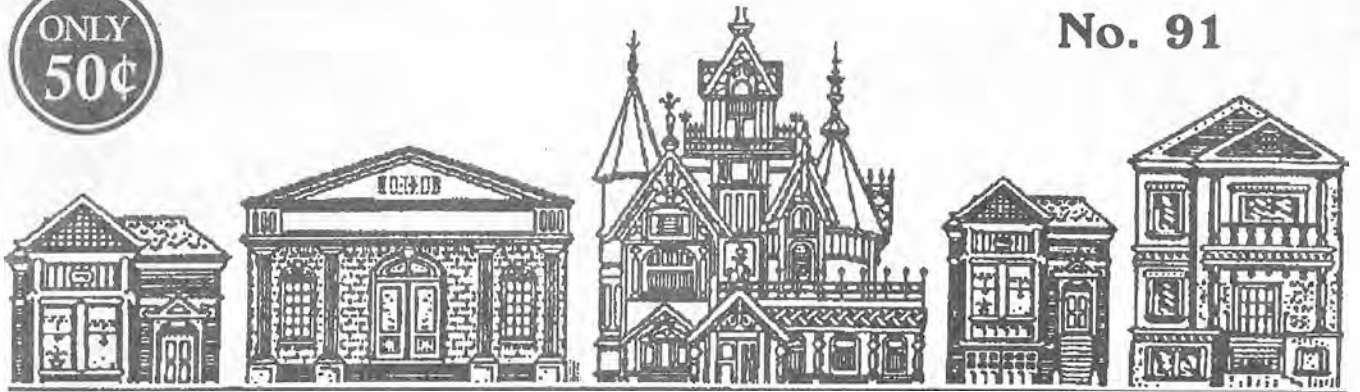


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No. 91



Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY



Aunt Maggie

A Christmas Story

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

It would be years before I ever realized what kind of a person she really was.

Also in this issue: "The Mansion On The Hill"

Aunt Maggie

This story was originally printed in Old Huntsville Magazine in 1993. Due to the many requests we have had, we are reprinting it for this Christmas Season.

by Anonymous

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

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

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

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

Huntsville, like the rest of the country, was still suffering the effects of the Great Depression.

Uncle Mil was a hard worker but there were few jobs to be had. He worked part time, usually one or two days a week, at a sawmill and whenever he was laid off, delivered firewood door-to-door in Huntsville. Oftentimes people would not have the money to pay and would give him used clothes, chickens and other items that we could use. Aunt Rose had a large garden which, together with a few chickens, was the main source of our food.

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

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

We used to receive a letter from her every Tuesday. Before I learned how to read and write, Aunt Rose would sit me down at the kitchen table and laboriously, with her limited ability, slowly read the words that Aunt Maggie had written. There were always



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two letters in the envelope; one for Uncle Mil and Aunt Rose and another, the long one, for me.

Her letters were always full of stories and adventures about people she knew and things she had done. Many times they would include photographs or postcards showing the sights of Chicago.

After I started school, Aunt Rose would make me write Aunt

Maggie a letter every week. Often I resented the fact that I had to sit and write the letters while my friends were out playing.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Shortly after daylight on that Christmas morning, Uncle Mil, Aunt Rose and I embarked on the long drive to Chicago. I remember hearing them talk about cancer and making arrangements and what to do with her things.

Later that day we stopped at a roadside park in Indiana to eat the biscuits and ham that Aunt Rose had packed. Then she and I

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

When we finally reached Chicago I was not prepared for the rundown, shabby tenement that Aunt Maggie had called home. It was a two-room efficiency with dirty walls and torn wallpaper hanging from the ceiling. It had hardly any furniture.

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

ment. The ornament was a small wooden Christmas tree with Aunt Maggie's picture on it.

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

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

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

Though it sounds strange, life

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

I received my draft notice in 1942 and was stationed at Fort Bliss, Texas, when I received word that Uncle Mil had died. Aunt Rose had died the year before and I was the last of the family. I was granted a brief furlough.

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

**Ready or not,
here I come.**

*Nana came to paint
the nursery.*

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

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

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

When I got married in 1956, my wife, sensing a reluctance on my part to talk about it, never asked about my family. The first

Christmas we spent together was hard for me. Every time I looked at the Christmas tree I was haunted by memories of another Christmas tree in a cold water flat in Chicago; of an aunt who was really my mother.

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

J. Otis King was the preacher and, though I admired him, I rarely listened to his sermons, preferring to daydream about other matters. One day we were sitting in church and I was daydreaming about cutting grass or whatever when Brother J. Otis

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began to preach about love. He used a parable about the man who had given up everything so that his children might have a better life. Though I tried to return to my daydreams, his words kept coming back to haunt me.

"There is no greater love than that of a mother for her children,"

"How many mothers," he asked, "have done without so that their children might have something?" Each time he raised his finger to point at something it seemed as if he was pointing straight at me.

My wife could tell that I was upset when we left the church, but she never said anything at the time. That evening after dinner I told her about Maggie and the shame I had felt when I learned the truth. My wife sat silent for a long time. As I struggled for words to describe my feelings she took me in her arms and held me as if I were a young child.

That was the first time she ever saw me cry.

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

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

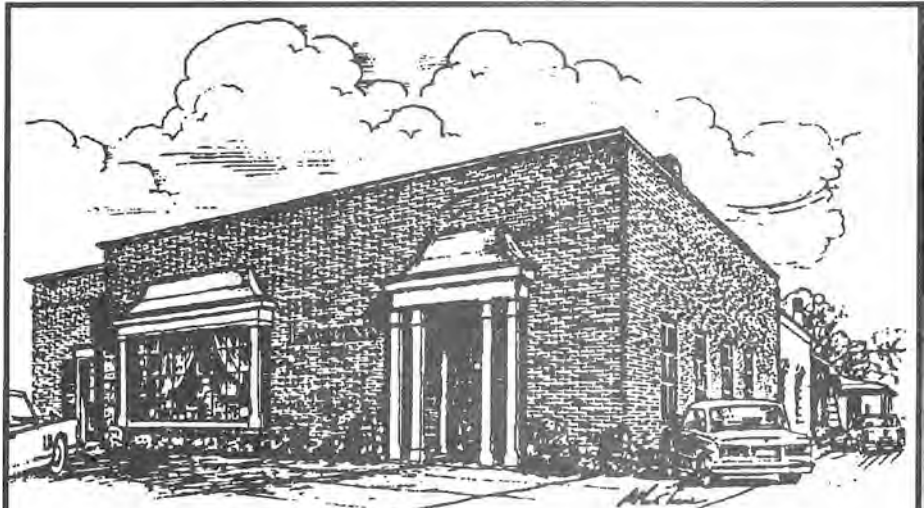
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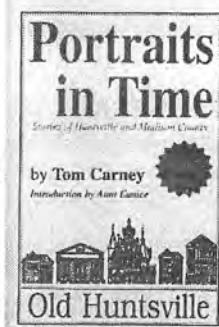
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Letters From Huntsville

The following are excerpts from letters written by Anne Royall, who visited Huntsville, in 1819, while it was still in its infant stage. The letters provide a unique look at one of the most undocumented periods of our fair city's history.

January 1st, 1818

Now here is the twentieth letter I have I written, without receiving an answer to one of them, until today - and that is no answer I may say. What are you about? Have you got the blues again, or blacks; or are you in love? But seriously, I am sorry to hear you mend so slow. I am convinced this climate would restore you.

It is summer here, compared to our country; the trees, many of them, are still green. Huntsville;

you will expect to hear something of this flourishing town. It takes its name from a man called Captain Hunt, who built the first cabin on the spot, where the courthouse now stands. In front of this cabin, which was built on a high bluff, there was a large pond, which is now nearly filled up by the citizens,

Captain Hunt cleared a small field west of his cabin, the same year. This was between his cabin and the Huntsville Spring. He spent much of his time in waging war with the rattlesnakes, who were very numerous in his day, and had entire possession of the bluff at the spring. Thousands of them, it appears, were lodged amongst the rocks, and the Captain would shoot hundreds a day, by thrusting long canes filled with

powder, into the scissures of the rocks.

Whether Hunt or the snakes acquired the victory, I have not heard, as he was compelled to abandon his settlement to a more successful rival, who purchased the land. This was Colonel Pope, who, in company with Dr. Manning, and others, purchased the land at a Land Office opened in Nashville; and though this sale did not stand, these gentlemen at this time own vast bodies of land around Huntsville, and are the wealthiest men in the Territory. ...

The town stands on elevated ground, and enjoys a beautiful prospect. It contains about 260 houses, principally built of brick; has a bank, a courthouse, and market house. There is a large square in the center of town, like the towns of Ohio, and facing this are the stores, 12 in number. These buildings form a solid wall, though divided into apartments. The workmanship is the best I have ever seen in all the states; and several of the houses are three stories high, and very large. There is no church. The people assemble in the court house to worship...

... The citizens are gay, polite, and hospitable, and live in grand splendor. Nothing like it in our own country...

February 22, 1818

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our beloved Washington, was ushered in with all manner of rejoicing. The star spangled banner is now waving on the cupola, before my window, and an elegant ball is to conclude the day. The companies are now marching before me, under arms, in a handsome uniform; they step light and graceful, and are tall, fine looking men.

Their Captain Howard boards with me; I mean in the same house. He is six feet in height, and one of the finest figures of them all, and has a martial look. He is a great favorite among the ladies, and is, doubtless, to open the ball this evening with some of the fairest of the fair.

I board with Major Rose, the merry old veteran mentioned some time back. He has met with a dreadful reverse of fortune since I first met him. He was then one of the first merchants in the place, but was overwhelmed in the general wreck, which prostrates so many of our merchants. But the Major is as merry as ever; keeps a tavern and boarding house; amuses himself with a pet crow; and sings "Jerry go Nimble."...

February, 1818

... The ladies of Huntsville, distance everything on the costliness of their dress; nor do I like their manners as well as I do the manners of the Florence ladies. They are always in the streets. But they are very beautiful women, and very familiar. The young gentlemen are rather better informed; are gay and lively; play and sing well. They often go out serenading, and have a thespian society, who entertain the citizens at stated periods...

Mrs. Royall eventually settled in Washington, D.C., where she wrote a book describing her travels throughout the Southeast.

News From Around the Country in 1909



Representative Moroney of the Texas legislature introduced a bill providing for the levying of a \$50 annual tax upon all unmarried men of 30 years of age who under oath swear that they have not exerted due diligence in trying to get married. To be exempt from this act, however if he remains single, he must produce the affidavit of some reputable woman that at least once a year he has made a proposal of marriage to her.

A man about 40 years old, giving his name as Tom Keefe, walked into the station house at Memphis, Tenn., and asked to be locked up. When the turnkey went to release him, he was found dangling at the end of a piece of rope, dead. There was no clue as to his real identity.

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

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

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The Last Soldier

John A. Steger was born on December 7, 1845, the son of Kennon H. Steger. The elder Steger had moved from Virginia and settled in Ryland, a few miles north of Huntsville, where he became a prosperous farmer.

When Alabama seceded from the Union in 1861, John, like all young men everywhere, was anxious to enlist. He was attending school in Ryland at the time and his father reminded him that fifteen was too young to go off and be a soldier. The war became a reality early the next year when General Mitchel and his hated Yankee troops invaded Madison County, burning, looting and terrorizing at will.

These were dangerous times. The Yankees automatically suspected any young man as being a rebel, while the Confederates assumed any young Southern man not in uniform was a deserter, or even worse, a traitor.

On May 24, 1863, John Steger was sworn in as a private in the Confederate States of America

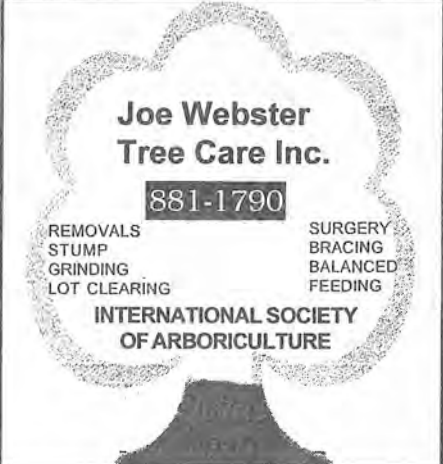
army. He had heard of Confederate forces camped at Brownsboro, and after receiving permission from his father quickly made his way to join them.

The group he joined was Company G of Colonel William A. Johnson's 4th Cavalry Regiment, which was then passing through Madison County after a raid into Tennessee. Johnson's regiment served in the brigade of General Philip Dale Roddy, the famous "Defender of North Alabama."

Steger's army life was filled with adventure, and the teenage soldier quickly rose through the ranks to sergeant. He served mainly in North Alabama and Mississippi, though he also saw combat in Tennessee and Georgia. His closest call came on June 10, 1864, at the battle of Brice's Crossroads, Mississippi. Roddy's men had ridden all day in the hot sun to reach the battlefield, but General Forrest ordered them into action almost immediately. When the cavalry dismounted, the soldiers counted off and every fourth man was assigned as a horse holder. Steger was fortunate enough to be so designated. However, he traded places with another and charged with his comrades. As the Alabamians were driving back the Yankees, a bullet struck Steger's cartridge box and cut the strap holding it to his side.

A fraction of an inch closer and it would have seriously injured him.

Another of Steger's encounters took place quite close to home. In the fall of 1863, Roddy's horsemen had been sent to North Georgia. When they returned to Ala-



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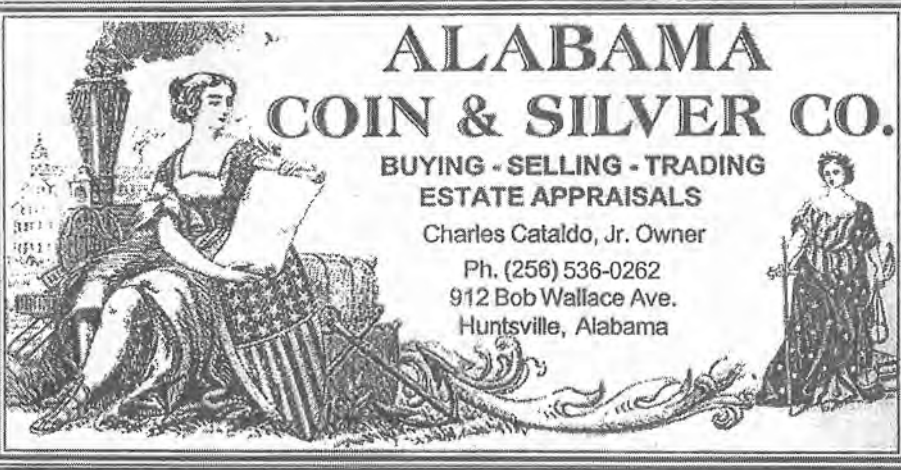
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bama, they found the Yankees in force at New Market. Steger and several others were sent to scout. Unfortunately, they were cut off by the enemy for several days. Steger suggested the men head for his father's house near Ryland. They reached the house late in the afternoon. Steger was about to approach the house when he was stopped by one of the family's servants. The old black woman warned him that four Yankees were already there. Steger and his companions waited until early morning, then they surprised the sleeping Yankees and captured them, without firing a shot.

After General Lee surrendered at Appomattox, word was slow to reach the scattered remnants of the Confederate army still struggling in North Alabama. It was more than a month later, May 17, 1865, when General Roddy finally surrendered at Pond Springs (now Wheeler, Alabama).

For John Steger, like hundreds of thousands of other men, there was nothing else left to do except begin the long walk back home. Returning to Huntsville, he found a land that was completely

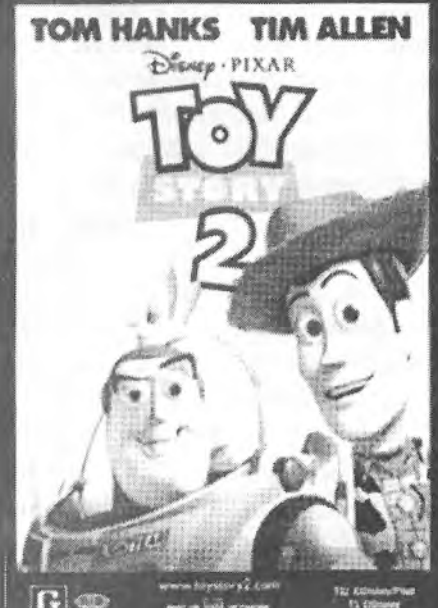
devastated, with people starving and no way to earn a living.

Luckily, parts of his father's farm was still intact, and he was able to return to farming. On January 19, 1870, he married Mary Simpson and with both of them working in the fields, they were able to rebuild the rest of the farm.

When the United States went

to war with Spain in 1898, there were reservations in parts of the South about putting on a Yankee uniform and fighting a Yankee war. Most people were content to sit back and see what would happen, but when General Joe Wheeler and General Fitzhugh Lee (late of the Confederate army) joined the hostilities, the mood changed in a hurry. Young men ev-

All shows are In Stadium seating and are features in digital six track sound or Dolby Digital



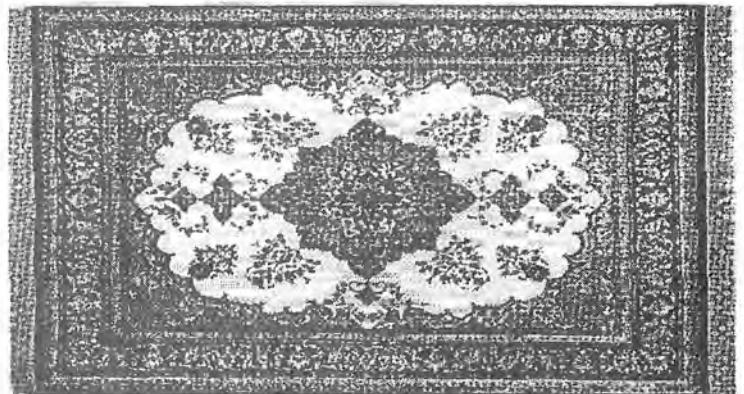
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From Around the World

Holiday Advice for the Girl who Earns her own Living

from a 1910 Magazine

This Christmas season is the true test of a business girl's courage. This is not because most of us must work harder than ever just before Christmas, but because we must solve holiday problems which our stay-at-home sisters are spared.

The self-supporting girl must decide that she should do the square thing by herself and the man she works for. And the square thing does not consist of getting into debt or sacrificing the strength which belongs to her employer, in order to make presents to her family and friends.

Do not in a moment of enthusiasm start a subscription paper to give your boss, a pair of gold cuff links or a brass desk set. You may feel particularly friendly to-

wards him for a promotion, but the girl at the next desk who was not promoted may entertain entirely different feelings for him. If your employer is a well-bred man - and you want to keep your distance from any employer who is not-- he will be annoyed if you send him an expensive Christmas present which represents nothing but your desire to secure advancement or a raise.

Perhaps you ask, "Well, to whom (else) do I give?" To those you love-- precisely as your stay-at-home friend does. If the girl on your left has been a good office friend and the girl on your right has been unfriendly, give the girl you like the present-- simply because she's a friend, not a desk-mate. If the office-boy has been courteous to you or you know he has a hard time in life and you want to scatter Christmas cheer his way, remember him as you would someone in your own home, but don't toss him a quarter as if it were a Christmas tax.



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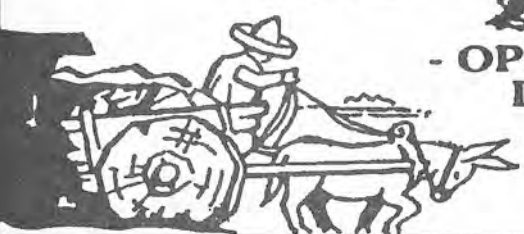
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Tips from Earlene

Place a charcoal briquette in your toolbox-- it will absorb much of the moisture and keep your tools from rusting.

Next summer, to kill unwanted grass, just pour a little Heinz vinegar (white) in crevices and between bricks.

For a great diamond polish just put one Efferdent tablet in a glass of water and let your diamonds soak for about 5 minutes.

To make your hangers glide over your closet rods just spray a coating of WD40 on the rod (move clothes out of the way and don't spray too heavily) and wipe lightly with a rag.

To get those mineral deposits out of your steam iron, just fill the water compartment with white vinegar, then steam iron a soft rag until the vinegar level drops to low-- fill up with water and do it again. Your iron will be like new!

To keep hair coloring from staining your face and neck, just rub the area with a bit of Vaseline before you start to color. When finished, just wipe off the Vaseline.

Use a level teaspoon of Nestea mixed with two teaspoons of wa-

ter-- make a paste and use it with a cotton ball to get scratches out of wooden furniture.

Put a thin layer of petroleum jelly around the top of your nail polish bottle to keep the top from ever sticking shut.

Try something new with Coca Cola. Pour a bottle of Coke into your toilet bowl, let it sit for an hour. Brush it out good and flush-- Coke takes stains out of vitreous china, according to Heloise.

Eat two servings of yogurt a day and canker sores will soon disappear.

To keep shoelaces from fraying, dip the ends into a dab of Elmer's glue.

If you have an ailing plant, give it two teaspoons of Geritol per week. In a few months you should begin to see fresh and healthy green growth.

Listerine does a good job at getting rid of acne-- just dab on at night with a cotton ball.

To prevent lint from sticking to your clothes in the dryer, just

throw a pair of Leggs pantyhose into the dryer along with your clothes.



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Huntsville Coffee Talk

by Aunt Eunice

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



Last Month's photo was **Karen Tareko** from Channel 19. She co-anchors with **Jerry Hayes**. **Kay Vest** was the happy winner of a country ham breakfast for guessing Karen's photo. Kay sure had a good time when she came out.

If you need to do some Christmas shopping, make sure and go on over to the **Senior Center** on Drake Ave. The Seniors have made homemade wooden toys and they are really cute.

Congratulations to the **Senior Crime Prevention Class** that just graduated. They all had a great time taking this class, at no cost. The next class will start in March, so make your plans to attend-- call **Pat Colson** at the Senior Center.

Toni and Gary Live from Channel 15 (coming soon to Huntsville) will start in the evenings at 6 p.m. Stay tuned and we'll get you more details.

People sure do appreciate our **Mayor Loretta Spencer's** com-

mitment to the community-- she just paid for a bus load of seniors to attend the Galaxy of Lights at the **Botanical Gardens**. It is more beautiful this year than ever before, and you can stay in your car to tour it.

We hear that **Doug Hale** is throwing his hat in the ring to be our next congressman. If you want to know how this one is going to turn out, watch the money.

I was awfully proud to see **Senator Jeff Enfinger** stop by for breakfast before he headed back to Montgomery, he's a wonderful young man.

Jane Smith had pneumonia and was in the hospital recently-- she's home now and feeling well. She's getting ready for her run for circuit court clerk and we know she'll do fine.

Tommy Ragland and his lovely wife stopped in for breakfast-- he's getting ready to start campaigning for his election.

Good luck, Tommy, as the next Probate Judge.

The Arthritis Breakfast-- Thanks to everyone who came out and supported my breakfast for Arthritis-- I raised over \$7,000 and this was my 12th year to host it and it gets better every year.

Happy Birthday to a dear friend, **Sylvia Turner**. She sure is looking mighty pretty-- what's going on in your life, Syl?

Those two daring ladies, **Ranee Pruitt** and **Jacque Gray**, were seen out partying with a distinguished Englishman by the name of **Ken Follett**. Look for a movie to be made about his upcoming novel based here in Huntsville.

I always go by and visit with **Loyd Tomlinson** at **Outback** at least once a week to eat and just say hi. He sure works hard and it

Photo of The Month

The first person to identify this child 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: "Local businessman who is popular at the breakfast table."



Last month's photo was Karen Tareko from Channel 19

A Helping Hand

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- * 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



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definitely pays off. Do you ever see that parking lot empty? The other night they told me that things were really heating up in the kitchen but it was just Loyd working the grill!

People have been so sweet to send me sweatshirts with their college emblem on them. I'm sure many of you know **Dr. Montgomery** and his wife, **Dot**. They stopped in to see me with **Julian Butler** and his wife, **Betty**. Well, **Grandmother Montgomery** sent me the most beautiful throw I've seen ever-- Red and black and boy does it warm up these "arthritis joints!"

What's happening with **Larry Mullins** and **John Cockerham** these days? Politics were a lot more fun to follow when they were out there stirring things up.

Congratulations to **Wayne and Doris Elkins**-- my daughter and son-in-law on their birthdays-- one was November 18th and the other was next day, November 19th.

I was happy to see **Judge Buddy Little** looking so good and I enjoyed his picture in the Huntsville Madison County book. He sure does a good job and let's remember that when we go to the polls next election.

If you're not sure what to give as gifts this Christmas remember that homemade gifts always touch others, especially if you enjoy baking. Get nice containers and fill them up with candy, cookies and confections.

My sympathy goes out to **Dr. Cotton Ray's** family for their loss. I sure miss his early morning visits. Also, my sympathy to **J. R. Brooks** in the loss of his sister, **Doyce Parker**.

My good-looking boyfriend was in town and had breakfast with me before he had to head back to Washington, D.C. I'm talking about our **Congressman Bud**

Cramer of course! He sure is one in a million.

Next time you pick up a copy of **Old Huntsville Magazine**, remember where the money goes to. Thanks to the **Golden K Kiwanis Club**, children throughout all of North Alabama are benefitting from their numerous charitable programs, paid for by the sale of **Old Huntsville**.

Congratulations to Councilman **Glenn Watson** on his becoming President of the City Council. We know he will work hard and get a lot done for you.

We're proud of **Tabitha Shar** on her promotion to Marketing Assistant at the Senior Center.

Christmas is coming and I hope you will be safe and happy with your friends and family gathered around you. Remember I love each and every one of you and I'll be back in **2000!** I know our electricity will be on and we'll be ready for business!

Dave Sumner

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A Sweet Christmas to Remember

Brazil Nut Chews

- 2 eggs
- 2 c. firmly packed brown sugar
- 1 t. vanilla extract
- 1 3/4 c. all-purpose flour
- 1/2 t. baking powder
- 1/2 t. salt
- 1 lb. ground Brazil nuts
- Sifted powdered sugar

Beat the eggs well in large bowl til thick and lemon-colored. Gradually add your sugar and vanilla. Sift together the flour, baking powder and salt, add slowly to the egg mixture. Stir in the Brazil nuts. Cover your bowl and chill for several hours.

Shape the dough by using a teaspoonful for each cookie, and shape the dough into 2-inch rolls. Place the rolls 2 inches apart on

your greased cookie sheet. Bake at 350 degrees for about 12 minutes, then roll in powdered sugar while still warm. For a festive look dip the ends of the rolls in melted semisweet chocolate, then ground nuts.

Light Eggnog

- 2 T. sugar
- 1/2 c. fat-free egg substitute
- 4 c. scalded 2% milk
- 1 t. vanilla extract
- 1 t. sugar
- 1/2 c. light whipped topping
- cocoa powder for garnish

Beat the sugar into the egg substitute, then slowly stir in the milk. In a double boiler, cook the mixture over hot but not boiling water. Stir constantly til the mixture coats the back of a spoon,

about 5 minutes. Remove from heat, add the vanilla and cool. Chill for 4 hours.

Pour the mixture into a punch bowl. Fold 1 teaspoon sugar into the whipped topping, top each mug of eggnog with a dollop of the whipped cream and sprinkle with cocoa powder.

Royal Ambrosia Cookies

- 1 c. butter (2 sticks)
- 1 c. sugar
- 1 c. firmly packed brown sugar
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1 t. vanilla extract
- 2 c. all-purpose flour
- 1 t. baking powder
- 1/2 t. baking soda
- 1/2 t. salt
- 1 c. flaked coconut
- 1 1/2 c. regular oats, uncooked
- 1 c. chopped pecans
- 2 c. chopped dates
- 1 T. grated lemon rind
- 1 t. grated orange rind

Cream your butter in a large mixing bowl and gradually add your sugars, eggs, vanilla - beating well after each addition. In another bowl combine the flour, baking powder, soda, salt, coconut, oats, pecans, dates, and rinds - mix well and add it slowly to the butter mixture. Drop the dough by teaspoonfuls two inches apart on a greased cookie sheet and bake



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at 375 degrees for 10 minutes. Cool on wire racks.

Chunky Peanut Butter Delights

½ c. butter (1 stick)
½ c. chunky peanut butter
1 c. brown sugar
1 egg, beaten
1 ½ c. all-purpose flour
½ t. baking powder
¾ t. baking soda
¼ t. salt

Cream your butter with the peanut butter, add the sugar and beat til light and fluffy. Add the egg, beat well. Sift together the flour, baking powder, soda and salt in another smaller bowl, add it gradually to the butter mixture and mix well.

Shape dough into ¾ inch balls and place them 2 inches apart on your greased cookie sheet. Bake at 375 degrees for about 10 minutes, cool for a few minutes then remove to wire racks to completely cool.

Almond Crunchy-Crusted Pound Cake

Almond Butter Crust
¾ stick butter
½ c. light brown sugar
¼ c. flour
1 c. sliced almonds

Make the crust by combining the butter and sugar in a mixing bowl, mix well, add the flour and

blend til mixture is crumbly. Add the almonds, stir lightly. Butter the pan, then pat mixture over the bottom and halfway up the sides of a regular loaf pan (8 ½" x 4 ½" x 2 ½"). Spread evenly and don't get it too thick in the corners. Set aside.

Pound Cake Batter

2 eggs, room temp
¾ stick butter, softened
3 oz. Cream cheese, room temp
½ c. sugar
1 c. all-purpose flour
¼ t. salt
½ t. baking powder
2 t. almond extract

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees. Mix the butter, cream cheese and sugar in a bowl, beat til smooth and blended. Add the eggs, beat well. Combine the flour, salt and baking powder, stir them together. Add to the first mixture and beat well, add the extract. Continue beating til the mixture is smooth, like a soft frosting.

Spoon batter into the crust-lined pan, will fill up about halfway. Bake for 50-60 minutes, check for doneness by inserting broom straw in center of cake - it should come out clean. Remove from oven, set on a rack to cool. When completely cool, run a knife between the crust and the sides of the pan and turn the cake upside down onto a serving board or platter, top side up. Serve in thin slices.

Hot Fudge Sauce

¾ stick of butter
½ c. water
3 squares unsweetened chocolate
1 c. sugar
2 T. light corn syrup

Put the butter and water in a small, heavy bottomed saucepan, bring to a boil over medium-low heat, stirring well. Add the chocolate, don't stop stirring til the chocolate melts. The sauce may lump at this point, ignore it. Add the sugar and corn syrup, stir and then let the sauce simmer gently for 5 minutes. Serve hot over toasted angel food cake, ice cream, fruit chunks or whatever you wish. Store what's not used in the fridge. Reheat for use later.

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A Childhood Christmas

by Chip Knight

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

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

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

I had probably been told about Santa Claus since I had been



born, and, I swear, I believed in him with all my heart. He was the one who came down the chimney and left all the presents that weren't wrapped – and they weren't there when I went to bed on Christmas Eve. But I was a skeptical little kid, and I wondered how such a jolly old fat man could get down the flue of our chimney and do that in eleventy million houses in one night in a sleigh drawn by reindeer, of all things. And I wondered a little more about the toys he left. If his elves made them at the North Pole, why were they the same things we could buy at Montgomery Ward or Sears? I didn't say anything, but the jig was up when I began to see boxes which had held things that Santa had brought at the curbs

of my neighbors. My own parents were careful about that; I don't know what they did with the boxes of the stuff left at the Knight house. I didn't say anything, of course, being afraid that I would stop the flow.

We used to always put up a cedar tree - a sticky thing at best. I guess we just didn't have the firs available from all over the place

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

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

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

One of my strongest memories about Christmas was my excitability. I would work up to it, probably from the time of Thanksgiving Day. Finally, we would get out of school for Christmas vacation, about a week before. By the time I was seven, we had a television, a big black and white affair in a mahogany case

that looked like a bar when the doors were shut. Everyone who had been in Vaudeville or had otherwise been a popular entertainer in some medium had a Christmas television show. We watched the Perry Como Christmas show, the Jack Benny Christmas show, the Bing Crosby Christmas show, and I believe even Bob Hope had one. All of them were really pretty neat. These people who usually ran around making fools of themselves came together and sang carols and held hands and hugged each other and loved each other. This was really touching to me, because it was really foreign; we didn't do too much hugging in my house. In fact, we did very little of that.

Back to the excitability. Christmas Eve was the one night of the year when I just could not go to sleep. I would lie there, hour after hour, not really waiting for Santa to come, but just wanting to sleep,

cont. on page 28

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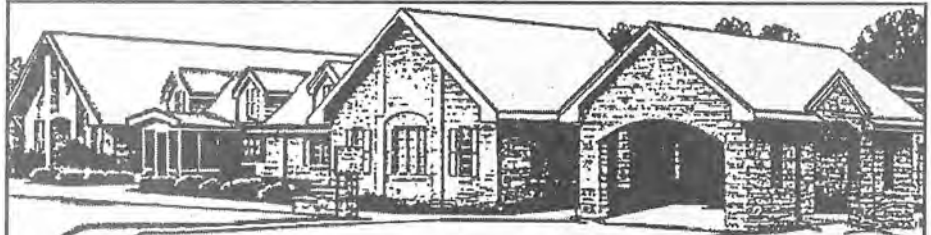
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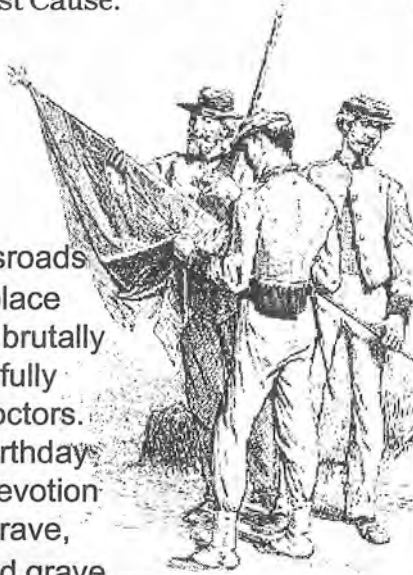
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A Lost Cause

For many people the Civil War left a legacy of bitterness as they watched the youth of a nation sacrificed on fields of battle. Often times the anger was directed at their own comrades as much as the hated "Yankees."

In a small graveyard in Scottsboro, Alabama stands a tombstone erected by grieving parents to immortalize the futility of their own son's struggle in behalf of the "Lost Cause."

James K. P. Martin
Born November 5, 1844
Died January 4, 1863



In a negro cabin at Parkers Crossroads from a wound received at that place December 31, 1862. He was most brutally treated by Yankees and Shamefully neglected by his own Southern doctors. Before he had reached his 18th birthday he sealed with his own blood the devotion to a lost cause. To the youthful brave, a soldier's grave, a soldier's honored grave.

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Know Your Rights

Name Change "Looking For A New Handle"

Under Alabama law, for some purposes you are allowed to use any name you please regardless of your legal name, except of course to commit fraud, or where your proper legal name is specifically required by law. For example, you are required by law, when asked by police officers to give your correct legal name. At the same time, many businesses operated by individuals or by corporations "do business as" other titles which can be entirely legal. Lots of folks merely adopt and use a nickname for themselves for most of their dealings.

However, if you wish or need to legally change your name for any reason, it is relatively simple under Alabama law. Any adult Alabama resident can ask to change his/her name by petition-

ing the Judge of Probate Court in the county where he/she resides. The Probate Judge upon consideration may issue an Order changing your name. The petition itself must be signed by you and state the name or names by which you are now known, and the name which you wish to change to. The total court cost for this is only \$17.00.

A lawyer can do the petition and submit it to the Probate Judge, usually for not too great a cost. Although there are no instructions or forms available for this purpose, people also sometimes look at other name change petitions on file at the Courthouse in the public records, and draft and file their own papers. You'll probably need to provide an Order to be signed by the Judge at the same time. Remember that Courthouse personnel aren't allowed to give any

legal advice, so although you don't have to have a lawyer, you may still want to see an attorney to be sure it is done correctly or to save time.

Because the law was changed a few years ago, you can also then get a new birth certificate if you choose, by submitting a form, along with the Order signed by the Judge, to the Department of Vital Statistics in Montgomery, Alabama.

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A Civil War Diary



Some of the incidents of the Civil War are extremely touching. We have before us the diary of a young soldier of Huntsville, Alabama, who was killed at Bull Run. His diary was taken from his pocket by a member of the New York Seventy-first Regiment.

His name was George T. Anderson, and we learn from his posthumous record that on the 20th of April, with his brother Stephen, he left home with a company of volunteers. He describes the parting with home and family and friends and admits that he "hated to leave most awfully," but justifies himself by stating that his country was in danger.

He mentions all that transpired the next day at Dalton, Georgia and tells us that the regiment to which his company was attached elected E. J. Jones, of Huntsville, Colonel and E. M. Law, Lieutenant colonel. May 5, he "woke up in Jonesborough, Tennessee, about sunrise, saw lots of beautiful women, received a bou-

quet from a very nice girl with a soul-stirring inscription in it." This incident reminded him of home and his sister Pauline.

On May 8, he "wrote home for the seventh or eighth time, and was mustered into the service of the Confederate States." Now the reality of his situation opened to him. He "felt homesick," he says, "because he could not hear from home." At length he has two letters from home. He has passed through Lynchburg, and in due time reached Harper's Ferry. Here is his account of his first Sabbath at the Ferry:

"Sunday, May 10-- What a cold day for the 10th of May, everybody is acting as if it were Monday, all firing guns, cooking, playing cards, etc; had a dress parade with Col. Jackson inspecting us. He is a large, fat old fellow; looks very much like an old Virginia farmer. Returned to camp, prepared and ate a scanty dinner. Had Episcopal service, and then a good old-fashioned sermon

from our Pastor Chadrick. Oh, how I loved to listen to him. Wrote a letter home; had another dress parade in the evening; rained all night."

This is not a bad fellow. All through his diary we find evidences of goodness. On another occasion we find that he has "finished the last chapter of the Acts," and he has done a little reading of the Testament.

On May 2 he received two letters from his sister Caroline, and replied to them next day. We have full view of this lad, for his records of himself now and then that he "feels very bad and unwell." He was devastated when his brother Stephen is attacked with what appeared to be a fever.

"May 29-- I woke up and found it raining; Stephen has fever; cold day; drilled one hour, and I am now waiting for my breakfast. Stephen took the measles today-- I moved him to a private house and stayed with him at night; ate my supper with Mrs. Jordan; I intend to eat there all the time that she stays, if possible. Two companies of Virgin-

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ians ordered off this evening for a fight somewhere."

We have him afterward in various moods. He is himself sick occasionally; but what with letters from home and the prospect of a fight and the recovery of Stephen, he becomes more cheerful.

"June 19-- Received a box of cake and a pistol from home, with more letters; glad to get them at any time."

The regiment is withdrawn from Harper's Ferry. What follows will help to show at what time the reinforcements reached Manassas Junction.

"Sunday, July 7-- We were ordered to fall back to our old position near Winchester; some of the men thought it was a retreat and began to grumble; the general ordered a note to be read to his command, in explanation of his conduct; we started in an awful hot day; I fell out of the ranks, went off the road some distance, and got a splendid dinner from an old lady and two young ones-- splendid milk, butter and bread, and I did ample justice to it; she upbraided us for leaving her to the mercy of the Yankees. I straggled into camp at sunset, completely exhausted, and went off to bed

without supper.

"July 10-- received a letter from home, all's well; have struck our tents and are lying around here waiting for orders; don't know what it means; a huge columbiad came up a few moments since to be placed upon this hill; that looks as if we are going to fight here; the militia and prisoners are engaged in throwing up breastworks and planting cannon for the defense of this place; the Yankees are advancing and seem determined to make an effort to drive us out from here, but I think they will fail. They outnumber us, but they can't outfight us; received orders to strike tents this evening, which we did, but a rain coming up. We pitched them again for shelter; expected all day for enemy to advance upon us.

"July 11-- Struck tents again this morning at daylight. I suppose it is meant to deceive the enemy as to our force, etc. Drilled two and a half hours on battalion drill.

"Sunday, July 14-- Read twenty psalms; helped draw provisions, cleaned up my pistol, loaded it and looked over a new paper; have now just completed writing a letter home; I wonder

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why the pastor did not preach.

"July 18-- received orders to strike tents and cook two day's provisions in preparation for a march; this was done and we lay around until evening before receiving orders, received them at last and went through Winchester, stopped in town until late, and bid farewell, I suppose for the last time, to Winchester, about 5 o'clock. At about six, we began marching all night, slept about two hours; found ourselves on the

road at daylight, weary, but we rested awhile and then marched on the Shenandoah, rested there about five hours, waded the stream and pitched out again to the relief of Beauregard, who they said was pressed by overwhelming odds.

"We arrived at Piedmont Station about one hour after dark, completely worn out, went to sleep, but was aroused by a heavy rain in a few minutes, crept under a shelter of wheat, but got very wet, having left my coat in the wagon, dried myself, procured a shawl from Uncle Washington, and slept until after midnight. We were roused by orders to 'fall in' and did so.

"We crowded on board the cars for Manassas, where we arrived about 10 o'clock a.m., of the 20th, rested awhile, bought some butter and prepared to eat, having done without food for two days, received orders to march again and said we were going right into the fight. We heard a good deal of bragging about the fight of the 17th, though it was not much of a fight. We moved about two miles and bivouacked in the woods, where some bread and

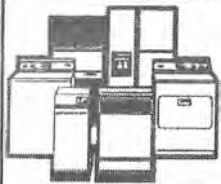
meat soon reached us and we walked right into it like starved hounds eat, now and then all day; slept a little and slept well at night; got up a little after sunrise on the 21st, broiled my meat and ate it with some old crackers full of bugs; expecting orders to march every moment; will get them, I think, for it is Sunday, and we will fight, I suppose, before another week. I've been thinking of Mama lately almost every day, and all she had to put up with, with me growing up and all and not giving her any peace."

George Anderson, Company I, Fourth Alabama.

This closed the diary, and a few hours later the writer lay a corpse upon the battlefield.

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Huntsville Happenings In 1907

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

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

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

Hon. W. T. Lawler, probate judge of Madison county, entered upon his 4th year of office on Monday morning with every deed mortgage left on the books from the past year. Business is heavier than ever and the probate office is especially busy.

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

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

The bursting of a water main leading from the city pumping sta-

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

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

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

and was depending on the Mercury plant for publication, was unable to get out at all.

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




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Childhood Christmas

cont. from page 21

but sleep wouldn't come. One time, I guess my parents heard me stirring around, and my father came to check on me. He asked, "Chip, are you asleep?" I replied "yes"

Enough said. I guess the high and the low points of the day began when we got up on Christmas morning, usually about six o'clock, and did kind of a random shuffle of trying to get everyone up so we could go into the living room together, as that was where the presents were laid under the tree, and where Santa had left his stuff by the fireplace. Of course, I had previously reconnoitered the area, at least by sticking my head around the corner of the room, and, if time permitted, by inspecting more closely. The high point was the "My God, it's Christmas morning and the waiting is over," and the low point, the realization that it was just not all that I had built it up to be in my mind. It was both ecstasy and disappointment. I sound disparaging, but I should not. It was just a matter of being brought back to reality. I always got one really nice present. When I was six, I got a Lionel electric train set. When I was seven, having learned how to ride one, I got a bicycle, a great big one which I

used years later to run over a boy who needed to be run over. But the reality was never quite as big as the dream.

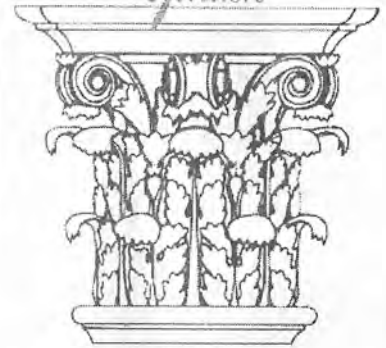
We had the morning to play with our new presents, the toys, and to set aside the ones we weren't all that excited about, the clothes. Then we had to get ready for Christmas dinner. We had this little tradition; Thanksgiving dinner was at our house, and Christmas dinner was at my Aunt's house on Williams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

After dinner was over, we all "retired" to the sitting room, which meant that the adults talked and we children kept our mouths shut. It was usually fairly cold, but we would have wanted to go outside and play, but, of course, we had our good clothes on and couldn't do that. Finally, about two o'clock or two-thirty, we would get back in the car and go home and change

clothes and begin to play with our now not so shiny toys, and the day would end on a much lower key than it had begun.

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Despite remonstrances and danger, however, Moor leaped the breastworks, canteen in hand, reached the wounded enemy and gave him a drink. The Federal, under a sense of gratitude for the timely service, took out his gold watch and offered it to his benefactor, but it was refused. The officer then asked the name of the man who had braved such danger to succor him. The name was given, and Moor returned unhurt to his position behind the embankment. They saw nothing more of each other.

Moor was subsequently

wounded, and lost a limb in one of many engagements in Virginia and returned to his home in the county. A few days ago he received a communication from the Federal soldier to whom he had given the "cup of cold water" on the occasion alluded to, announcing that he had settled on him the sum of \$10,000, to be paid in four annual installments of

\$2,500 each. Investigation has established the fact that there is no mistake or deception in this matter.

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- Victor Borge*



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The Mansion On The Hill

by Jacquelyn Procter Gray

Horace Garth gazed out from the balcony of his summer home atop Monte Sano Mountain at the magnificent panorama below. From where he looked that day in 1910, antebellum mansions and plantation homes appeared as small as children's toys, and at night, the lights twinkled like far-away stars. He turned back to his home, but his was not like the homes of his other wealthy neighbors. When Horace Garth had guests, he had plenty of spare rooms for them to stay in. In fact, he had 233 guest rooms, for Mr. Garth's summer home was once known as the Monte Sano Resort Hotel.

Just one year before, the June 16 Weekly Mercury ran a notice announcing that prominent Huntsville resident Lena Garth had executed a deed to buy the resort, the contents of the hotel, six lots in Viduta, Memphis Row,



the stables, some acreage, and the pipeline for the amount of \$20,000. After extensive remodeling, the property would be the summer home for her father Horace, who was in poor health, and needed a large home in which to receive the best attention. Why would he need a 233 guest room home on top of Monte Sano Mountain? Quite simply because the air was good for his health!

Horace Garth was born in

Trenton, Kentucky in 1837. His was a classic rags-to-riches story in a country where dreams come true if a man is not afraid to roll up his sleeves and work hard. Mr. Garth started as a cashier at the German National Bank in Memphis at the age of 25. Within two years, his diligence took him straight to the office of the presidency. His meteoric rise may have been hastened by the Civil War, or at the very least affected by it, as other men who stood between Mr. Garth and the top job at the bank left to fight for the South. A yellow fever epidemic in Memphis provided the incentive for him to move to New York in 1879, where he took a job with the Mechanics National Bank. Once again, he was president within two years.

For twenty-five years, he held the prestigious position, but eventually the millionaire president retired because of poor health. He was so well liked at the bank that his son succeeded him as the president of the bank. Unfortunately, his son soon died, and at the age of 72, Mr. Garth and his wife Alice came South to be near

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the home of their only surviving child, Lena Garth.

Daughter Lena was already a well-known philanthropist in Huntsville. She was a charter member of Twickenham Town Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, and founder of several garden clubs. Twenty years later, Lena would receive an award as the Outstanding Citizen of Huntsville, the first for a woman. Lena was married to Winston Fearn Garth, whose grandfather was well-known Huntsvillian Dr. Thomas Fearn. Winston's father was William Willis Garth, director in the Memphis and Charleston Railroad, director in the First National Bank, Civil War veteran, Huntsville attorney, and Congressman from the 8th district. The Garth estate on Whitesburg Drive was known as "Piedmont."

Not much is known about the events during the time Horace Garth spent at his summer home. Much is known however, about the fabulous Monte Sano Resort Hotel built 1,800 feet above sea level. The nearby "Cold Spring" provided pure, fresh water to the guests who arrived on June 1, 1887 for the grand opening. Several grand balls were held that first season, and when over 400 guests arrived in early July to dance, canvas was laid out to protect the Brussels carpets while many others danced out on the porches for lack of floor space in the ballroom. Over 300 soldiers were stationed on the mountain due to a yellow fever epidemic at Fort Barancas in Florida, adding significantly to the festivities and excitement that year.

No expense was spared to entertain and pamper the wealthy

who came to visit. The first season, which ended in October, was so successful that a two-story house was built, which contained thirty-six rooms to accommodate the "adults only" overflow from the resort. It was named Memphis Row in honor of the city that provided the most guests.

The biggest problem however, was transportation up and down the mountain. A carriage pulled by six horses, known as a tallyho, was used the first year, but it was too expensive and all around, unsatisfactory. Ruins of the old trails on the mountain indicate that it was quite rocky, and therefore, a most uncomfortable ride. By August 7 of the next year, a railroad was completed to the top. A train wreck occurred soon after the service started. Although no one was seriously injured, it caused many people to avoid the trip, and un-

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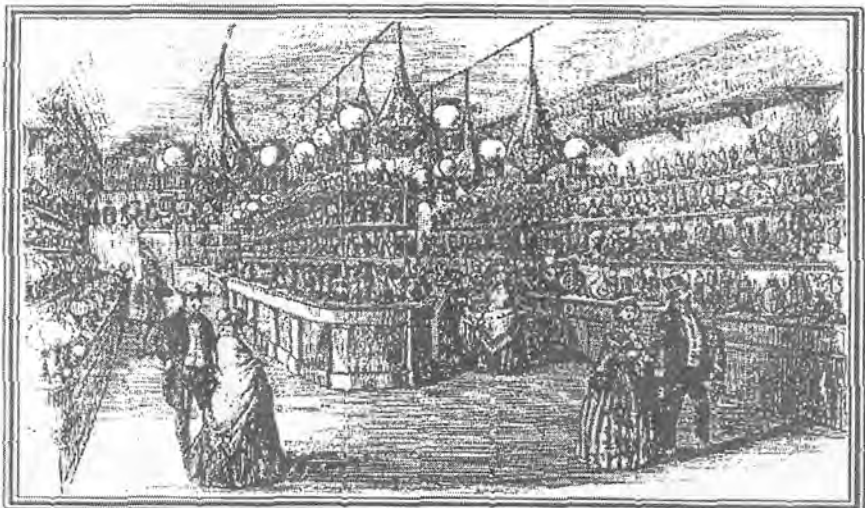
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fortunately, a visit to the Monte Sano Resort Hotel. By 1896, the steel rails were pulled up.

The hotel suffered terribly from poor decisions made at the top. Although the resort boasted many famous guests from around the world, it did not open one year at all because of quarreling among the stockholders, and other inconsistencies in opening for the season. In 1898, electricity was brought to the mountain resort, but sadly, the 1899 season would be the last for the Monte Sano Resort Hotel.

The hotel remained furnished, but vacant for another ten years until Horace and Alice Garth came to Huntsville. Speculation about how the Garths actually lived in such a cavernous building have been numerous. Did they sleep in different guest rooms every night, or did they sequester themselves in a single room? Surely Mr. Garth had a full-time nurse nearby since he suffered some degree of paralysis. Mr. Garth did not enjoy the beauty of his summer home for very long. On Sunday, July 30, 1911, he died on Monte Sano Mountain at the age of 74.

On May 28, 1917, a surprising story appeared in the Hunts-

ville Mercury. A plan to reopen the hotel was announced if \$25,000 could be raised for improvements. In the next few months, advertisements were published inviting guests to the resort, and even a story about the new style of dress adapted by visitors. The resurrection of the great hotel was apparently short lived.

For the next 27 years, the vacant mansion saw no visitor but the occasional winter fog that rolled in. A caretaker stayed near the mansion to watch over it as it sat fully-furnished, decaying in total abandonment. In 1944, the once beautiful old hotel was sold by the executors of the Garth estate for \$9,000. It was torn down and sold for scrap.

The old railroad bed, now a rocky footpath for nature-lovers, still snakes its way to the top of Monte Sano Mountain. Although one can imagine the scenic beauty enjoyed by the visitors as they made the train trip, the remnants of harrowing hairpin turns hint of the danger as well.

Today, the only evidence that remains of the gathering place for some of the most famous people of that time is the three-story chimney, lovingly tended, preserved, and appreciated.

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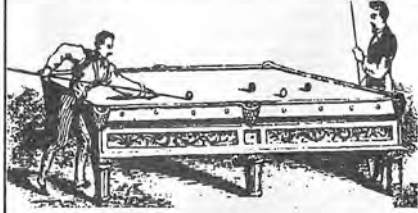
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Memories

by Ruby Crabbe

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

Livestock feed from Miller's feed store has been put in about every farmer's barn in Madison County. His line of canned goods has graced many a table in Hunts-

ville and surrounding area. Mr. Miller was in business for 54 years at the place better known as Miller's Crossing. Prior to E.P.'s taking over the business, his father, Press Miller and his uncle Frank Miller ran the business.

The Bon-Aire restaurant cooks filled many a stomach with the fine food they prepared. The homemade rolls were the best this side of the Mason-Dixon line. During the years I worked at the Bon-Aire, I saw thousands of people leave that place with a well-satisfied look on their faces. I worked for Mr. Rob Hicks, and he, along with his daughter Sis, son Olan and Olan's wife Joyce were the nicest people to work with. Of course we had our little ups and downs - what place of business doesn't become more lively when

there is a spat now and then? Mr. Hicks was very firm about one thing - there was to be absolutely no alcoholic beverages of any sort allowed - he wanted his restaurant to be the best family place around.

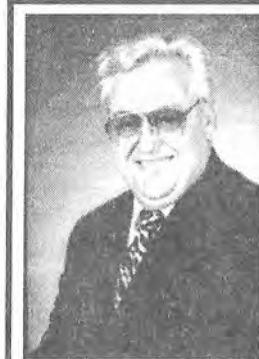
Now the overpass has blotted out the scenery where the Bon-Aire and the feed store used to be, but it can never blot out the memories of those two old landmarks. So many things have changed in Huntsville and Meridian Street is no exception. A person could get lost driving down a street he's driven down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

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When Fantasy Became Reality

"A man is on top of the Russell Erskine hotel and he's going to jump off the roof!" Within minutes all the citizens of downtown had heard the news. Eagerly, almost morbidly, they rushed to the scene of the impending tragedy. The street in front of the hotel became a mass of swirling humanity as crowds jostled for a better look.

"Someone said he works at the Huntsville Arsenal and he just got a letter from his wife saying that she was leaving him."

This news, by some unidentified source, was quickly consumed and spread to the four winds by the crowds who were now grasping at every morsel of new information.

Suddenly the still night air was rent by the screeching sounds of police cars arriving on the scene. Emerging from their cars the policemen began pushing the crowds back with night sticks, trying to establish some sense of order.

"Be careful. He's got a gun," yelled some voice from out of the darkness.

The crowd ran scurrying for cover as the policemen quickly ducked behind the safety of their automobiles.

When a few minutes had passed with no shots being fired, the crowd, now emboldened by the latest developments, began surging forward. The crowd now numbered in the hundreds and was growing larger by the minute.

While the police were frantically working to regain control, the sounds of a woman screaming emerged above the noise of the mob. The crowd had inadvertently pushed her into a store front window, breaking the glass, and now she was running hysterically down the street with blood streaming down her arms. Before the police could reach her, another

woman began screaming. This woman had been knocked down by the crowd jostling for a better look.

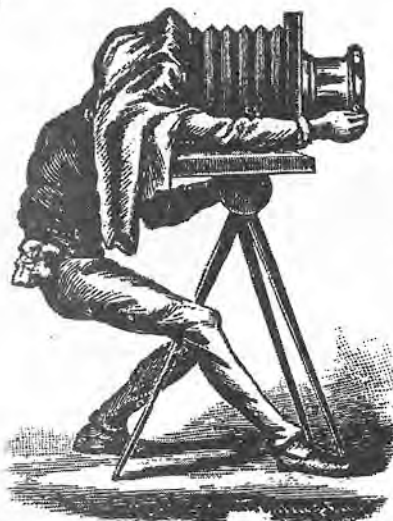
Sensing that something had to be done, and quickly, the brave men of the Huntsville Police Department drew their pistols and resolutely began making their way to the front entrance of the hotel where the unseen deranged man lay in wait.

There was no hesitation in the purposeful stride of our brave policemen on that cold day back in 1942. This was their town and this was their job. Someone had to take charge and they were the ones to do it.

Cautiously, with their guns drawn they took the elevator to the top floor. The men were silent, probably thinking of their loved ones, and of the danger that lay ahead.

History does not record the name of the first brave soul to exit onto the roof, ready to do battle with the fiend lurking in the shadows.

History does not even record the name of the man, who after receiving the dear John letter,



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tried to commit suicide.

For, you see ... it never happened.

Some person, who understandably later chose to remain silent, started the rumor and within minutes the whole town was caught up in a frenzied state of anticipation. Every rumor became fact and every fantasy became reality.

And the good people of Huntsville became the victims.

A Bitter Legacy

No one in Huntsville, in 1902, was surprised when they learned the Rodgers and Ricketts families had been involved in a gunfight. The families had been feuding for years - so long that most people had forgotten what the feud was originally about.

The latest incident began when the elder Rodgers was accosted by members of the Ricketts family while on his way to town. Harsh words were exchanged and both parties returned home to, "gather their kinfolk."

Later that evening Jim Ricketts and Halbert Rodgers met on the banks of the Flint River. Both were armed with shotguns.

Hatred between the two families was so great that both parties immediately began firing.

The first blast caught Ricketts full in the chest and neck. A second later Rodgers fell to the ground-- grievously wounded in both legs.

Although Rodgers and Ricketts would live many years after the gunfight, they would both remain crippled for the rest of their lives.

Jim Ricketts and Halbert Rodgers were both only thirteen years old.

The Price of Vengeance

from 1888 newspaper

On December 12, of the year last, my son was murdered by Leon Culpepper, late of this county.

I will trade my property consisting of one house, 24 acres with fresh water and 32 head of stock for the dead body of Culpepper. An additional \$1000.00 per carcass will be paid for the bodies of other parties involved, if accompanied by proof.

Culpepper's body must be delivered to my home and be recognizable.

Inquiries should be sent to Frank Sharp of Colbert County.



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Not So Long Ago

by Peggy Montano

"Today's War on High Prices" the advertisement read: a 24 lb. bag of flour - 99 cents, a 10 lb. bag of sugar - 50 cents, a 16 oz. loaf of bread - 7 cents and a 1 lb. tub of butter - 29 cents. It was December, 1934 and many families found it hard to buy these staples even at this war on prices price.

On the editorial page of the Huntsville Times, there was an appeal for donations to help some children have a gift for Christmas but the greater need, the article said, was for shoes and clothing. The head of the child welfare office said that with the coming of

the cold weather, many children did not have adequate clothing. In one school alone there were about 100 children who could not attend because they did not have the proper clothes. However, one family with five children gave an example of great determination. The children did not have a change of clothes, but they had not missed a day of school and were always clean Their mother washed and ironed their clothes each night.

This was life for some in Huntsville as my parents waited for the arrival of their first child. Things were better for them, They had a two-room apartment on Meridian Street and Daddy had a job at Lewter Hardware. A brand new baby bed, the gift of Mr. Lewter, was ready and waiting.

Dr. "Jack" McCown, who had an office above Humphrey's Drug Store, was coming to our home to assist in the birth. A lot of women were still choosing to have home births even though the new



Huntsville Hospital had opened in 1926. Mother had chosen to have me born at home. Dr. McCown came but after a long night of waiting, he decided it would be better if this birth took place at the hospital. And it did.

For the first seven years of my life, we lived near Five Points. First on Walker Avenue, then on Pratt and finally on Third Street (now called Schiffman), In that small house at 507 Third Street with its multicolored linoleum floors, there was a black potbellied stove in the kitchen, and in the bedroom,

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a three-piece bedroom suite from Sterchi's Furniture Store. In the living room, there was a small radio that Daddy sat near so that he could hear Gabriel Heatter give a fifteen minute newscast each night. Three nights a week, we could tune in for The Lone Ranger. On Saturday night, the Grand Ole Opry, broadcast from Nashville, Tennessee filled the house with music. Mother had a new wringer-type washing machine that made her work easier.

Even though this was a small house, we had room to share with relatives who sometimes needed somewhere to live for a short time. My grandparents stayed with us for a while and Mother worked part-time at the Dallas Cotton Mill.

From that house on Third Street, we walked a couple of blocks to Pratt Avenue and then walked up Walker to get to downtown, that magical place of stores, cafes and movies. It was exciting to go to the Lyric Theater and see those Roy Rogers and Gene Autrey movies. I can still see Gene in that black and white movie, sitting tall on his horse and singing; "I'm back in the saddle again." One night, I stood with my parents in a long line that passed Kress dime store, went to the corner and wrapped around out of sight. It wasn't long into the movie that I laid my head on Mother's lap and went to sleep. She woke me up just in time for me to hear Rhett tell Scarlett what he thought of it.

Also downtown, I could walk around the courthouse with Daddy as he greeted people he knew; then have my picture made at a photographer's studio on Jefferson Street. That hand-colored photograph with its pale pinks and blues is still in wonderful condition in a family album. From Kress' or W.T. Grant five and ten cent store, I could go home with things like col-

oring books and paper dolls even though I didn't get the red sandals I saw in a shoe store window and wanted.

Things began to change as I finished the second grade at East Clinton School. We moved away from our neighborhood near Five Points into a just built house in a new subdivision south of town. Near the intersection of Drake and Whitesburg, there were about 1200 new homes, built under the Federal Works Agency to be homes for people who worked for the Huntsville and Redstone Arsenal. Daddy no longer worked for Lewter Hardware. He was one of those workers now employed by the Redstone Arsenal.

Things were changing for our small town, but I wonder if anyone really knew how much.

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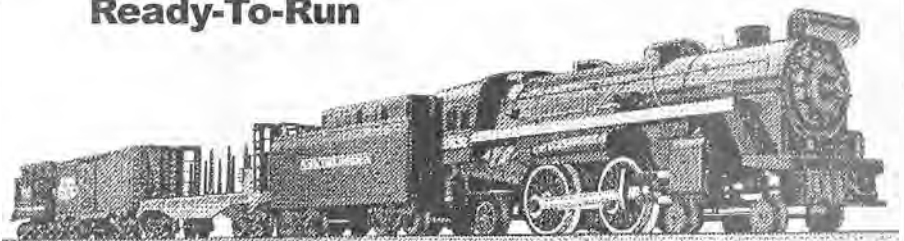


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Timeless Christmas Creations

Gilded Tissue Paper for Wrapping gifts

Take some ordinary colored tissue paper, crumple it up slightly, then spray paint lightly with gold or silver paint. Let dry, smooth out, and it's beautiful! Or, for tie-dyed, make small, tight twists all over the paper, spray with the paint, dry completely and smooth paper for use.

Decorative Ice Bowls

Use two large freezer-proof glass bowls, one larger than the other. Place your small bowl inside the larger one. Find some colorful nontoxic flower petals such as roses, petunia or ferns; add some slices of kiwi or limes/lemon/orange slices, find a bit of greenery - set aside. Pour water between the two bowls up to 1/2 inch of the top. Add your flowers and greenery and arrange with long spatula so that it looks good. Squeeze the material down to the bottom so it's spread out evenly. Use masking tape to tape the two bowls in place. Put in freezer overnight. In morning pour cold water into the center of the smaller bowl, remove tape, set the larger bowl in cold water and soon the bowls will come apart so that you can use the ice bowl for ice cream, sorbet, whatever. Don't use warm water to separate the bowls - the ice will crack.

Spicy Citrus Pomander

You'll need:

- 2 cups orrisroot powder
- 3 tablespoons cinnamon powder
- 5 lemons/limes
- Whole cloves - 2 cans
- Bowl to dry them in

With a knitting needle or similar device punch small holes about 1/4 to 1/2 inch apart in your lemons and limes. In each of these holes insert a clove. In your large bowl place the clove-studded citrus and coat each one very well with the orrisroot/cinnamon mixed - that is the drying material. Place some of the orrisroot in a small paper bag and add one

lemon or lime. Put the bags in a dark room for 2 weeks. When ready there should be no moisture left in the citrus or it may rot. Tie each lemon or lime with a raffia string and bow - these can be hung on the tree or just grouped together in a bowl for a wonderful Christmasy scent in your home.

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February 1	6:30	Mark McDaniel	Criminal Law
	7:40	Mike Wisner	Wills, Estates & Taxes
February 8	6:30	Carol Wallace & Connie Glass	Elder Law
	7:40	George Moore	Personal Injury
February 15	6:30	Archie Lamb	Tobacco Litigation
	7:40	Bill Burgess	Divorce Law
February 22	6:30	Bob Prince	Car Wrecks
	7:40	Charles Brinkley	Insurance Law
February 29	6:30	David Cromwell Johnson	Criminal Law
	7:40	Steve Heninger	Medical Malpractice
March 7	6:30	Phil Price	D.U.I.
	7:40	Lynn Jinks	Death and the Law
March 14	6:30	Judge John Crawley	State of the Judiciary
	7:40	Clyde Blankenship	Divorce Mediation
March 21	6:30	Hare, Wynn, Newell & Newton	Trial Tactics
	7:40	Ron Sykstus	Bankruptcy
March 28	6:30	Tommy Siniard	Nursing Home Law
	7:40	Jock M. Smith	Premises Liability
April 3	6:30	Larry Morris	Evidence
	7:40	Edgar C. Gentle	Corporate Law
April 10	6:30	Thomas Edwards	Workers Compensation
	7:40	Jim Yance	Tort Law Update

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