me of a man who once lived in Huntsville. One of the diaries dates from 1871. On an inside page there is written by another person's hand, "To whom it may concern, I take great pleasure in stating that Mr. Biederman and family, of Zurich, are honest, industrious and respectable people, who are about to make their home in the United States and I can most heartedly recommend them to the kinship and consideration, of those among whom they may make their home.



(Signed) Th. W. Byers, United States Consul at Zurich." On another page, there is the address Henry Biederman, care of Mr. John Hertzler, Huntsville, P.O. Alabama.

This was the second time according to these diaries, that Mr. Biederman had been to the United States, for in late 1853 he set sail, leaving his wife and four children at home in Switzerland to travel to San Francisco, California. Why

California? Perhaps it was because of the aftermath of the 1849 gold rush luring enterprising Europeans to cash in on the still very wild west. It appears from other diaries (all diaries are written in Swiss/German) that Mr. Biederman was an astute businessman, part time engineer, inventor, traveler and scientist.

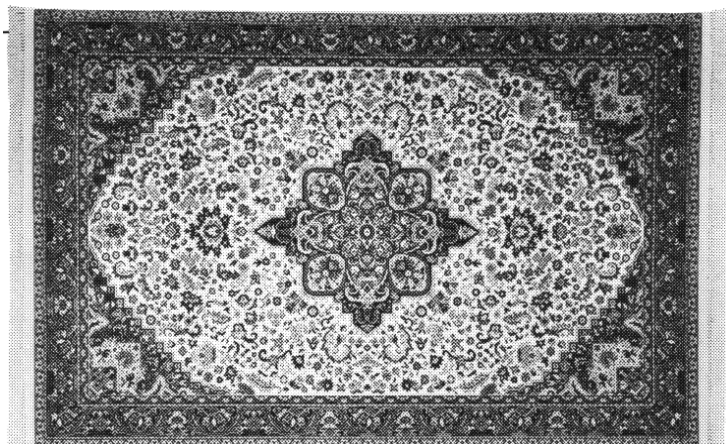
In the 1853-54 diary, and separate letters he later mailed home to his wife, he tells of this journey from Zurich to California, of traveling by ship from Liverpool to New York City, then on the double engine steamship Prometheus down the East coast of the United States, to San Juan del Norte, then on to Nicaragua, traveling via train across the narrow 12 mile strip of land, catching yet another steamer ship, the Cortes, to travel up the West coast and sail finally into the bustling port and sprawling city of San Francisco! This incredible journey was recorded both in the diary and in a 36 page letter written to his wife and mailed (by returning steamer) to her once he arrived to the bay area. Cost of trip? The

## James Carpet & Lighting

Your Oriental Rug Gallery

KARASTAN  
CAPEL  
MASTER CRAFT  
HAND MADE

2722 North Park Dr.  
859-9830



From Around the World

128003



tidy sum of \$205, Second Class, open Berth. The ticket stub which I found among the diaries boldly declares, "The shortest and cheapest route for San Francisco." To bring your dog, it also states, there was another fee of \$25.00 and you were not allowed to carry any mail on your person.

Once in California, he recorded the temperature on the day of his arrival, hotels where he stayed and later drew, with artistic flair, the Orientals of Chinatown, Sasaledo Bay, the U.S. Marine Hospital, a house located at the corner of Stockton and Pine Streets and several other buildings and homes of the day. On December 30, 1853, he plunged head long into business when he and a business partner, Paul Riphstein, purchased for \$530.00 a business called "The Sierra Nevada Caffé" which also doubled as a boarding house on one of the main thoroughfares of San Francisco. A floor plan, which he drew by hand and mailed home (letter dated April 15, 1854) shows the layout of the bar area, kitchen and upstairs bedrooms. He choose to purchase a home in Oakland, across the bay and accessible only by boat or ferry at that time. All of these locations he drew freehand in pencil (graphite) or pen and ink, with birds-eye views and also front elevations. He traveled light but in one drawing of the inside of his home in Oakland, he clearly points out the daguerreotype he brought with him of he and his family, proudly displayed on the wall above his desk. In 1854, he bought out his partner Riphstein for \$200.00.

Living in California required a daily regiment of keeping precise records of every penny taken in and spent. If Henry purchased a drink for a business associate, he recorded its cost. He kept a

running daily expense sheet, recorded neatly, in his trained hand, nearly all of his life. Most days he also recorded the temperature. He read the California Democrat where he also placed ads for his boarding house cafe, renamed Sierra Nevada Bar and Beer Saloon. The Democrat was printed entirely in German and published for the large concentration of Germans then found in the nearly untamed California wilderness. Based on what I can ascertain, Biederman also imported wine and sold it in the San Francisco Bay area. Tiring of poor business or homesick, he sold the saloon and Oakland properties and returned to Zurich in 1855.

There he lived quietly, probably in the importing and selling of spirits, perhaps to accounts he set up in the United States, until he decided around the age of 50 to relocate his family to Huntsville. I cannot be certain of what happened to attract him here. I have a business card for C.E. Cramer of 452 Broome Street, NY Piano-forte Tuner; it states:

"Henry, beloved daughter, Adele, married a Carl Cramer of Huntsville, becoming his second wife. Adele, it appears from papers I have found, also attended the Huntsville Female Academy or may have taught there. So perhaps Henry Biederman moved to Huntsville to join his daughter who was already here? I believe that she may have met Carl while the family lived or visited New York City. All I do know is that he arrived here sometime in 1871 and it appears to have been in May. In the remaining papers I have of Adele's, she never mentions Henry in any way but then

# Brooks & Collier

A Complete Selection of  
Unusual Trees, Shrubs,  
Flowers and Unique  
Statuaries & Accessories.



813 Meridian Street  
Downtown Huntsville

**536-0734**



MEN - WOMEN -  
CHILDREN

**Billy's**

**BARBER SHOP**

Full Service  
Master Barber  
\* Call anytime \*  
leave message

**533-5714**

805 Regal Dr., #7  
Huntsville, Ala. 35801

again, I don't have that many from her estate.

Other papers and bills I have in my possession show that Henry Biederman and his son Leo were in the floral and produce business while here and that Adele eventually became a widow, selling her interest of the house (located on Adams Street, I believe) to her stepdaughter Jenny Cramer and her brother. Jenny eventually married, relocated and lived most of her life in Birmingham, becoming an fine portrait artist and teacher.

After this transfer of interest, Adele probably was allowed to live on in the house until her death. A worn personal business ledger book she kept, names the prominent families of the day who paid her for her stamp work, lace work and other fancy hand made creations. Some of her work was for money, but often food was bartered.

Jenny Cramer Mohan, in her later years, returned to Huntsville and died in 1956.

Henry Biederman is buried in Maple Hill Cemetery in the Carl Ernest Cramer plot, close to the unmarked grave of the gypsy queen. His tombstone reads simply R.A.H. Beiderman from Switzerland. May just be he was a bit of a gypsy himself.

# Southern Superstitions

It's bad luck to sweep out trash or carry out ashes after sunset.

If you spill a jar of face powder, a bad quarrel with a friend will ensue.

If a hen is set in the light of the moon, the eggs will hatch roosters who will refuse to leave the hen house.

Should a man and woman pour tea together, they will have a baby within the year.



## The DUSTY SHELF

*Books & Gifts*®

708 ANDREW JACKSON WAY, PHONE 539-5466

- ART
- WALL MURALS
- PHOTOGRAPHY
- CALLIGRAPHY
- FINE PRINTS
- GIFTS

CELEBRATE YOUR HERITAGE!



Col. Egbert J. Jones Camp, #357  
Sons of Confederate Veterans  
PO Box 2811 Huntsville, AL 35804  
Meets every 1st Thursday 7:00 p.m.  
the Depot, Downtown Huntsville  
VISITORS WELCOME!

## Huntsville Heroes in Gray

He was a Confederate hero. Born in Huntsville, Alabama, Henry Bolden served in many theaters of the war and saw action in the battle of Nashville. When the Union troops began to overrun his position in bloody hand to hand fighting, Bolden, who did not have a gun, picked up a stick and began swinging it furiously. When the battle was over, five dead Yankee soldiers lay sprawled about his feet. Later when asked how he did it, his only reply was, "I knocked them in the head."

Henry Bolden was a black man.

Although few people realize it, there were a number of black Confederate veterans in Madison County. These men, all of whom were valued and respected citizens, earned a unique place in Huntsville history.

Essex Lewis, one of the best known and highly respected of these veterans, went to war with his master, Colonel Nick Lewis, and saw action in Virginia, Tennessee, Alabama and Georgia. After the war he returned to

Huntsville, where he worked as a farmer and as a janitor at the post office. Lewis was a loyal member of the Egbert Jones Camp of Confederate veterans here in Huntsville. In 1910 he was chosen to represent the Huntsville camp at a Confederate reunion in Richmond, Virginia. When Lewis died at the age of 106, his funeral was attended by an honor guard consisting of ex-Confederate soldiers.

Another Huntsville black who saw service in the Civil War was Matt Gray. "Uncle Matt," as he was known, always wore an old gray uniform with the bronze "medal of the Confederacy" pinned to his lapel. He also was a member of the Confederate veterans organization here in Huntsville and had the distinction of a "special" chair being reserved for him at the monthly meetings. According to newspaper accounts of the day, the only meetings he ever missed were when he was sick. At his death, the Huntsville newspaper ended his obituary with, "Now Uncle Matt has gone himself to aid with the Rebel yell."



## Meridian Street Chevron



**Full & Self Service Gas Pumps**

*New & Used Tires - Wrecker Service - Brakes  
Air Conditioning Service - Tune ups - Road Service  
Wheel Balancing - Computerized Engine Analysis*

**Jim Wolchik, Manager**

**1315 Meridian Street - Huntsville, Al 35801**

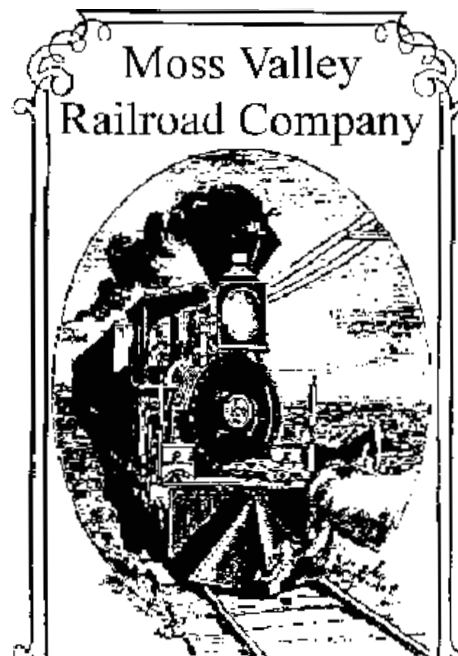
## The Computer Doctor

**We make house calls**

**Hardware - Software  
Networking**

Specializing in after hours  
and weekend calls

**539-6409**



Huntsville's 'Historic'  
Train Shop

MTH - WEAVER

WILLIAMS - LIONEL

RIVAROSS - LGB

**536-3303**

Mon. Thru Friday

10:00 til-6:30

Saturday 10 - 6

320 Church St. Huntsville, Ala.



# Household Brevities

To remove the iron taste from new kettles, boil a handful of hay in them and repeat the process if necessary. Hay-water is a great sweetener of tin, wooden and iron ware. In Irish dairies everything used for milk is scalded with hay-water.

When glass tumblers stick together, you may break them, even cut yourself, if you struggle with them. Instead, place the bottom glass in hot water and fill the top glass with cold water. They will separate like the black sheep and the white on the day of judgement. Some housewives prefer to use crumpled pages of newspapers to get rid of grease in pots and pans, lard buckets and slop pails. Be sure the grease is soft, and then toss a heaping spoonful of cornmeal into the vessel. It does an amazingly good cleanup job.

Baptize a new frying pan by boiling vinegar in it, rinse thoroughly, and put into service. To preserve iron and steel goods from rust, dissolve a small amount of spirits of camphor in 1 lb., of hog's lard; take off the scum; mix as much black lead as will give the mixture an iron color. Iron and steel goods, rubbed over with this mixture, and left with it on 24

hours, and then dried with a linen cloth, will keep clean for months.

Glass jars or glass will not be cracked by heat when boiling or very hot liquids are poured into them if you put silver spoons in them before you add hot liquids. Alcohol stains on furniture can be removed if you cover the spot with a paste made of equal parts of linseed oil and salt. Leave this on for an hour and then remove. If that does not work, follow up by rubbing the spot with a soft cloth dipped in spirits of camphor.

Hang small pictures from or-

dinary fish line. This is strong and inconspicuous. To hang straight, give the picture cord a hitch around the nail.

Nothing is more simple than greatness; indeed, to be simple is to be great.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

**BILLS...    *BILLS...*    **BILLS...****

**DRIVIN' YOU CRAZY!!!**

**LET US HELP!!!**

- ✓ Debt Consolidation
- ✓ Credit Cards

- ✓ Home Improvement
- ✓ 1<sup>ST</sup> & 2<sup>ND</sup> Mortgages
- ✓ Any Worthwhile Purpose ✓

**LOW LOW RATES!**    **No Out of Pocket Expenses**

**WE COULD SAVE YOU THOUSANDS CALL OR COME BY TODAY!**

*Heritage Mortgage Company*



**Huntsville - 883-1103**  
**or 1-800-624-8783**



# mill story

# Helion Lodge: Birthplace of Alabama Freemasonry

by Chuck Rice

The impressive white edifice has long stood on the corner of Lincoln and Williams Streets in Huntsville's Twickenham District. Almost everyone has passed by it. Many have been inside it. However, not many know the fascinating story of this historic Masonic building. In fact, it is generally referred to by a somewhat incorrect name: Helion Lodge. The true name of this Huntsville landmark is Eunomia Masonic Hall, but even its members call it Helion. Home to both Helion Lodge and the Huntsville York Rite bodies, Eunomia Hall is the oldest Masonic structure in the entire state and houses Alabama's oldest Masonic bodies.

The Masonic fraternity has played an important role in American society since the very beginning. Prominent among the fraternity's distinguished 18th century members were George Washington, Benjamin Franklin,

Paul Revere, the Marquis de Lafayette, and a host of others – including signers of the Declaration of Independence and the U. S. Constitution. Masonry came to Alabama with its earliest settlers. Since Alabama in those days essentially meant Madison County – Mobile was in still Spanish hands and the only other settlements far away in the southwest – it is not surprising that the light of Freemasonry first burst forth in the city of Huntsville.

On August 29, 1811, Madison Lodge #21 opened under dispensation from the Grand Lodge of Kentucky. This premier lodge of Alabama consisted of brethren from a number of Southern states. Serving as first master was Marmaduke Williams, a former U. S. Congressman from South Carolina. Williams' older brother was Governor of the Mississippi Territory, which then included Alabama. Marmaduke Williams had resigned from Congress and moved to Huntsville, evidently ex-

pecting to be appointed governor of the soon to be created Alabama Territory. Instead, another was named to the job. Williams stayed on in Huntsville, and when Alabama achieved statehood in 1819, he ran for the office of Governor. Defeated in a close contest with William Bibb of Mooresville, Marmaduke Williams left Huntsville forever, settling in Tuscumbia.

Nevertheless, the lodge he had first led continued to thrive. Madison Lodge received its charter from Kentucky on August 28, 1812. The names on its member-

## Your One Stop Full-Service Package Store

Largest Beverage Store In Huntsville  
With The Best Selections  
Open 8:00 AM Till 12:00 Midnight  
6 Days A Week, Mon. Thru Sat.

- ★ Coldest Beer In Town
- ★ Your Favorite Draft on Tap
- ★ Lowest Prices In Town

*Let us quote you a price for all your parties!*

OPEN  
ALL HOLIDAYS



### SPIRITS

1802 University Drive  
539-4333

## THE COPPERSMITH

Finely Crafted Functional Metal Work and Roofing

Do you have a unique area on your home that you would like to accent in copper?

A Bay?

A Porch?

An Entrance?

Even a turret or tower?

Copper may be more affordable than you thought

Visit our website at [Coppersmith@aol.com](mailto:Coppersmith@aol.com)

851-6774 Peter Jenke

ship roster are almost a who's who of early Huntsville. Included are such notables as Dr. David Moore (personal physician to Andrew Jackson), Calvin Morgan (father of Confederate hero Gen. John Hunt Morgan), Capt. John Hunt (founder of Huntsville), and LeRoy Pope (the developer of early Huntsville).

On April 16, 1818, Madison Lodge gained company when the Grand Lodge of Tennessee issued a dispensation to Alabama Lodge 021. This lodge received its charter five months later. The two lodges continued to meet in Huntsville until 1823, when the Grand Lodge of Alabama was formed in Montgomery. Both Huntsville lodges then returned their charters and received new

ones from the Grand Lodge of Alabama. Shortly afterward, the Huntsville Masons decided to combine their lodges. They chose the name Helion from the Greek "helios" meaning the sun - the great light which opens and closes each day. Helion Lodge #1 received its charter under that name on December 18, 1824. It has continued to meet as such ever since.

In the year 1823, the Huntsville Masonic bodies - Helion Lodge and the Royal Arch Masons - joined together to erect an impressive two-story lodge building. It was given the name Eunomia Masonic Hall, after the Royal Arch Chapter. The property on the corner of Lincoln and Green Streets was purchased at that time from lodge member LeRoy Pope.

Masonry encourages patriotism, and this early lodge building saw its members march off to fight in the Texas War of Independence, the Mexican War, and the War Between the States. The structure survived the turmoil of the Civil War, when Huntsville was occupied by the Union Army and repeatedly threatened with burning. Another generation of its members left to follow Mason Gen. Joseph Wheeler in the 1898 war with Spain or to serve under Mason Gen. John J. Pershing in the campaign against the

## mill story

# — Portraits in Time —

## *Stories of Huntsville and Madison County*

**By Tom Carney, with an introduction by Aunt Eunice! Also featuring stories by Fred Simpson, Raneé Pruitt, Clarence Scott, Judy Wills, Charles Rice, Jackie Gray, Chip Knight, Ken Owens, Ron Eyestone, Kay Cornelius!**

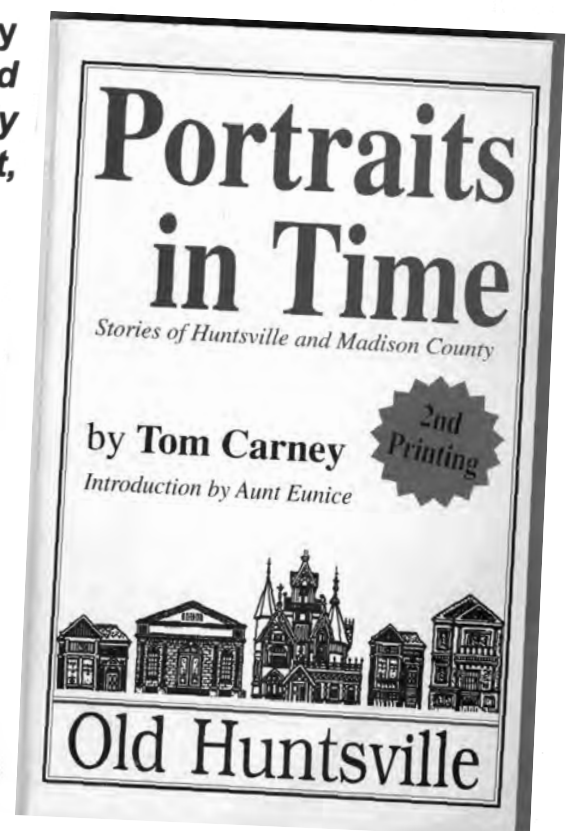
Over 300 pages of rich and colorful stories from Huntsville's past! Our first book, *The Way It Was*, set all time records for a local book and *Portraits In Time* is expected to do even better!

In no other place will you find such a wonderful collection of local stories by your favorite local authors. This book will fast become a collector's item you will want to save and share with your family and friends.

It is expected to sell out fast so order your copy now.

**Send \$17.95, plus \$2.00 postage and handling to:**  
Old Huntsville,  
716 East Clinton Avenue,  
Huntsville, AL 35801.

# **ORDER NOW!**



Kaiser's army in Europe. At various times a private school met in lodge's ground floor, while the Huntsville Female College held classes downstairs until their own campus was completed. A Baptist church temporarily met in the lodge, and B'nai Shalom Synagogue also used the structure until they completed their brick temple on Lincoln Street just before the turn of the century. In 1905, little Meridianville Lodge #265 gave up its separate existence and combined with Helion #1. Helion today thus represents a union of three antebellum Alabama lodges.

By the second decade of the 20th century, the 90 year old building was felt to be too small for the growing membership. Huntsville architect Edgar Love, a Helion member, designed an impressive new structure that would incorporate the old building, sparing it from destruction. Love's plan called for a double-wing neoclassical lodge, in which the original structure would acquire a new facade to match the rest. The structure you see today is Edgar Love's design, completed in 1917. Regrettably one very important part is missing. By the

early 1920s, the present structure was in use, with the old section awaiting renovation. However, a violent wind storm one night seriously weakened the century old north wing. A few days later, the roof caved in, taking parts of the walls with it. The lodge could not afford to rebuild the structure, and the original building had to be torn down. One wall remains, however, so that at least a portion of the 1823 building is still standing. In fact, if you go inside the present lodge, you will see a double set of stairways. The stairway on the north now leads only to a blank wall without even a visible doorway.

The stairway to nowhere is just one of the delights of today's Helion Lodge. While the tales of ghostly apparitions and strange footsteps are unverifiable, there can be no question over the existence of a wonderful array of historic memorabilia. The lodge still has its original King James bible from 1811, the same bible that was opened when city founder John Hunt attended meetings nearly 190 years ago, as well a wonderful letter to the members from Andrew Jackson dating to the same period. There is also on

# Advertise in Old Huntsville

## 534-0502

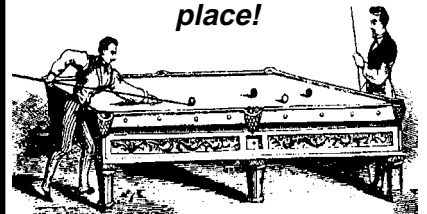


Billiards,  
Entertainment,  
& Fine Foods

### Schedule of Events

- Fri 5/21 Kozmic Mama
- Sat 5/22 Kozmic Mama
- Fri 5/28 Nite Lite
- Sat 5/29 Nite Lite
- Fri 6/18 Jivin' Johnsons
- Sat 6/19 Ms Johnnies Blues Band
- Fri 6/25 Nite Lite
- Sat 6/26 Nite Lite

*Rack and Roll at  
Huntsville's favorite gathering  
place!*



**2703 University Dr.**  
**536-4400**



# TLS, Inc.

*"We Light the Stars"*

ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBER  
*CMA*  
COUNTRY MUSIC ASSOCIATION

DEALER MEMBER  
**ESTA**  
ENTERTAINMENT SERVICES &  
TECHNOLOGY ASSOCIATION

## Theatrical Lighting Systems, Inc.

SHIPPING/SHOWROOM:  
909 Meridian Street  
Huntsville, Alabama 35801

MAILING:  
P.O. Box 2646  
Huntsville, Alabama 35804

PHONES:  
256-533-7025 Voice  
800-229-7320 Fax



display a leather Masonic apron from the 1790s, donated a century ago by a descendant of the man who wore it at a lodge in Baltimore when George Washington presided as master and Lafayette assisted him as the number two officer. The York Rite bodies – Eunomia Chapter #5, Royal Arch Masons; Eureka Council 45, Royal and Select Masters; and Huntsville Commandery 47, Knights Templar – have their own impressive assortment of Masonic mementos. The York Rite bodies have deeded their share of the building to Helion Lodge, but they still continue to meet here, just as they have since the early 1820s.

With a current membership of close to 800, Helion is the largest Masonic lodge in Alabama. Noted members in recent times have been U. S. Senator John Sparkman, Huntsville mayor Joe Davis, and the late Tilman Hill. Even though he had left Huntsville many years before, Col. Carroll Hudson, first commandant of Redstone Arsenal, maintained his membership at Helion until the day he died. Gov. George Wallace was also occasional visitor back in the days when his health permitted. Helion Lodge now has two offspring in modern city of Huntsville, Solar #914 on 9th Avenue and Apollo 0921 on Bob Wallace. Before Solar and Apollo were chartered, Helion's membership totalled an incredible 1,200. Old timers still tell of the days when members had to sit on the floor, there simply not being enough seats to go around.

Proving false the charges that Masonry is a "secret society," Helion Lodge has opened its doors to the public on a number of recent occasions, including the Huntsville Tour of Historic Houses. Try to visit Helion Lodge some time, if you have a chance.

The classical architecture of the beautiful lodge room is truly inspiring and gives evidence of the affection that architect Edgar Love had for his beloved fraternity. And if you would like to become a Mason, simply knock on the door of this or any other lodge and introduce yourself the brethren. All you have to do is ask.

You would be following in the footsteps of a long line of honorable men stretching back far into the distant past.

It is the height  
of absurdity to sow  
little but weeds in the  
first half of one's  
lifetime and expect to  
harvest a valuable  
crop in the  
second half.

--Percy Johnston



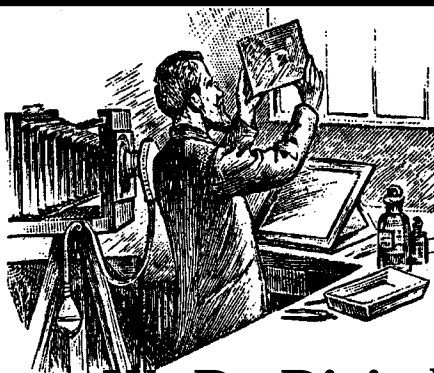
Serving Huntsville  
Since 1972

## United Fire & Water Restoration Service



Louie Tippett, Owner

**533-7163**  
209 Parkway Drive  
Huntsville, Al. 35801



**S&S**  
*Photography*

**We Do Digital Restorations  
of your old photographs**

**2365 Whitesburg Drive**  
**533-0088**

# Deputy Kisses Murderer for a Little Girl

*from a 1913 newspaper*

"Kiss my Papa for me for the last time" - Deputy Sheriff J.F. Tucker of Montgomery heard these words over a telephone while he was at the county jail early Friday morning. He knew from whom the utterances came. He could not be mistaken.

Then he walked up the winding steps which led to the death cells. He unlocked one and stepped into the "presence of one who had been condemned to die. "I kiss you because your daughter requested me to," said the officer, addressing C. Walter Jones. Then he threw his arms around the man and planted a kiss on the man's cheek. Jones wept aloud, and tears streamed from the eyes

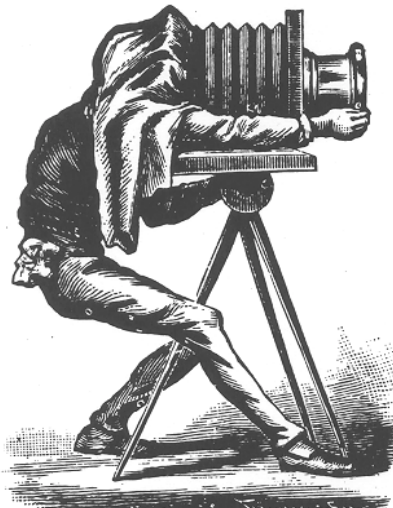
of Mr. Tucker. "Your little daughter has just asked me to kiss you for her," he explained.

Jones threw his arms around Tucker. He kissed the deputy, then asked the officer to "return this kiss to my daughter." It was one of the most pathetic scenes ever witnessed.

Jones' daughter had told him good-bye Thursday night when the doomed man was allowed a few final minutes with his family. But

it would not suffice.

She wanted communication, indirectly if it must be so, with her beoved father just a moment before his life was to be taken away. And the kind officer, knowing well the love the child had for her father, agreed to act as bearer of the final message from the child to her father.



We Specialize In Copying  
**OLD PHOTOGRAPHS**  
895-0495  
**BOB GATHANY**  
PHOTOGRAPHER  
4951 Century Street

# Was Bordeom The Mother Of Invention?

by Lydia Spencer

Shortly after the Civil War ended, a young man came south, to Memphis, to work as a telegraph operator for the railroad. He worked at night and slept during the day in his rented room over a saloon. A tall, lanky fellow, he had an easy manner, and his friends called him "country man" or "Rube."

Rube was happy when his railroad buddies woke him up in the late summer afternoons to play a game of baseball. He was a pretty good ballplayer, too- he usually pitched or played first base. And he liked to be captain so he could choose his own team of players.

Winter or summer, Rube wore a straw hat and an ink spattered linen duster. Folks around town thought this was odd, but the young man seemed too distracted to pay any attention to his wardrobe.

Rube was the fastest telegraph operator around. He had time to fiddle with various "projects" in his office while he waited for telegraph messages to come in for decoding. One project in particular earned him the thanks of his coworkers. The night staff brought their lunches to the office, and in the darkness cockroaches crept out to nibble them while the staff worked. So, Rube tacked two strips of heavy tinfoil close together on the floor and connected them to powerful batteries. He invited the night staff to place their lunches inside the foil barricade and - *voila!* - the roaches trying



to crawl across it were electrocuted.

In the 1860s, telegraphs could not be sent directly from New York to New Orleans, but had to be relayed through Memphis. So every day Rube took down messages from New York and repeated them to New Orleans, or vice versa. He became bored with just repeating others' messages, and he created

a device that would automatically repeat the messages to the second telegraph line without the presence of an operator.

Perhaps his boss, Col. James Coleman, discovered the repeating device and realize he no

**Advertise  
in  
Old Huntsville**

**534-0502**



## Pleasures

*Imported Chocolates · Delicious  
Coffees · Toys & Lotions ·  
Informative Videos &  
Literature · Cards & Magazines*

Huntsville                      Decatur  
6242 University Dr.    1711 Central Pkwy.  
830-0069                      584-0069

## Gill Diamond and Jewelry, Inc.

*Diamonds and Jewelry at Wholesale Plus Brokerage Fee*

Don Gill, Graduate Gemologist (GIA), 25 years experience

visit us on the web at [www.gilldiamond.com](http://www.gilldiamond.com)

Diamonds  
Gold  
Chains  
Bracelets  
Earrings

**Appraisals (While you wait)  
Repair Service**

Wedding Bands  
Pearls

**"Where Quality Is Not Expensive"**

Colored Stones  
Citizen Watches

(256) 534-3334

Artcarved™ Wedding Bands

2006 Franklin St. Suite 205

Franklin Professional Center - Huntsville, Ala. 35801

longer needed Rube in the telegraph office, because Rube lost his job in Memphis. One story has it that Coleman fired Rube because his desk was so cluttered with junk. Another says the manager was jealous of Rube's speed at deciphering messages. But according to the most interesting story, Rube and his coworker Aleck Knapp were fired one night after they attended a bawdy performance of "The Black Crook," which featured horned devils in red suits engaged in something like kick-boxing. Urged on by theater hostesses in risque costumes, the two young men bought and enjoyed many glasses of red wine. After the show, they opened the telegraph office on time, but they were soon affected by the overheated room. Rube said to Aleck, "I'll bet I can kick your hat off your head without touching you!" Aleck replied, "I'll bet I can knock yours off, too! But let's take our boots off first." [Good thinking.]

Imitating the play's devils, the young men stripped down to their red long johns and the contest began. Soon furniture was overturned, instruments were broken, and paper was scattered all over the office.

Col. Coleman came in during the tomfoolery and fired both men on the spot. Rube packed up and headed north to New York where he got another job as a telegraph operator. In time, he was tinkering with more projects.

He invented a voting machine and a stock ticker. He later invented the phonograph, the motion picture projector, the electric light bulb and a thousand more creations.

"Rube" was Thomas Alva Edison, America's greatest inventor.

A few nights after he died in October 1931, the cities across America honored Edison by stopping all its streetcars and dimming all its lights at 9 p.m.

**Visit Our  
Web Site**

**www.oldhuntsville.com**

# Wanted

**Do you know of any old  
Huntsville stories that  
have never been  
written?**

**Complete confidentially  
assured.**

**Stories must be true and  
accompanied by factual  
records or evidence.**

**Call Old Huntsville  
534-0502**



Make it a perfect  
*Wedding*  
beginning with your  
*Invitations*

**Invitations, Announcements, Napkins,  
Thank You Notes,  
Reception Favors, Ribbons, Guest Books,  
Toasting Glasses, and More.  
For Any Social Occasion**

*Linda's*  
**Printing Services**

3308 7th Ave., Huntsville, Al. 35801 - (205) 534-4452, Fax (205) 534-4456

Visa  
Master Card  
American Express

## Pratt Avenue Antique Mall

708 Pratt Ave.  
(1 blk. E. of Andrew Jackson)  
536-3117  
Mon - Sat 10 - 5, Sun 1 - 5  
Antiques, Fine Furniture, Accessories,  
Books, Artwork and a large selection of  
Collectibles. 9000 sq. ft.



**Mullins & Co. - For all your insurance needs**

## L&N Railroad Says "No More Booze"

from 1913 newspaper



The L & N Railroad Company has declined to deliver packages of any kind containing intoxicating liquors. Orders from headquarters are to this effect: that no intoxicating liquors shall be delivered by this road in "dry" states and counties. So if you must have "booze," supplies must be brought to Huntsville by some other route than via the L & N Railroad. The Southern Railway has had no instructions to discontinue the delivery of "fire water," however and the Southern Express Company will continue to deliver the usual not-to-exceed two gallons for private use.

The Webb liquor law is getting in its work along with other measures intended to put a stop to the liquor traffic and while it may be a while yet before the local option law may be seriously regarded by a certain element, the time is near at hand when it will be one of two propositions, either stop selling "booze" or take the consequences, and this community has about reached that stage of the game.

## Furniture Refinishing

Specializing  
in all types  
of  
hardwood  
furniture



256-828-0031

pager 532-0002

### The Little Refinishing Shop

# AVAILABLE NOW!

*Intriguing to read and hard to put down. It's a must  
for anyone interested in the early days of Huntsville!*

— Margaret Tucker

Probably no book written about Huntsville's history has been so widely quoted by historians, but largely unread by the public. Ever since its printing in 1909, *Early History of Huntsville, Alabama* has stood as an unparalleled work in documenting the formative years of Huntsville and its society.

For years the only copies available were in private collections but now, ninety years after its publication, *Early History of Huntsville* is once again available to the public!

Revised and edited, with a complete index and many period photographs, this book has already proved extremely popular.

## ORDER NOW!

To order by mail:

Send \$12.95, plus \$2.00 postage and handling to:

Old Huntsville

716 East Clinton Avenue  
Huntsville, AL 35801.

## Early History of Huntsville, Alabama

1804 - 1870

by Brigadier General E. C. Betts

Edited and Revised

Introduction by Tom Carney



## Old Huntsville

# THE WHISTLE WALK



Houses in the pre Civil War South were often built without kitchens. Or rather, the kitchen was in its own building, separate from the house but within a short walking distance. This was because cooking was done over fire, and there was fear that a kitchen

fire could quickly and easily spread and burn down the whole house.

Servants then had to carry food from the kitchen to the main

house for meals. In some households, if the lady of the house suspected the servants would sneak a bite of food while en route, she required them to whistle while they made the walk from the kitchen to the house.



## Bennett Nurseries



*We grow and sell a complete selection of trees, shrubs, flowers, bulbs, vines, and plants for this area.*

*State of Alabama Certified.*

*More than 500 varieties of Perennials in stock - plants that come back every year.*

*Nurserymen and Nurserywomen available to serve you.*

*7002 Memorial Parkway North  
Huntsville, Alabama 35810  
(256) 852-6211*

Distribution of  
Old Huntsville  
provided by the  
Golden K Kiwanis



R.G. NAYMAN CO. INC.

# RGN

GENERAL CONTRACTORS

General Contractors  
Residential & Commercial  
Specializing In  
Fire Damage Repairs

*"A Contractor You Can  
Trust"*

# 533-9016

# A Natural Born Fighter

Though he had but six months of formal schooling in his entire life, no military experience and didn't join the army until the age of 40, Nathan Bedford Forrest gained fame as one of the greatest cavalymen in the Civil War.

Born in 1821 in middle Tennessee, he was the son of a blacksmith who died when N.B. was only 16, leaving him to support his mother and younger siblings. He started out as a farm laborer, but then worked his way into a career as a horse and cattle trader in Mississippi. Dealing wisely, and saving his money, he bought cotton plantations in Arkansas and Mississippi; he made his fortune at these and as a slave trader.

Forrest was opposed to secession but when the Civil War began and hostilities came close to home, he joined the Confederate Army as a private, raising and equipping a cavalry regiment at his own expense. Within a few months he took command of the regiment as a lieutenant colonel.

Forrest proved himself in campaigns at Fort Donelson, Shiloh, Murfreesboro and Vicksburg. In 1864 he was given command of all the cavalry with the Army of Tennessee. He was the scourge of General William T. Sherman who vowed to stop Forrest "if it costs ten thousand lives and bankrupts the federal treasury!"

By February, 1865, Forrest had been promoted to lieutenant general, but by then his cavalymen were so worn down by war and privation that they were almost useless against the enemy. His troops were surrendered on

May 4th. After the war Forrest settled in Memphis and operated his plantations.

His skill on the battlefield and his genius in the tactical arena earned him the respect of military men on both sides.

Forrest, the natural born fighter, had his own simple formula for success: "Get thar fust with the most men."

When people speak to you about a preventive war, you tell them to go and fight it. After my experience, I have come to hate war. War settles nothing.  
--Dwight D. Eisenhower

## LOOKING YOUR BEST



- \* Important Occasions
- \* Everyday Life
- \* Graduation \* The Prom
- \* That Special Someone



**Call 464-6700 or 880-0870**

*for private or group appointments  
with CERTIFIED IMAGE CONSULTANTS  
for COLOR ME BEAUTIFUL  
the world's leading color analysts*

- \* **Makeup** to match your
- \* **Clothing Color Analysis** (with 45 swatches book)
- \* **Facials \* "Wrinkles Away" \* Skin Care Products**
- \* **Improving Your Assets: Illusion Dressing**  
based on Bone Structure, Body Shape,  
Persona and Height

ALSO - Find Perfect Gifts at  
**BOUCHET'S  
GIFTS**

Main Street South Shopping Village  
(across atrium from Victoria's Cafe)  
7500 S. Memorial Parkway

**15% DISCOUNT** when you mention "Old Huntsville"

# **REGIONS BANK**