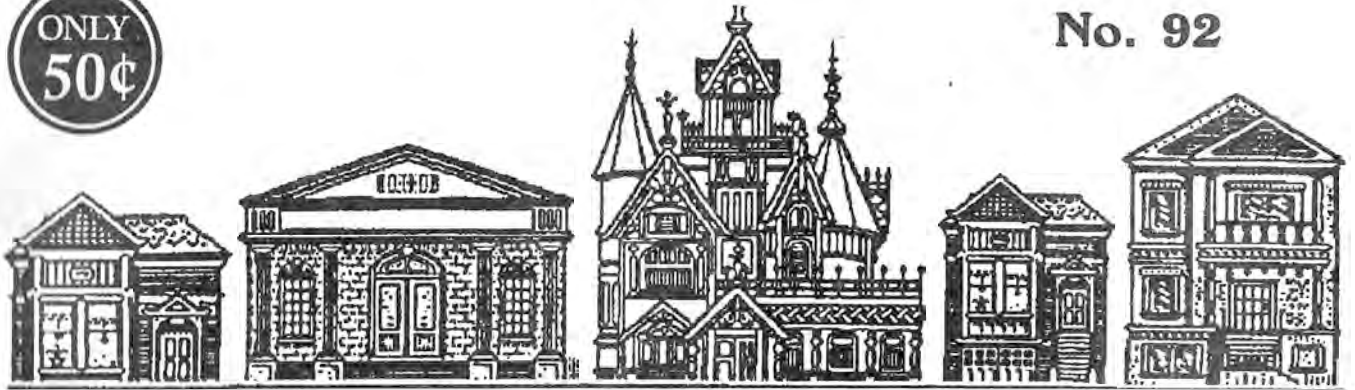


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No. 92



Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY



The Promised Land

In the mid 1890s William Hereford, his wife Almira, and their six children packed what few possessions they still owned into a covered wagon, and after attaching a hastily scribbled note, "Gone To Texas" to the front door of their now abandoned home they headed westward.

They had forsaken the life they had always known in search of what they hoped would be the Promised Land.

Also in this issue: "Mama Dearest"

The Promised Land

by Jacquelyn Procter Gray

In the mid 1890s William Hereford, his wife Almira, and their six children packed what few possessions they still owned into a covered wagon, and after attaching a hastily scribbled note "Gone To Texas" to the front door of their now abandoned home they headed westward to what they hoped would be the Promised Land.

Like many other families, it had been a hard decision for the Herefords. Their friends and relatives were here and their ancestors laid buried in local cemeteries. Life in Alabama was all the family had ever known but that life had drastically changed in the past few decades.

When the War Between the States finally came to an exhaustive conclusion, haggard ex-Confederates laid their rifles down, removed their uniforms, and tried to reclaim their lives. Lines in their faces were etched by Shiloh, Franklin, Vicksburg and scores of other bloody battles.

The defeated and battle-weary South thought the worst was finally in the past, only to learn that in the decades following the war,

poverty and turmoil were inescapable companions.

The era of Reconstruction was a time for revenge. Former slaves and white people both were near starvation. Carpetbaggers from the North came to prey on white people now victimized by the Federal government, while the Freedmen's Bureau was established to help former slaves begin their new lives. Unfortunately, the very men sent to help former slaves adjust to freedom exploited opportunities to pad their own pockets. For a charge of \$2 to the former slave, a useless contract would be drawn up insuring wages and living conditions they could expect to be paid. Employers simply did not have the money to pay these specified wages, and the only person who prospered was the agent. Nevertheless, Carpetbaggers collected their fee anyway, leaving both the ex-slaves and planters at the mercy of a corrupt system.

Once prosperous farms now laid unattended with no hands to work the fields. High taxation and lower cotton prices also took their toll. Perhaps worst of all for the proud ex-Confederates were the humiliations heaped upon them daily by the Carpetbaggers, Scalawags and bands of black marauders. This soon became too much for some, and the Ku Klux Klan was born.

Klan activities in Alabama came under the scrutiny of federal authorities, and on October



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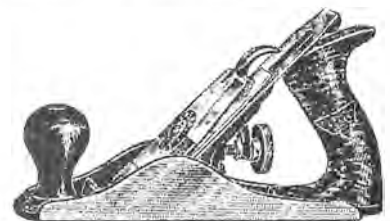
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The team was composed of (left to right top row) Charlie Herrin, Thurman Williams, Willie Malone. bottom row - Ray Byrom, Jack Phillips, Harold Herrin. The team was managed by Robert Shiffman (wearing suit).



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6, 1871, a joint committee from both houses of Congress assembled in Huntsville to investigate. During this 10-day period, Huntsville's prominent citizens, as well as various known criminals, were called to testify. Not surprisingly, it was during this period of time that many families suddenly chose to move west, rather than testify against their neighbors and friends.

Part of the lure of Texas was the hope that the western-most Confederate state would remain largely unaffected by Reconstruc-

tion. Although Texas remained on the fringes of the Confederacy, it was most definitely a Southern state, but its remoteness became a blessing when the ravages of Reconstruction were concentrated on the states in the Deep South. Many people in Madison County already had strong ties to the new land since Pleasant Gray had left Huntsville in the 1830s to found the new town of Huntsville, Texas.

Another Alabama family who made the trip out west was that of Major Robert Donnell. Preserved family letters indicate the desperation and fear of his parents, as they tried to hold together the family home and farm that was eventually sold for debt. Donnell, whose expertise with a gun was legendary, became a sheriff in Waco. In the years just before his death, he was frequently seen wearing the Confederate uniform of his youth.

These early migrants wrote home glowing accounts telling of cheap lands untouched by Carpetbaggers and corrupt political systems. Planters were raising two bales of cotton per acre and hired help was plentiful and cheap.

For William Hereford, his wife

Almira, and their six children, the promised land of Texas was the Old South they hoped to recapture. Having lost their livelihood as merchants and planters, they felt that the lure of Texas might restore the glory of the Utopia they once knew. After selling or giving away most of their possessions, the Herefords packed up only the necessary provisions and started the long trek west. Pots and pans cracked and clattered on the sides of the wagons as they slowly made their way out of Alabama, across northern Mississippi and into Louisiana. Traveling at a speed of only about twenty miles a day, every rise of the land seemed to bring new adventures. The landscape began to change; the skies were bluer, and the grass became sparse and pale. Even the curious Southwestern terrain possessed strange names: canyons and arroyos, buttes and mesas.

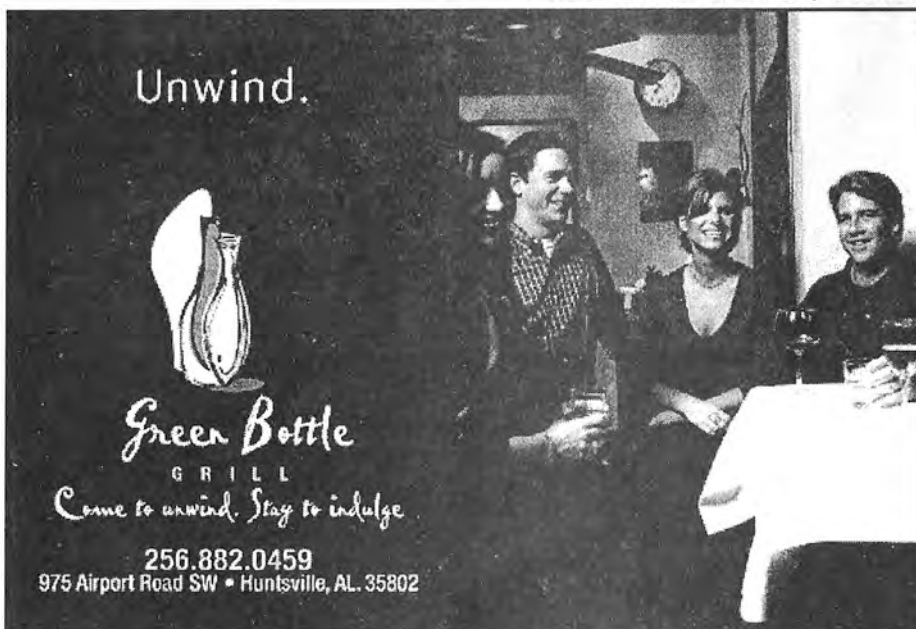
At night, the settlers gazed through the curls of smoke rising from the campfires to see that the stars in the Western sky were more brilliant and vivid than any they had seen back home. The Milky Way was a thing of wonder, the sunrises indescribably beautiful.

The Herefords soon discovered that although being a Texan was much more complex than having a preference in boot styles, there were many similarities in the Southern pioneer spirit which they had grown up with.

To capture the definition of a Texan is as futile as sweeping sunshine off the porch. Beginning with the struggle for independence from Mexico, Texans developed a grit that carried them through deadly Indian attacks, war with Mexico and the extremes of Mother Nature. For these transplants to even begin the westward trek, knowing the many obstacles

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that awaited them, required fortitude and stubbornness that few possess. The rutted wagon trails that led to Texas became dotted with the graves of loved ones lost along the way, sad reminders of the sacrifices they made.

After arriving in Texas, the Hereford's first task was the erection of a home before the cold winds of winter began to sweep across the plains. A one-room sod hut with dirt floors was constructed with the intention of adding on as time and money became more abundant. The kitchen was a corner of the room with a wood stove, brought from Alabama, that provided both heat and cooking. A single shelf to hold cooking utensils hung from the wall and wooden barrels held provisions.

Homes were miles apart and simply going to town, or visiting neighbors, was an event eagerly

looked forward to for months. These forays involved a journey of several days. After being isolated for so long, a visit to town promised adventure to even the most reluctant traveler.

Mud-filled streets, hastily erected saloons in tents and the inevitable fights in the streets, with the occasional gunshot, must have seemed like a Sodom and Gomorrah to the new settlers. Richard Green, who had left his home near New Market, discovered dealing cards in a saloon to be more profitable than farming. An argument, a quickly drawn gun and a bullet wound in his right arm soon ended his career.

The Herefords, and others raised in the more gentele society of the South could not understand the somewhat coarse, direct and blunt manner preferred by the these Texans. Even the more civi-

lized ways of conducting court proceedings in other parts of the country were of no practical use in Texas. Common sense and necessity dictated the punishment as crime took on different dimensions. Justice was swift and harsh. A judge in Texas who once condemned a man to death by hanging for stealing a horse, while giving a man convicted of murder a mere jail sentence. When asked to explain the discrepancy in the punishment, the judge replied, "Fellars, I've met plenty of men that needed killin', but I've never met a horse that needed stealin'."

Living at such great distances from civilization often had dire consequences. One day William Hereford bid Almira and the children good-bye to make a trip to the nearest community for much-needed supplies, a trip that would take several days. Not long after

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

*Nana came to paint
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he left, Almira was gathering wood when she accidentally disturbed the den of a rattlesnake. Before she had a chance to react, she was bitten several times, a fate that spelled certain death.

Immediately her thoughts were of the security of her children until William returned. Almira gathered and chopped wood for the fire, washed the family's clothing in the washtub, prepared several days' worth of food, and after having satisfied herself that there was nothing left to be done, she sat down and waited for death to come to her.

Almost miraculously she didn't die. The only explanation available at the time is that she must have sweated the poison out of her system. Her working herself to the point of exhaustion actually saved her life.

Dreams of establishing cotton plantations soon disappeared for Hereford and many of the other settlers. Though the land was fertile, the vast distances to market and a diminishing labor supply combined to make the growing of cotton impractical. In its place, however, was a product that was already making many people tremendously rich.

The native Texas ranchers who returned from the war found that

their rangy longhorns, turned loose on the vast plains while no one was around to tend to them, had multiplied. Until then, many residents of the eastern half of the United States had relied on wild game for their dinner tables. Now that the war was over, Northerners were beginning to develop a taste for these long-legged animals first introduced to Texas by Spanish Conquistador Coronado in 1541.

Texas ranchers saw an opportunity to make a fortune on the spooky creatures whose horn span could measure an impressive eight feet from tip to tip. These ranchers needed men to get the herds up north where they could get as much as \$40 a

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2. Harvie Jones Retrospective, Vol. II by Historic Huntsville quarterly of Local Architecture & Preservation (\$6.00).
3. Voices On A Cold Day - Huntsville Times columns by Bill Easterling (\$6.95).
4. Rocket Boys - New paperback edition, with photos by Homer Hickam (\$12.95).
5. Killingsworth Cove on Hurricane Creek, 1898-1998 by Joe Floyd Broyles (\$10.95).
6. Sand In My Shoes - Inspirational Tales from a Country Preacher by Bryon Laird (\$11.99).
7. Glimpses into Antebellum Homes of Historic Huntsville, Alabama - New 9th edition (\$14.95).
8. A Man Called Gurley - Nathan Bedford Forrest's Notorious Captain by Colonel Donald H. Steenburn (\$19.95).
9. True Tales of Old Madison County - Reprinted by the Historic Huntsville Foundation (\$7.95).
10. Storied Ground - Facts and Fiction of Maple Hill Cemetery by David Chamberlain (\$12.95).

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head. The era of the cowboy was born.

With the dream of establishing the same life-style the family had known in Alabama fast receding, William Hereford and his oldest son went to work as cowboys for a rancher at twenty dollars a month and board. Leaving his wife at home to take care of the younger children, he would spend months at a time herding cattle with occasional breaks to a nearby town.

One cowboy, Grant Evans, from Decatur wrote his mother that herding cattle was "being sore in the wrong places all the time and smelling so bad that a skunk stays upwind from you."

About one-third of all cowboys were Hispanics. For people from Alabama, these people who were neither black nor white were a curiosity. To the frustration of the Hispanics, made up of the mestizos, the Mexicans, and the descendants of the Spanish conquistadores, Alabamians could not understand that they were from three distinctly different cultures, although many similarities in their language were undeni-

able. Their hard work, an even more important quality than the color of their skin, quickly earned the respect of the Alabama settlers.

An ex-slave, Foster Humes, from Florence, Alabama migrated to Texas in the 1880s owning literally nothing except for the shirt on his back. Within a few years he had become a wealthy rancher known for his eccentric habit of naming the various buildings on his ranch for places he had visited. His stables were named "Mississippi."

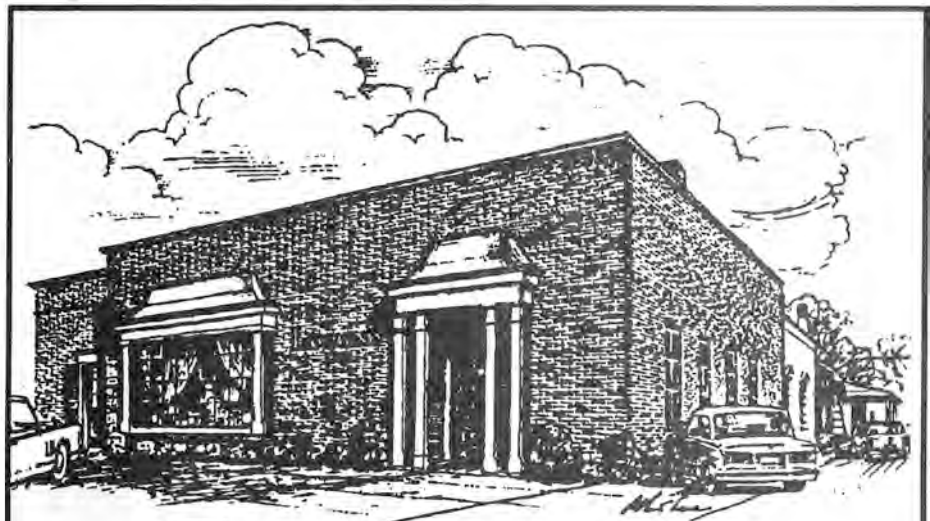
The sheer remoteness of life "Out West" was under-appreciated by more populated parts of the country. J. B. Procter, whose Confederate Missouri ancestors changed the spelling of their name

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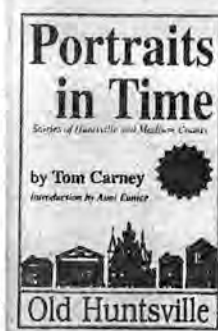
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from Proctor to Proctor to differentiate themselves from the Union sympathizers, passed through Texas to homestead the high plains of New Mexico after the turn of the century. Proctor once wrote to Sears Roebuck to order toilet paper, a commodity not readily available. When he received a written reply that he should consult a certain page of the Sears catalog to determine the order number of the toilet paper he wished to purchase, he wrote back and informed Sears that if he had the catalog, he wouldn't have a need for the toilet paper.

The loneliness of being away from his wife and family soon overwhelmed Hereford. Returning to the small sod house on the prairie, he spent the next year trying to eke out a living as a farmer.

While many Alabamians prospered in Texas, for William and Almira Hereford, the West never replaced their fond remem-

brances of home. The Utopia they had counted on was as shriveled and parched as the desolate Texas prairie.

After five long years of flat, treeless landscape, they once again packed their covered wagon to return to Madison County with all but one of their six children. Son Jesse remained west after having married a Texas girl, but years later when he knew that his death was at hand, he returned to his native Alabama to die and forever lay in peaceful rest in his native state.

They struggled for so long to thrive in Texas, only to find that the real promised land was in Alabama, home to generations before them.



Anger is only one letter short of danger.

Cow Law Upsets Village Residents



There is a popular outcry in Dallas village against the enforcement of the city ordinance which forbids allowing cows on the streets of Huntsville and it appears likely that a test case will be had in the courts at an early date.

Since Mayor Smith gave instructions for the strict enforcement of the ordinance there have been about fifteen or more cows belonging to residents of Dallas taken up. Several of the owners have been placed under arrest when they appeared to pay the fine for impounding and they have been fined in the city court.

The residents of the village allow their cows to graze on the common and they claim that the animals ought not to be taken up because of this.

Some of the people of the village have set about to make up a purse with which to employ a lawyer and take the question into court.

1907 Huntsville newspaper

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The Revenge of Frank Gurley

The year was 1914 and the Civil War had been a memory for almost a half-century. Capt. Frank Gurley was in the twilight of his days. A hero and defender of Huntsville and North Alabama, Gurley had tried to live a peaceful existence since those long ago days when he had pledged his honor and life to the Confederate States of America.

As Captain of the 4th Alabama Cavalry, he kept in touch with the remaining men who had fought beside him against the northern aggressors. Gurley felt it his duty to represent these men and do for them all he could in matters pertinent to them.

In the fall of 1914 it was brought to his attention that one D.B.E Whitaker was on the pension rolls of the State of Alabama Pension Bureau for the relief of Confederate soldiers and sailors. Whitaker was listed on the pension rolls as a private in Company D of the 49th Alabama Regiment.

Certainly a commonplace occurrence for a surviving veteran of the Confederacy.

The only problem with Whitaker's name on the pension rolls was the fact that he was also on the pension rolls of the United States of America as having served as a yankee soldier!

In his application for pension relief from the State of Alabama, Whitaker stated that he was an enlisted private from March 10, 1864 until July 3, 1865. Capt. Gurley knew from his men that Whitaker had only served in the Confederate Army a short time

and then had deserted to join the Union Army, and now, nearly fifty years later, Whitaker was drawing a pension from both sides of the conflict!

This was an affront to every brave soul who had fought and sacrificed everything for the Rebel cause.

Gurley would not stand by and let such an injustice continue. The wounds of the Civil War were deep and the people of North Alabama had suffered enough without having to endure the indignity of giving a turncoat a pension.

On October 31, 1914, Frank Gurley wrote to the Pension Bureau in Montgomery revealing all he knew about the Rebel traitor. Three days later Whitaker was

sent notice that he had been charged as ineligible for a pension because he was a deserter from the Confederacy and was drawing a Union pension. If he failed to respond to the charges, it would be taken as an admission of guilt and loss of pension.

D.B.F. Whitaker never responded to these charges, was dropped from the rolls and never heard from again.

In some small way Capt. Frank Gurley, C.S.A., had come again to the defense of Huntsville and North Alabama. He had restored to his native land its honor and dignity and driven out the yankee invader from his home.



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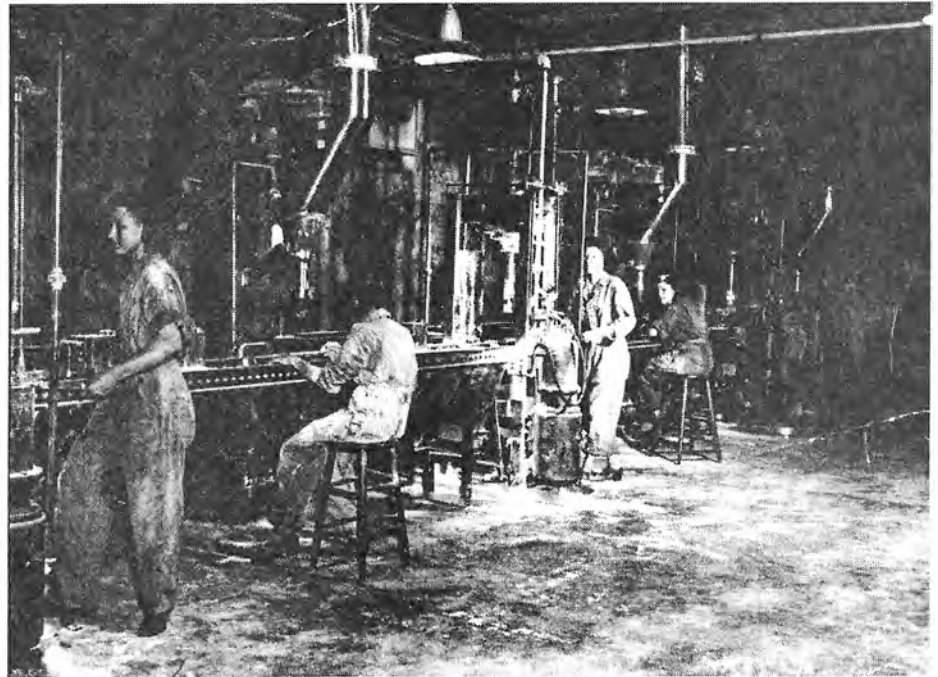
Working At The Huntsville Arsenal

by Louise Matthews

Soon after I graduated from high school, I applied for a position for work at the new Chemical Warfare Service, an installation being built a few miles outside of town to manufacture different kinds of chemical weapons. Since the nation was in a state of war I wanted to be a part of the Armed Forces, but not to go into the actual joining-up, so to speak.

I started in early September, right after I turned 18. I filled out the application and was into the line of processing within a two day period. We had very little to do to get ready. No experience was necessary, just the will to work. Early on we acquired a profound feeling of doing something for our country.

When I first went to work, I lived with my maternal grandparents, and aunt who also went to



Workers on assembly line in 1943. Louise Matthews is first on left. Photo taken by the National Geographic Magazine.

work the same day as I did. We worked close but not in the same area.

We didn't have a car so our access to the Arsenal was by city buses. We had a three block walk to the Clinton Street bus-stop. Then we changed buses at the corner of Clinton and Jefferson Street. The bus we had to ride came about every thirty minutes

and it was marked ARSENAL ONLY. The fare cost us a nickel on the first bus and we got a change token for the arsenal bus. Our return at the end of our shift would cost the same for return trip. We got off the arsenal bus on the Hutchens Hardware Comer and caught the Meridian/Clinton bus home.

We were really "wading-in-

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YOUR HOSTS: THE SANFORDS & HAMPTONS

high-cotton," to coin an old Southern cliché, when we got our first paycheck. And the money we made was astronomical compared to the wages some (me, for one) had been paid for drugstore work.

We were controlled as to the clothes we had to wear, even the type shoes. Even our underwear had to meet the specs! All Cotton! But really who among us had ever been used to any other kind?

We were paid every two weeks and my memory isn't all that good now but I think it was about \$33.00 - \$35.00. That was after the deductions, oh yes, we had that too, but believe me that was the most I'd ever had in my life. And the check had my name on it!

We changed clothes at the work-site. They were Army issue; coveralls and shoes. The shoes were ours to keep in our locker, but the coveralls were changed every day. Some fit and some didn't, mostly, though, they were usually too big.

We never ran out of work; if we had slack time for any reason a job was found, even if it was cleaning our machine or the floor. We were always told to stay busy.

I didn't have a designated position until after nearly a full year. I worked in all phases of the operation. I drove a tractor bringing the powder from one building to the other; carried workers to the cafeteria for a smoke-break or just a

rest period. We had fifteen minutes twice a day and thirty minutes for lunch and we had to smoke at the cafeteria. Since I carried the workers on the trailer I got to go often, for we didn't shut the line down at anytime. Rules were to be adhered to and believe me, you lived by them. If anyone was ever caught outside with a lighted cigarette you sure could get in trouble.

Once warned-twice aware was a motto I really learned to live by.


I had been caught once with a cigarette and the next time meant a three day layoff, without pay. One day after getting my riders on and turning around I saw the guard coming our way, fast. Realizing I had a smoke in my hand, I had no other alternative but to eat the thing.

We made smoke grenades. They were for camouflage and signaling - for ships, troops and bunkers. Later we made larger ones called "Smoke Pots." The pots were carried to a deep pond on the southernmost section of the area where they were tested in water. The burning time of the pots was much longer than that of the cannisters.

All of the grenades and smoke pots we made produced different colors. Each color had a significance, but we knew very little of the military codes. We just made

cont. on page 20

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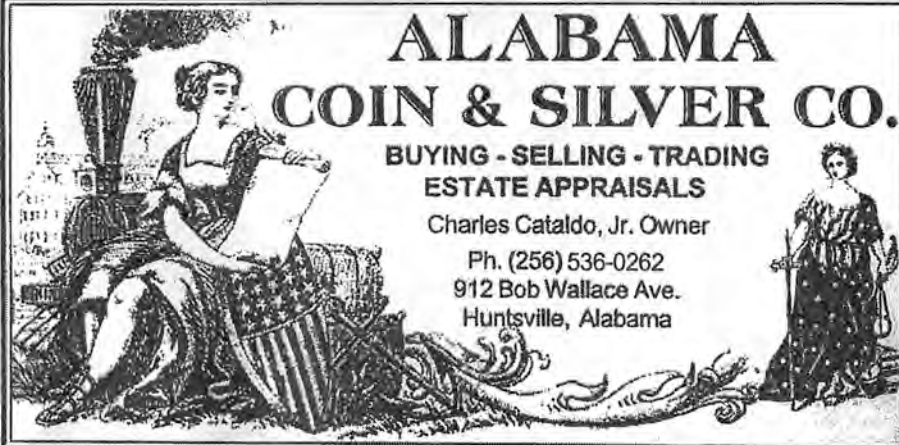
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On The Home Front

by Lillian W. Dale

The following memoirs were originally published in 1899.

Shall I tell you of some of the "makeshifts" to which we were driven during the war? Well, one of the hardest things to come by was sugar, and by the second year of the war it was impossible to buy even the commonest brown sugar in the South. My grandmother possessed a loaf of white sugar that she treasured very carefully, and only used on extra occasions, and when the war was over she still had a small piece of it.

The best substitute we had for sugar was molasses, or sorghum, made from Chinese sugar cane. It was used in coffee and all kinds of desserts, and when one got



used to it, did not taste so badly. Preserves were made by cooking berries and fruits in sorghum molasses, and as all the essentials were plentiful, we made them in large quantities.

Cake was also made with sorghum. In the South we do not think it is Christmas unless we have boiled custard for dinner.

One Christmas we had no sugar for even this favorite delicacy; so we decided to make it with sorghum. It was of a rich, golden color, and certainly the prettiest, if not the best, I ever saw.

Real coffee was almost as scarce as "hens' teeth," and many things were tried as substitutes. Grandma had a sack of coffee when the war began, and she divided it into small quantities, and hid it in various places, so that if some of it was found and taken she would not lose it, so by this means we usually had our coffee,

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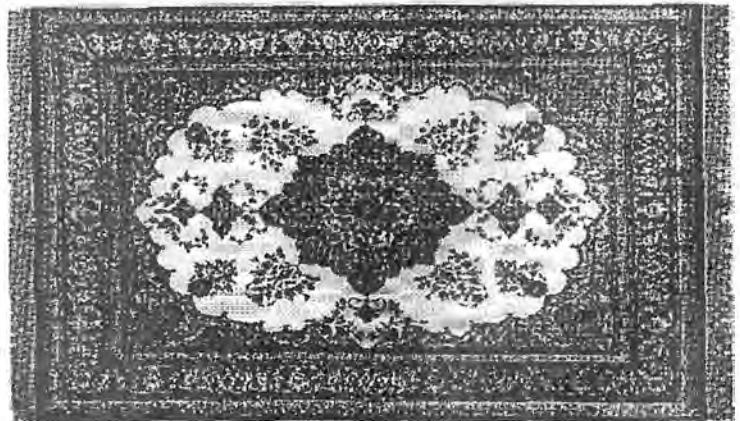
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part Rio and part Rye, without the "O." Some of our neighbors used parched corn, okra, sweet potatoes, etc.

Another thing very hard to procure was salt, and that was indispensable. Part of the time during the war it was impossible to buy it for love or money. Then it was that those who owned old smoke-houses with dirt floors were considered very fortunate. The dirt floors were dug up for a depth of several feet, and the dirt put up in hoppers.

Water was then poured over it, and, as it soaked through, it was put in kettles and boiled down till it made a dark-looking salt that answered very well to preserve meat. The stock did not like it.

Many times was our house searched, on various pretenses, by the Yanks. Sometimes they were looking for Rebels supposed to be in hiding there-- sometimes for arms, etc., but whatever reason they gave for doing so, everything that attracted the fancy or the stupidity of the searchers always disappeared with them.

At the beginning of the war my father wore a handsome overcoat of the style known as a "Lord Rag-

lan," with wide sleeves and big pockets. As the Yanks always appropriated such articles of wearing apparel, it was kept in the darkest corner of the darkest wardrobe. New Year's day, 1863, was one of the coldest days ever known in the South. One of the Federal Generals, Hatch I think it was, was quartered in our town with his command, and they roamed over the country for miles. As we lived only a short distance from town, they almost crowded us out of the house, in order to get to the fire that very cold day. Their invariable salutation on coming in was, "It is rather coolish today." In order to keep warm I put on my father's "Raglan," and filled the pockets with silver spoons and other valuables; they threatened to take it from me.

We all wore homespun dresses in those days, the work of our own hands, and sang with great enjoyment:

"Three cheers for the homespun dress the Southern ladies wear."

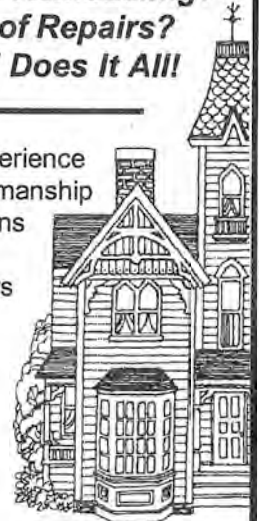


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Letter To The Editor

Dear Sirs,

In regards to your story on the German POW's who were imprisoned on Redstone Arsenal - There was a German POW who went into the home of Huntsvillian Mrs. Bradford. She was a lady in her seventies, and lived in a large home located on 5th Avenue (now Governor's Drive) where Lawrence Street intersected with it. I could stand on my front porch and throw a rock to hit Mrs. Bradford's home. At that time, we lived with my great aunt, Eliza Esslinger, at 414 5th Avenue.

The German man did not hurt her - but she didn't speak German and couldn't understand what he was saying. Later on in the day some military officials came to the home and took the man back to the Arsenal. I was a little boy at the time (I was born in 1940) and so many of the details I never

knew. The talk around the neighborhood at the time was that the German had run off from the Arsenal and was trying to escape.

Mrs. Bradford's son was Astor D. Bradford, who ran a store on Clinton Street at Dewey Street. He later worked at Wilson's Grocery at Governor's Drive and 4th Street. He was later murdered at the West Side Community Center, shot in the mouth. He was 74 when this event happened. The time frame was close to Christmas, in 1975. Astor had \$400 in his pocket, but the murder was never solved. It was reported that a black male shot him.

I remember Booger Town, Center Theater, Brown's Store, West Huntsville School and Old Butler. My mother was injured while working at the mustard gas and later died from cancer.

Gilbert A. Jenkins,
Huntsville

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your head. To handle
others, use your heart.*

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Tips from Earlene

It's really cold and many of you are using your fireplaces. When you order and stack wood, make sure that you don't put it on the ground, because it will attract many bugs all year round. Build a frame of 2x4's and concrete blocks - the wood should be stacked at least twenty inches above the ground.

And, when you stack, stack with the bark facing up - it will repel water so you start with dryer logs.

Position a section of old inner tube on your garage wall so that when you open the car door it doesn't hit anything hard.

Dark shoe polish can make an excellent finish for wooden frames - it adds color as well as a water-proof shine.

Use an old waiter's trick - if you have a water spot on wood, put a pat of butter inside a cloth napkin and rub.

An extra breadbox will hold all the tools you'll need to take care of any household repair.

You'll want to clean your dishwasher every so often by filling it up with warm water and adding

about a gallon of distilled vinegar. Let it go through its cycle and you'll have a fresh-smelling washer.

I still buy sheets one size smaller for the top sheet - in other words, for a queen size bed buy queen size fitted sheet, but full size top sheet. It still covers you but without so much excess and is cheaper.

When I first slept in our new bed it was awful, because we bought a firm bed and it felt like sleeping on cement. So I went out and got one of the "eggshell" foam mattress covers that just lays on top of the mattress underneath the fitted sheet, and it is WONDERFUL. I can't tell you the difference it made for a comfortable sleep. I love it.

If you drink coffee at all, and like the taste, you have got to go out and buy one of the coffee bean grinders. I had thought about it for some time and then finally did. It makes a huge difference in the taste, and you can grind up

enough for a couple of weeks. It just tastes fresher and more like real, full-bodied coffee without being strong. And the little grinders are inexpensive and easy to clean.

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Huntsville Coffee Talk

by Aunt Eunice

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



cently donated \$1,100 to the Library for the purchase of childrens books. There's not a finer bunch of men anywhere than those guys!

Congratulations to my friend **Jim Hall** who just began his new job with the **Huntsville Chamber of Commerce** as Communication Director.

My friends **Jim** and **Susan Kirkland** got to get away to the **Smokies** with **Henry** and **Mary Flack** for the New Years, said it was so relaxing!

I sure did enjoy seeing so many folks over the holidays wishing me holiday cheer... **Mayor Spencer, Jeff Enfinger, Sheriff Whisante, Tommy Ragland, Congressman Bud Cramer, Emmett Sanders, Billy Harbin, Judge Lynwood Smith** and **Missy, Judge Little, Eddie**

Can you believe that we reached the year **2000** and my stove is still working!! Happy New Year everyone.

Picture of the month in December was of **Loyd Tomlinson**, one of my favorite people and also owner of the **Outback Restaurant** and the Country Ham breakfast was won by **June Young**. See if you can be the first to guess this month's picture and win a breakfast.

Ken Weiss, an author from Alaska stopped by to see me recently. He's in town working on a book about the 62 car pileup above Chattanooga in 1978. That was a wreck that made a lot of lawyers rich!

Several of my customers have recently told me that they're getting calls from these so-called vacation sales people saying that they have won trips to various places, as well as high-priced gifts.

And that all they've got to do is give out their credit card number and agree to pay a small amount in order to collect the loot. PLEASE remember that these are all scams - you should NEVER give out your credit card numbers, or any other pertinent information about your family. These people are professionals and they're very good at persuading you to part with your money, but they are crooks and want to take your money. Please remember this!

I've got a new little friend who is four years old, **William Robert Roberts**. He saw a bell ringer during Christmas and gave one dollar, the ringer said God bless you, this will help some child have a better Christmas and he replied, I have three more that you can have if it will help. I think everyone could learn a lesson from little William.

The Golden K Kiwanis re-

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: "Community leader with a heart of gold."



Last month's photo was
Loyd Tomlinson

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- * Help with parties



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LeVick and Michelle, Byron and Miss Tillie Laird and their family from Florida, **Tom and Cathey Carney**, and many others.

I sure was proud to have my family with me for Christmas, everyone except two grandchildren, sure was proud that my son **Donald and Wanda** and their two kids **Brad and Whitney** made it up from Florida.

We were sorry to hear about the death of **Dave Headrick**. He was a controversial man but left a lot of friends.

We hear that **Ranee Pruitt** and **Jacque Gray** were seen out partying until the wee hours on New Year's eve. I hear that Jacque is still in the doghouse!

I was excited to find out that **Cassie** from Outback is engaged and planning her wedding for this year and boy, is she excited!

Well, it's time for all the local politicians to start dropping by and letting me know who wants to run for what office, I understand the **Mayor** is running again, so is **Commissioner Mike Gillespie, Congressman Cramer, Judge Little**, and my friend **Jane Smith** is running for Circuit Court Clerk and **Tommy Ragland** is running for Probate Judge. It's gonna be a big and busy election year, get ready folks to see these smiling faces pouring coffee.

Chuck and Annelie Owens are in Florida for the winter working on their golf swings. Must be nice!

We hear that **Wade Russell** is also going to be working on his golf game now that he doesn't have to spend as much time at Star Market. Go for it Wade, you deserve it!

Dr. Chappell and his family came by and ate with me, he says he sure loves his job at **Huntsville Hospital**.

Congrats to **Stephanie** and

John Troup of Nashville who are expecting their first baby, in September.

Everyone mark your calendars for **Tuesday, January 18**, 10 a.m. at the **Senior Center** for a ribbon cutting ceremony to celebrate "**A Walk in the Park**." I helped them get some things donated to build a gazebo, plant some trees and make it pretty.

I keep listening, but I'm not sure if I hear the wedding bells for **Betty Hubbard** and **Mike Kloster** ringing yet. Come on Mike, you'd better marry her before she gets away.

I want to wish my good friend, **W.L. Halsey** and his new Bride the best of luck on their marriage. I think he looks twenty years younger being in love, he married his high school sweetheart!

My sympathy goes to the family of **Hubert Hawkins** in his death. Hub will be missed. He did so much for the community.

Come see me and remember I love you!

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These recipes are taken from "Tastiest Bytes," a cook book compiled by the employees of Hewlett-Packard Co. in Atlanta, Georgia

Bacon/Water Chestnut Wraps

1 can whole water chestnuts, cut in half

1 lb. bacon

1 c. sugar

1 c. ketchup

Cut bacon into thirds, wrap each piece of bacon around each half of water chestnut. Secure with toothpicks. Bake at 350 degrees for 20 to 25 minutes. Drain the fat.

Mix sugar and ketchup in baking dish, heat slowly til sugar dissolves. Add the drained wraps to the ketchup mixture, serve immediately. *by Lee Goynes*

Tortilla Appetizers

1 6-oz. can pitted ripe olives, drained and chopped

1 4-oz. can chopped green chilies, drained

1 8-oz. pkg. Cream cheese, softened

1 c. sour cream

½ c. chopped onion

5 10-inch flour tortillas

Snipped fresh parsley, chopped Cilantro, Salsa

Combine all ingredients except tortillas, parsley, cilantro and salsa. Blend well. Divide evenly among tortillas and spread to edges. Roll up, wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate several hours or overnight. When ready to serve, cut rolls into ½ inch slices. Arrange the slices, cut side down, on serving platter. Sprinkle with snipped parsley and cilantro. Serve with salsa.

by Leann Mikkelson

Maryland Crab Cakes

1 lb. regular crabmeat

½ c. bread crumbs

1 egg, beaten

5 t. mayonnaise

1 T. parsley, chopped fine

2 t. Worcestershire sauce

1 t. prepared mustard

1 t. salt

¼ t. white pepper

Mix all ingredients, form into small (3" diameter) flat cakes. Deep fry at 350 degrees for 2 or 3 minutes or broil til golden brown. This will make 6 cakes.

by Joan Porter

Good Salsa Recipe

2 cans Ro-Tel tomatoes with diced green chilies,

2 cans diced tomatoes,

1 jar chopped jalapenos,

Fresh cilantro, chopped,

Garlic Salt (or crush a garlic clove and add salt)

Add and mix tomatoes in food processor. Add lots of cilantro. Add garlic salt, chop up jalapenos and add them to suit your hot register. Optional - can add a squirt of lemon or lime juice, or a medium sweet onion, chopped.

by Andy Hilbun

Savory Rice Dish

Melt 1 stick butter in a skillet and 1 cup of rice. Simmer 7 minutes. Stir once or twice. Pour rice



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in casserole dish, add a can of Campbell's onion soup and a can of Beef consomme. Bake covered at 350 degrees for an hour and 15 minutes. This is especially good with ham.

by Kay Wells

Red Beans and Sausage

1 lb. red beans, dried
1 large onion, diced
1 clove garlic, diced
1 T. parsley flakes
Celery
1 lb. smoked or hot sausage
3 T. butter
2 T. Cajun spice

Rinse your beans, pick over them and discard stones. Fill a large pot with beans and water. Let boil for an hour, adding water as needed. Add seasonings and spices. Let beans cook til soft. Add meats and butter, cook on low heat til creamy. Serve over white rice. by Candy Champion

Broccoli Casserole

1 c. mayonnaise
½ c. chopped onion
1 can Cream of Mushroom soup (undiluted)
1 c. shredded Cheddar cheese
2 pkg. frozen chopped broccoli
Saltine crackers

Cook the broccoli according to package directions. Mix mayonnaise, onions, soup and cheese. After broccoli is cooked, drain any remaining water. Alternate the fol-

lowing layers into a baking dish - ½ of the broccoli, followed by ½ of the mayonnaise mixture. Repeat once more. Crumble saltines on top of the casserole and add a sprinkling of cheese. Bake at 350 degrees for about 20 minutes and the top of the casserole is brown.

by Vivian Edwards

Chicken & Cheese

4 boneless chicken breasts
4 slices Provolone cheese
1 tomato, chopped
1 bunch green onions, chopped,
3 t. Worcestershire sauce
1 T. soy sauce
½ g. garlic

Combine the last 3 ingredients as a marinade. Put the chicken breasts in, let marinate for 2 hours. Grill or saute the chicken til done. Melt the cheese over tops of breasts. Garnish with chopped tomato and green onions. Good with a side of sour cream.

by Nikki Swanson

Apricot Coconut Balls

1 ½ c. dried apricots, ground,
2 c. coconut,
2/3 c. Eagle Brand Sweetened Condensed Milk

Combine ingredients and shape into balls. Roll in powdered sugar, if desired. Let balls stand til firm. Makes 32 balls.

by Gail Black

Sweet Potato Custard

2 c. cooked sweet potatoes, mixed with mixer,
1 c. sugar,
1 c. milk,
3 eggs,
6 T. melted butter,
½ t. lemon flavor or ginger,
½ t. allspice,
½ t. cinnamon

Mix all ingredients well. Pour into 2 (9-inch) unbaked pie shells and bake at 350 degrees til done, about an hour.

by Gail Black's Dad

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Memories

cont. from page 11

them to the "specs" given to us.

Shortly afterwards, I was put in the position of inspector for cannisters in the filling room. I worked on the complete cycle of each and was to do the filling, pressing and any other part that would build the completed product. Then I would go to the test area and burn a sample of each cannister to see if the "duration was sufficient" to run the batch.

We were not allowed to write any kind of message, whatsoever on the shells. One wartime slogan that was drilled into us was, "A Slip of the Lip will Sink a Ship."

In another area of the arsenal they started work on a project that very quickly became much more vital and more needed in the war effort than the cannisters and smoke pots.

The Mustard Gas and Phosphorous products were of a different type gas all together. I never worked in those areas but did go there on loan. I was in only one scary time and it was at the mustard gas area. We had to wear a gas-mask at all times. And if the alarm went off we had to "hit the pool." At the time I couldn't swim and the foreman called the order and I wouldn't go so he pushed

me in. Of course it was only about waist deep, but to me it could well have been the ocean. I never volunteered again for a call to help out a line in that area.

We had a lot of visiting personnel; writers, photographers and authors that came and talked to us and made pictures. None of our work was made public as long as the war continued. All of our work was in secret.

I stayed at the arsenal through 1943 and some of 1944. I married in 1943 and when my husband was assigned a naval post I resigned and went to Oklahoma to live for a few months, then we moved to Florida and after that he was sent to Japan,

I never went back to the arsenal. Although I tried to keep up with what was going on there, and believed that I would eventually go back when I had the time, I never did. I had a son in 1945 and then, for real I didn't have time, but I'll never forget my wartime contribution to our country with my work at the Huntsville Arsenal.

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A Young Boy Goes To War

by Robert B. Morrow of Co. L, 5th Ala. Cavalry, written in 1912.

In July 1864, I joined as a volunteer of Company L, 5th Regiment, Alabama Cavalry.

Perhaps it will be interesting at this time, for it lacks a little of fifty years, to tell something of my equipment. I rode a mule, a large gentle one, a good traveler. My bridle was made of home-tanned cow leather, sewed into the bits with cords made of home-tanned fox or coon hides. The bit was made in a shop nearby and was what was called a curb-bit. The saddle, homemade also, consisted of two pieces of poplar, shaped so it was supposed to fit the mule's back as they lay lengthways on her. These were fastened together in front by a piece of tough oak with rivets made of iron in the shops nearby. The back part was fastened the same way, by tough oak, cut so as to resemble any ordinary saddle.

This saddle had holes mortised, through which to tie on the belongings of a soldier of the C. S. A. When this was covered with a heavy woolen blanket, spun and woven at home by my Mother and Sister and colored with bark, the soldier, dressed in cloth made by the same loving hands was ready to mount and be off to war.

Neither the boy nor his equipment would make a formidable looking soldier or inspire terror, you will say. True! But the mule could travel, and the boy could shoot, and either could very nearly find his own ration. These three formed the chief requisites for a



soldier in Forrest's Cavalry.

The next morning after I was sworn into the service and became a soldier of the C. S. A., we were ordered to cook one day's ration which consisted of one pound of corn meal and one pound of beef. This done, we started, Wednesday morning, on a raid across the Tennessee River. When we had traveled 35 miles we stopped in the night, stayed there all day Thursday and until 3 o'clock Friday, then rode back 30 miles and we had eaten by Saturday at 10 a.m. that one pound of beef and meal. I mention the ration not because it was so unusual an episode in a soldier's life, but because as an introduction into the profession it was rather hard on a 17 year old boy.

It would be useless to try to

remember or record the almost daily bouts with the enemy on such outpost duty as we were on. Sometimes we were running and fighting, the enemy in front and sometimes fighting and running, we were in front.

One other battle was on the west fork of Flint. We had followed the enemy of 1,000 or 1,200 men all day; we had 500. When they camped we concealed our horses in the woods, lay there until 4

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a.m., then charged into their camp on foot. We lost some men, but could not learn what loss we inflicted as they carried their dead and wounded with them.

I will relate one incident of this battle, which I am glad to say, was the only one of its kind I ever knew of personally. While a cousin of mine, a boy about my age, and I were standing side by side firing into the camp, he was shot, and his thigh broken. I was directed to take him back out of the camp. When I had gotten out a piece, the enemy rallied, passed around us and cut us off from our own men. As I could get no further, I left him standing, holding himself by an apple tree. When the enemy found him they commenced to shoot him, in spite of his cries for mercy, which I heard as I lay hidden nearby.

They kept shooting till he fell with two more wounds, one in his breast. He then feigned death.

They took a sword, jabbed it into his back, cut at his neck and head. He feigning death, they left him. He was afterwards found by some of the enemy, carried to a nearby house and left, as they supposed, to die. To the surprise of all, he got well. He lived for 35 years, carrying to his grave not only the scars of the gun wounds, but the sword wounds which the dastards had inflicted to neck, back, and head, while he lying face down on the ground supposedly mortally wounded.



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If the parents of the child have filed for *divorce*, the grandparent can intervene in the divorce proceeding for the purpose of re-

questing visitation. If the parents have already obtained a divorce, the grandparents can file a petition to modify the divorce decree to seek visitation rights.

If the parent related by blood to the grandparent *dies* and the surviving parent denies visitation privileges, the grandparent can ask the Court to grant visitation. And, if action is taken to relinquish the surviving parent's custody of the child (voluntarily or involuntarily) the grandparent can intervene in any legal action solely on the issue of visitation privileges. If Court action has been completed, the grandparent can ask the Court to modify the original Decree to authorize visitation with the grandparent.

There is no assurance that the Court will allow visitation with the grandparent. In each case, the best interest of the child will be the guiding light of the Court in reach-

ing a decision.

Unless there has been an adoption by a family member, a divorce, or the death of a parent, a grandparent has no legal right to seek visitation with the child. The Alabama Court of Civil Appeals has made clear that natural parents have a *primaface* (presumed) legal right to the custody, care, and control of their children to the exclusion of all others.

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The Buried Treasure of Rube Burrow

by Emmett Ashworth

All my life my late father, B.E. Ashworth, told me stories of the night Rube Burrow and his brother Jim visited my great-grandfather, Bud Ashworth at his home in Royal, Ala., about 15 miles south of Guntersville.

Along about dusk one evening in 1889, two strangers approached the house and asked permission to spend the night. As was the custom back then, they were invited in, fed a warm meal and given a place to sleep.

Later that night, the family was awakened by the sheriff at the front door, who loudly ordered that Burrow give himself up.

When Bud Ashworth went to the door to talk with the sheriff, the Burrow boys made a hasty exit out a back window. The next day, the sheriff and his posse caught up with the outlaws about four miles north of the United Methodist Church. They were too far away for the posse's shotguns to harm them, so everyone just stared and hoped nothing would happen. Suddenly, one man with a rifle started shooting at the Burrows.

Rube Burrow returned the fire and in the melee following, killed W.P. Woodard. The posse, after getting a taste of the Burrow's gunfire, decided the chase wasn't worth it and returned, chastised, to their homes.

The next day, the brothers were spotted walking into a heavily wooded thicket across from Grave's farm, carrying what appeared to be heavy saddlebags. A witness later swore that when they exited the thicket they no longer had the bags.

Rube never returned to claim what he had buried in the thicket. Soon afterwards, before anyone could question him about the mysterious saddlebags, he was killed in a fierce gun battle.

All my life my Daddy was convinced that the saddlebags contained treasure from one of the Burrow's numerous robberies. Though we searched for years, no trace was ever found. Most people, by this time, had discounted the whole story, attributing it to mere folklore. Regardless of local beliefs, my father was so firmly convinced that it never entered my mind to doubt him.

Early one summer morning in 1991, an employee of Hiwassee Land Co. was clearing this particular land using heavy equipment. Often times he had found unusual objects buried in the ground, so it was not particularly

a surprise when he encountered what appeared to be large pieces of leather. Turning his bulldozer off, the man climbed down for a closer look.

Entwined in the roots of a tree were the remnants of two saddlebags, bulging with gold and silver coins. Also found were the remains of what was once bundles of "Federal Greenbacks."

Though the claim was contested by many people, the court, after a lengthy court battle, awarded the treasure to the bulldozer driver.

And thus ended the saga of Rube Burrow's foray into North Alabama.

Real Estate Bargains From 1907

\$5,500 Two story, 7 room brick residence on Randolph Street, large lot.

\$5,000 The old Gordon property on Lincoln Street opposite Presbyterian church. Large lot and brick house.

\$4,100 Two story 8-room brick residence on Randolph Street, lot 106 x 200 feet.

\$2,750 Buys 4-room tenant house on Adams Street with large lot and 3-room tenant house in rear.

\$2,600 Buys a nice 5-room cottage on East Holmes Street - hot and cold running water.

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Grandma's Remedies

How to stop smoking:

When tempted to smoke, eat an apple or an orange instead. Drink freely of water and eat fruit and vegetables, and the smoke will begin to taste bad. Continue doing so and living well, and soon the appetite for smoke will lessen and finally disappear. Find a strict vegetarian who smokes, if you can.

Do not attempt to "taper off", it usually results in a long period of agony and fails at last. Remember what tobacco does to you.

How to get rid of that Head Cold:

Hot Chicken Soup

Soak a handful of rosemary tops in warm water til soft. Combine with a pint of hot cider, 1/8 tsp of cayenne pepper and 1/8 tsp ground ginger. Drink the liquid while hot.

Make a tea from ginger and

honey. Make a thyme tea for sore throats.

Use a mustard foot bath to clear a clogged head. Add one tablespoon dry mustard powder to a footbath of 2 gallons hot water. Soak feet in the bath for 15 minutes.

Fill a shallow bowl with honey and add 2 cloves. Make 6 cuts in a lemon and soak it overnight in the honey. Squeeze the remaining lemon juice into the honey and take teaspoons of the mixture when needed to relieve symptoms.

If you can't sleep, try this:

Take 1 tablespoon of honey every evening at dinnertime, and you should have less trouble falling asleep at night. If a spoonful of honey doesn't do the trick, try a mixture of 3 teaspoons of apple cider vinegar and 1 cup of honey. Take 2 tsp of the mixture as you are getting ready to go to bed. If you still can't sleep after an hour, take 2 more teaspoonfuls of the mixture.

Writing is turning one's worst moments into money.
J. P. Donleavy

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Ott Talking Machine Co. is Growing

Roy F. Ott is Conducting Progressive, Active Sales Agency for Victor Machines

(Taken from The Huntsville Mercury, 1916)

The Roy F. Ott Talking Machine Company, Roy F. Ott, sole proprietor, is one of Huntsville's most successful business firms established in recent years.

Mr. Ott has been a resident of Huntsville four years and estab-

lished his business in Huntsville about eighteen months ago. On account of the rapid growth of his business and a desire for a more convenient location, Mr. Ott was forced to move his business into its present quarters at Number 5, Post Office Row.

Mr. Ott has extended his sales on talking machines over the entire North Alabama section, making selling trips by rail and spending considerable time on the road in his automobile, selling to families throughout the section. He has just recently placed machines in the public schools of Huntsville and Madison and in the Huntsville Y.M.C.A.

Mr. Ott sells machines for cash, of course, but also makes a specialty of long time payments. He carries a complete stock of the latest Victor Victrolas. Victor records and talking machine accessories and the completeness

of his store would do credit to a business of this kind in a much larger city.

Other Business News in Huntsville



Miss Molly Dechard has opened an ice creme parlor at her residence near the railroad depot. She will be available for business at all polite hours.

John Mitchell will provide skinned rabbits and squirrels to order. All are warranted to be fresh and cleaned of shot.
from 1899 newspaper

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Stories of Huntsville and Madison County

by Tom Carney

Introduction by Aunt Eunice



Old Huntsville

Town Gossip From 1899

One of the best known men about town, who is reported ill with La Grippe, is really laid up from the effects of injuries received in a fight at a gambling house. The melee occurred several nights ago, and the gentleman in question was badly beaten over the head with a chair. One of the others present was a traveling man from Augusta, and the balance, as far as I can ascertain, were mere card sharks.

I questioned not long ago to the open liaison of a beautiful young society woman, who is encumbered with a hubby somewhat her senior, and a young clerk in a downtown business house. About two days ago somebody notified a male relative of the frisky matron, and he came to Huntsville at once to see the lay of the land. He called on the clerk and notified him that he would fill him full of holes if he continued his compromising attentions and is supposed to have read the riot act to the madame. His visit has certainly had a restraining influence upon the couple, and they have refrained from scandalizing the public since.

A young man who poses as a leader of local society and who is as a matter of fact about as contemptible a cad as one could find in a year's travel, boasted at the Huntsville Hotel the other night of his intimacy with several women who move in the right circles, mentioning them by name. A gentlemen present mentioned the matter to the brother of one of the ladies, and he

promptly went on the warpath. When cornered the young puppy denied everything and declared the informant was a liar. This stirred up the man who carried the news, and he also started out looking for gore. The sassiety gent has bee laying low ever since and hasn't been found. It is a wonder, by the way, that this fellow hasn't had the top of his head blown off long ago. He makes use of the names of women in a manner that would mean certain death in some communities.

A very shocking story is going the rounds at present relative to an elderly Physician who is well known to almost anybody in town. If false, it is a horrible situation that no fair gentleman should tolerate and there may be some after developments.

I understand that a very warm reception is awaiting a certain drummer when he next turns up at New Market. He engaged in a flirtation with a well known married lady, and chanc-

ing to see her pass, he wrote a very tender little note on the back of a business card and sent it to her by one of the servants. The lady's husband was out of town at the time, but when he returned she gave him the missive. Meantime the drummer has left town. The husband swears that he will thrash him within an inch of his life when he reappears. Moral: don't write notes.



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Growing up Southern

By Fred E. Ashcraft

A defining component of Growing up Southern was horror of rejection, which dwells forever, like fallout from a mushroom cloud.

Such an event befell me many years ago on a splendidly sun-splashed day in St. Louis. Flowers bloomed, birds sang, and a frisky breeze flounced the skirts of pretty girls.

At age 18, I was there to enter the Navy flight program. I had already passed physical, written and oral examinations in Memphis. The Officer Procurement Center in St. Louis was the final step in the entry process.

Examiners asked me a variety of questions, which I fielded slick as rounds in a chamber until they inquired:

"Do you like girls?"

I did, but I sensed a trick question and opted for a slippery answer.

"What's a girl?" I asked.

A long silence ensued. Finally, one cleared his throat and asked, "You don't know what a GIRL is?"

"Nossir."

(That was a bald-faced lie but

Daddy always told me, "When you're being slippery, lie like hell and stick to your story.")

I told them: "I don't know much about girls because I've been too busy playing with my pet Bullfrog, Orval."

I continued: "I'll grant you, though, that girls smell better and are more fun to kiss, with some exceptions."

"Splendid response," exulted one examiner. "Sign him up," rhapsodized another, "HE'S OFFICER MATERIAL!"

I passed the test, Bullfrogs notwithstanding, leaving one last hurdle in my path - an eye exam.

My eyes were pretty wiped out after a sleepless night on the train to St. Louis but I navigated through the eye chart, from the big E down to a sprinkle of puzzling fly specks near the bottom. But, what the hell, I felt lucky, so I calmly pronounced them "Q's."

Right then is when my luck ran out. They really WERE fly specks!

As a result, I flunked the eye exam, ending my dream of becoming a Naval aviator.

I was stunned, disbelieving, totally devastated at coming so close and seeing it slip away. I cried going home on the train that night.

Nonetheless, though wobbling a bit in its orbit, my world kept turning. I spent the war in the sur-

face Navy. After that, I flew civilian airplanes for many years.

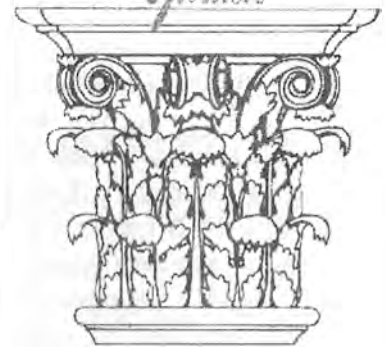
But the bitterness of rejection in St. Louis has never ceased haunting me. Disappointment has a long tail.

Or, as Daddy might have put it, "You may hate the menu but you've got to eat. Shut up your sniveling and come to supper!"

Which I did.

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Mama Dearest

Edited by Leslie Jeffrey

The years prior to WW I were prosperous and peaceful for much of the country. The United States was at the top of the heap in terms of global power. It was a golden age for Huntsville too, and the following excerpts from letters donated to *Old Huntsville Magazine* chronicle the experiences of one family. They also provide fascinating firsthand glimpses into larger events, such as the Judge Lawler murder in Huntsville, and an even larger event, the sinking of the *Titanic*.

Even more revealing are the glimpses into the life-style of the privileged where one was born into money and social prestige.

The Fletcher and Lowe names were well-known in Huntsville a century ago. Mattie Holding ran away from home at the age of 17 to marry B. J. Lowe, with whom she had two sons, Richard and Robert Lowe in 1859 and 1861 respectively. B. J. Lowe died of fever right after the Civil War and in 1867, Mattie married A. S. Fletcher who was vice-president of the 1st National Bank. With A. S. Fletcher, she had four children: W. Holding, Charley, Shelby, and



Mamie Fletcher Coleman. The following excerpts are from letters written by Mamie to her mother and brother Holding.

Nov. 14, 1910 letter addressed to Mrs. A. S. Fletcher, Huntsville from Mamie Fletcher Coleman:

"My dearest Mama, how I wish I could see you tonight! My heart has been full of you all day and of dear Bobbie! I can never tell you how sad I am about him and how I loved him! Everybody did who knew him, but how sad his sickness was and what a trial it was for you. I could not have stood it as you did, I know to see him as he was! Poor dear one, how he suffered mentally as well as physically! It is best though that he should go, he preferred it much to being like he was.

The Bobbie referred to in this letter was Robert Lowe, the second child of Mattie Lowe Fletcher who died November 1, 1910. Bob Lowe had already lost two wives to death and left a son, Robert Jr. who was only seven when his father died.

On January 27, 1912, Mamie Coleman wrote to her mother Mattie from Fort Moultrie, Charleston, South Carolina:

"Mama dearest ... Friday morning an orderly came with a telegram for LeVert. It was from Washington from Col. R. P. Davis who is on the general's staff telling him that the War Dept. wanted a coast artillery officer to go to Brazil as military attache to do some important coast artillery work and wanted to know if he wanted the detail. It is considered a most flattering offer and one which he thought that he could not refuse. He was selected from the whole coast artillery to represent the country in Brazil and to install the artillery there...

Mamie was the youngest child of A. S. and Mattie Fletcher. Her letters indicate that she was a loving and devoted daughter and wife, although somewhat pampered. Years later, her female relatives talked about her with a mixed sense of resentment as well as admiration for her worldly travels.

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Mamie wrote to her mother Mattie from New York on March 26, 1912:

"Mama dearest, ...It is much colder here than at home, but I like it and have enjoyed so much being again in beautiful New York ... After breakfast I went shopping and spent the entire day in selecting and having fitted two dresses ... They are both becoming and were reasonable in price, only \$32.50 and 27.50. I found them ... after looking for them at many other shops. Then I went to Lord and Taylors and happened to find just what I wanted in parasols ... LeVert went to see about his uniforms at Brooks Brothers, his tailors, and was well pleased with them, only they needed to be fitted in several places and I think it very fortunate that we decided to come a day sooner than we at first thought of ... I am going with dearest in a few moments, am to do some little things and get my slippers for my evening gowns. I shall go to Cammayers for them, I like his shop best of all the shoe shops in New York. We have talked of

you my darling every moment almost and of your generous gifts, Mama.

Three days later, she wrote to her brother Holding:

"Your sweet letter reached me yesterday and I was very glad to hear from you and that you had missed me since I left home ... The shops are fine here and I've succeeded in finding some things that I wanted, a white serge suit and black one. Some pretty slipper shoes and two beautiful hats as well as some ornaments for my hair to wear with my evening gowns. The hat is white lined with black velvet with a white plume, the other a black hat with one green plume which will look very nice with my green (?), you remember? I got a hat trunk which is the comfort of my life, it was impossible to pack hats in my other trunk with so many other things, so I'm glad I got it.

The next letter dated March 30, 1912, gives us a clearer picture of her husband's military position as well as stressing the im-

portance of her role in Huntsville's society:

"Mama dearest .. we are just sailing now. We are delighted with the ship and have one of the best cabins on it and are so comfortable ... Now about our going away; you asked me how to have it put in the paper. Just say that we left after a visit home for New York where we boarded the Augusta Victoria of the Hamburg American for Cherbourg, France and after a stop of ten days in Paris, will re-ship on the Capt. Finis Terre of the same line for Rio de Janeiro Brazil where Capt. C [Coleman] goes as military attache to the American Embassy. Must hurry my dearest to catch the pilot as he goes back. Just pulling out of the harbor here, will write you as soon as I reach Paris. In great haste and with much love and kiss for Bob. Devotedly, Daughter.

On May 1, 1912, Mamie Coleman wrote to Mattie Fletcher from Brazil:

"My dearest Mama, We arrived in Rio de Janeiro Saturday, April 27 ... after a fifteen day sail from Boulogne in France ... I supposed you have heard of the terrible accident of the steamer Titanic of the White Star line which ran on an iceberg near Newfoundland which caused the steamer to sink and over a thousand lives were lost. All the papers here full of it - as it was one of the most fearful marine disasters ever known. We were in mid-ocean when we heard of it by wireless, but we could not get many of the particulars and circumstances of it, but I knew it would make you feel anxious as the two were in

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the sea about that time. Colonel John Jacob Astor of New York was among those drowned and also Capt. Archie Butts who is the President's aide and whom we know was lost. He was on a leave and had been to Europe and was returning home! But I suppose Mama dear that you know more of it than I do as you could see the papers and we were on the sea and cut off from communications when it happened...

After settling in Rio de Janeiro, Mamie wrote to her mother on May 17, 1912:

"Mama Dearest, ... we find accommodations much better in Rio than in Petropolis so we have left where we were at first located and are now living at the Latin National Hotel which is the best hotel in Rio though compared with our hotels at home, it is about third class. But the best people come here and it is really the only livable place here ... I should not care to contend with Polynese servants who do not speak a word of English ... It is like our hottest July weather here all the while and this is winter so I do not like to think of what the summer will be! LeVert has been very busy trying to get

his office established so he would have a place for his business which has been very difficult as there was no place provided - things are so slow in this country. People cannot hurry on account of the heat! ... Mama dear, I wrote a letter to Miss McDonnell telling her to send me some things which I find I need very much. Shopping here is almost an impossibility, the prices are three times what they cost at home. I did not have time to get what I needed when I was in New York only four days, then I was sick most of the time in Paris and did not have a chance to shop very much, we were

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there only one week! ... I have written her in detail what I want and told her to have them made for me by the measurements which she has and to ship to me. She can get what I need in Huntsville and I did not know how else to get them from here as the distance is so great. I told her to send the bill to you as it is too far and takes too much time for me to correspond with her. Will you please pay the bill for me Mama dear? I will be so glad if you will. The things I need greatly or I would not order them. You remember the dresses she sent me were so 'dressy' that I cannot wear them except on special occasions ...

On September 11, 1912, Mamie again wrote to her mother:

"My dearest Mama ... Mama I believe I wrote you at length in my last letter all about my losing my hair? The condition of it now is about the same, somewhat better and it has stopped falling so much. I have a quantity of new hair coming in but it is of course very slow but I have so little that I cannot arrange it so I have to wear the transformation yet and for some time to

come. But I have gotten very accustomed to it now and it does not cause me much inconvenience. Otherwise we have both been very well since we have been in this place ... Mama I was so distressed to hear of Annie Richardson Wells being so ill! I do pray that she will recover her health and strength again - It is so sad! I suppose the climate and conditions of the Philppines largely responsible for that. So many go there well and return broken in health ...

The next letter of this collection was written nearly four years later on August 22, 1916 from Mamie to her mother Mattie:

"My darling, I know you will be interested to see from my letter heading that I am in Japan! Am just finishing a most wonderful trip of two months through China and Japan ... Kobe, where I am now, is a port city and I am sailing tomorrow for the Philippines to Manila on one of the Canadian Pacific steamers, The Empress of Russia ... Japan is exquisite, all the country like a beautiful garden and the most picturesque people and customs! The generous

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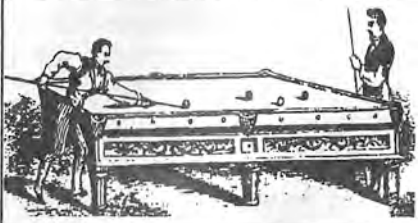


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check Mama dearest, which you sent me and which I received some time ago (in early June I think) enabled me to take this wonderful trip, and I really think I could not have spent it to better advantage, it is really what should be done if one is in the Philippines and can possibly do so! ... I am so anxious to see LeVert. He is a major now, stood a fine examination and passed of course, as I always knew he would do, though he felt uneasy about the result. The recent increase in the army puts him up on the list of majors, so that he almost comes in for his lieutenant colonelcy! There are not so many majors in the Artillery Corps so he won't be long a major! I shall be glad, I want him to have the grade or title of 'Colonel' although it seems to bring age with it, somehow! I got in one of the shops here in Kobe today a "kimono" which is the dress of the Japanese you know for LeVert, just the kind which

is now worn by the high class Japanese gentleman of today! ... In a few days I shall be again in Baguio. He is still stationed there although he thinks he may receive a change of order in the near future and be sent somewhere else in the Philippines for station ... We are so fortunate in not being in the States just now, for if we were it would surely mean service in the borders or in Mexico! I'd so much prefer the Philippines! There is no glory in that Mexican War! ... The religion of the country is Buddhist and Shintoesin, or spirit worship of ancestors! They are, of course, a perfectly heathen people, hence, the missionaries which are here in goodly number!...

was written from Camp John Hay on September 28, 1916:

"My dearest Mama, The last letter I sent to you was from Koki Japan, just before I sailed for Manila. I supposed it has reached you by this time. I am again back at Camp John Hay with LeVert ... since I have been back I have been much amused managing my little house and making it pretty and attractive for LeVert. Putting up my beautiful Chinese draperies and embroidery which I got in China or other little things, fresh curtains, and having everything thoroughly cleaned ... I brought up from Manila a Chinese cook also, and he is a good one, and we are keeping house well and enjoy it very much. We have been going

The last letter in this collection

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to the club for meals most of the time since we have been here and I am so glad to keep house again. It is a pleasure when you have a good cook. I try to have the table as nice as possible and good things to eat. LeVert enjoys it so much. The heavy and constant rains make it so disagreeable to go out for meals. I wish you could see my cute little Pekinese dog which I got in Peking. It is a dear little white and brown dog and very Chinese in appearance. They are all the fashion in New York but are easy to get in Peking. Japan is exquisite. A little country, everything is miniature like the little people!

... Mama I was shocked beyond expression by the news which reached us through the papers which you sent from home of the frightful murder of Judge Lawler! The Probate Judge! ... I never heard of anything so frightful, so horrible! It is a reflection on the entire community! The state where such a thing could occur among a respectable people! And poor, poor

Shelby Pleasant's suicide! He was not in his right mind surely to take his own life! My heart goes out to his poor grief-stricken mother! Who are the guilty ones? Have they yet been brought to justice! Was Earl Smith implicated? Or was Overton the policeman responsible? Write me the outcome of it all!

LeVert said that he had rec'd a letter from his mother while I was away on my trip in which she said that Ella Van Valkenburgh had committed suicide! Is that true? ... It is indeed sad, but I was not at all surprised for her way of living could lead no other way! In fact I've often said I'd not be surprised to hear of her tragic end in some way! "The wages of sin is death!" Poor girl! ... LeVert just came in after his day's work and has had his evening bath, it is now six o'clock. We have dinner at seven so I must see to it on the table.

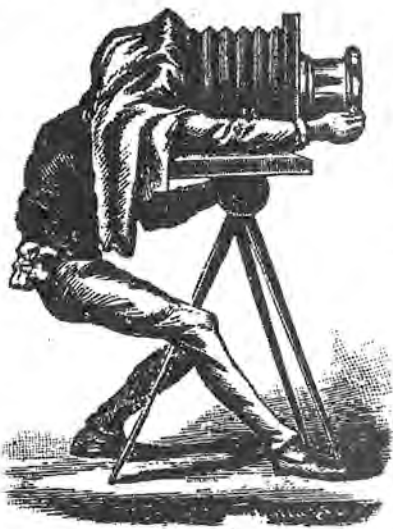
Mama darling you know I wrote you from Japan that we had received the draft, one for LeVert and one for me some months ago. It came from the

bank in New York all right to our bank in Manila and we were notified at once. It was with that I took my beautiful trip to China! I got it, I think sometime in April last. It came all right. One draft read \$250.00 for me and \$250.00 for LeVert.

... I am sending Florence a Mandarin coat from China which I hope she will like to wear as a wrap for evening. They are the rage here and much admired! Will write soon again. Tell Holding I enjoy the home papers so much. Please send them often. Good bye dearest one of my heart. With all my love, ever your devoted daughter.

Mamie Fletcher Coleman died December 2, 1939. Her mother, Mattie Holding Lowe Fletcher preceded her in death by eight years.

It doesn't matter that you can't dance, if you at least get up and try.
Dave Berry



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Preacher Vows To Continue Revival Until Sign Is Given

Rev. J. H. Newberry, who is conducting revival meetings in the big tent at the Calhoun lot, says that Huntsville has many influences for evil. He has directed his batteries at the popular amusements of the city and says that the picture shows, the skating rinks and the natatorium should not be tolerated by the Christian parents of this city.

He said that the mothers who allow their daughters to go to the rinks and roll on the skates there are allowing them to run the risk of rolling on into hell. He said that the bathing pool and the picture shows have influences against social purity. He promises to continue in his denunciations until he receives a sign telling him to stop.

Two weeks later the following article appeared.

Revival Services Canceled Due To Storm

The gospel tent that has been put up in the Calhoun lot for the evangelistic services that were to have begun Sunday afternoon, was blown down in the storm of Sunday afternoon, an hour or two before the services were scheduled to begin. It was impossible to open services then. Preacher Newberry is spending the time working on new sermons.

From 1907 newspaper

Notes from New Hope

Jere Giles had his foot cut off while his sister was cutting firewood. A laborer under the employ of Henry Edwards lost three fingers on his right hand in an untimely accident.

Uncle Ben Kenamer's leg was amputated after an unfortunate illness. The bodies of two unidentified persons were found by the Sunday school class while participating in their annual fishing expedition on the banks of the beautiful Paint Rock river.

Otherwise all is fine.

from 1898 newspaper

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Hoover Days

by Ruby Crabbe

I fully agree with Jan Street when she brought forth the "Hoover Day Memories." Times were hard back in the Depression days of 1929. People were called "well-to-do" if they could have two bowls of Hoover Gravy for Sunday breakfast instead of one bowl. The kids called gravy "cob soo;" their parents called it "growing mash." Tasted pretty good if you had a nice slab of steak or lean to go with it.

Our mama, Josie Allen, had the prettiest, cleanest floors in Dallas Village. Or, at least, we kids thought she did. On floor scrubbing day, she would send us to the ball park where Rison School had



ball games. A big ditch ran alongside of the ball field and in that ditch we would get a big sack of sand, carry it home, sprinkle it on the floor, and lightly scrub with clear water. A lot of people wondered how Mama had such clean floors. And, I remember a lot of people bragging on Mama's silverware. Her little secret of having sparkling clean silverware was also unique. She would take the silverware, find a nice clean spot in our yard, and everyone of us would take one piece of silverware at a time and stick it down in the ground and rub it up and down, up and down. Then Mama would take all the silverware back into the house, wash it with scalding water, rinse it real good and then dry it, piece by piece, with a dish towel. That silverware, after all those many years ago, is still as bright and shiny as the first day it was bought.

Oh, yes, the Hoover Days during the Depression were hard on

everyone, but that didn't dampen the spirit of us kids hatching up jokes to pull on people. Bill Jaco lived next door to us on Rison Avenue, and he could always come up with a good joke on someone or a good laugh for everyone. I remember the day he made the finest, "street car" dummy you've ever seen. That's the first dummy and the last dummy I've ever seen that looked so alive. On Stevens Avenue and 5th Street (renamed Andrew Jackson Way), a bench was placed next to a big tree so the street car would-be riders would have a place to sit while waiting for the street car.

When Bill caught that bench empty, he placed his dummy up right on the bench. There that look-alive dummy sat—legs crossed, work shoes on, hat pulled down over his eyes as if taking a nap, or resting his stomach from eating so much Hoover gravy. He looked more like a man resting from a hard day's work. I declare, he looked more alive than a lot of people who had occupied that bench. Bill was in hiding behind that tree when the dummy's first victim ascended next to him. A little old lady, bless her heart—I never did find out who she was, but she spoke to that dummy, "Nice day, isn't it, sir." Not getting a response, she leaned over to-

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ward the dummy to speak again, but her movement shook the bench and off the dummy went right on top of her feet. With a whoop and a holler, she came off that bench, and down the street she went like a whirlwind that knew no direction. She was yelling, "dead man, dead man," and gaining speed with every word. And, I'll never be able to describe the speed Bill made in gathering his dummy up and dragging it back down the street toward home. Let me tell you, it was fast!

Minutes later, an ambulance drove up, followed by the biggest crowd of people you've ever seen. People were coming up the street, down the street, across the street, and a few seemed to appear out of nowhere. After a lot of questioning, searching and hunting, the ambulance left and the crowd slowly disappeared. A lot of people, after all those years, are still wondering about the "dead man's" disappearance. What I've wondered about after all these many years is where in the world did the little old lady go.

How to Give Your Cat a Pill



1. Pick your cat up and cradle it gently in your arm as if holding a little baby. Position your right forefinger and thumb on either side of cat's mouth and gently apply pressure to cheeks while holding pill in right hand. As cat opens mouth, pop pill right in there.

2. Retrieve pill from floor and cat from behind bed. Cradle cat in left arm and repeat process.

3. Retrieve cat from under sofa, and throw soggy pill away.

4. Take new pill from wrap, cradle cat in left arm holding rear paws tightly with your left hand. Open jaws and push pill to back of mouth with right forefinger.

5. Retrieve pill from goldfish bowl and cat from top of wardrobe. Call spouse to help.

6. Kneel on floor with cat wedged firmly between knees, holding front and rear paws. Ignore low growls emitted by cat. Get your spouse to hold the cat's head firmly with one hand while forcing popsicle stick into mouth. Drop pill down stick and rub cat's throat vigorously.

7. Retrieve cat from curtain rail, get another pill from foil wrap. Make note to buy more pills and to get curtain repaired.

8. Wrap cat in large towel and get spouse to lie on cat with its head just visible from below spouse's armpit. Put pill in at end of drinking straw and with cat's mouth open, blow pill into mouth with a small puff of air.

9. Drink glass of water to take the taste away. Apply band-aid to spouse's forearm and remove

blood from carpet with cold water and soap.

10. Get cat from neighbor's shed, get another pill. Place cat in cupboard and close door gently over neck so just the head is showing. Open cat's mouth with dessert spoon, flick pill down throat with rubber band.

11. Fetch screwdriver from garage and put cupboard door back on its hinges. Apply compress to spouse's cheek and check records for date of late tetanus shot.

12. Call the fire department to get cat out of tree across the street. Apologize to neighbor who crashed into the fence while trying to avoid hitting the cat. Take last pill from foil wrap.

13. Tie cat's front paws to rear paws with pantyhose and open cat's mouth, push pill into mouth followed by piece of filet steak. Hold head vertically and pour ½ pint of water down throat to wash pill down.

14. Get spouse to drive you to the emergency room; sit quietly while the doctor stitches fingers and forearms and removes pill remnants from right eye. Stop by furniture store on way home to order new table.

15. Call vet to arrange for her to make a house call.

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Always A Gentleman

by Jim Hegney

Jefferson Davis was a man of many accomplishments. Distinguished Mexican War veteran, son-in-law of U.S. President Zachary Taylor, Senator from Mississippi, U.S. Secretary of War, and President of the Confederacy, Jefferson was above all, a complete gentleman. He had treated his slaves with kindness, even allowing them to run their own affairs in a democratic fashion. Davis was also noted for his love of affairs of a somewhat different nature.

The handsome Davis' eye for the ladies was hinted at in mid-19th century America, though he generally kept his liaisons discrete. Mary Chestnut hinted at them in her diary in the 1860s, and there are occasional rumors of his love life in other contemporary sources. One time, however, Jeff Davis let down his guard completely. The incident took place on the Memphis-Charleston Railroad during a trip to Huntsville. This time it actually made it into national newspapers. It was the summer of 1871 and the War Between the States had been over for six years. The Confederate President had been arrested at the close of the war and held captive in a veritable dungeon until his release was gained by prominent figures, both North and South. No sooner had Davis been freed from his dreary prison cell than he began his journey back to Mississippi, where his wife patiently awaited him. Surprisingly, Davis interrupted his return to visit some old friends in Madison



County. Davis left the train at Gurley's Tank and found a local Confederate veteran to guide him to his friends' home. The hugging and kissing that greeted Davis' arrival, wrote the veteran, beat anything that he had ever seen. His wife, a prominent local belle seemed especially glad to see Davis. Her husband who had been imprisoned with Davis, appears not to objected (or perhaps suspected?)

Now, in July of 1871, the Confederate President was on his way to Huntsville from Memphis. He had been staying at the Peabody Hotel. As the Louisville Daily Commercial reported it, "The distinguished ex-President and present insurance president was kind enough to honor with his protection and fatherly care the handsome wife of a gentleman who boarded at the Overton Hotel."

At 6:30 p.m., Davis and his companion boarded the M & C night train for Huntsville. Two hours later, the former President directed the porter to prepare the sleeping berths. Davis told the man to ready the lower berth for the lady. He would gallantly take the upper berth. The Louisville paper noted the passengers were somewhat surprised that the famous gentleman wished to retire so early, but no one said a word. "The lady retired to the lower couch," said the Dally Commercial, "and the form of the distinguished ex-President, partially disrobed, was seen to ascend in a dignified manner to the upper

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berth."

As the train rolled on towards Huntsville, however, "the curtains which hid the form of the distinguished ex-President from the gaze of his fellow passengers were seen to sway and bulge outward. A form descended cautiously from the upper berth, and dropped into the lower one." This was, after all, the Victorian era, and many a jaw dropped in disbelief. Some inconsiderate individual actually scurried off to inform the sleeping car's conductor, a man named Hess.

Ex-President or not, the conductor had to maintain the Pullman Company's strict rules. He approached the birth and spoke quietly, but firmly, "Mr. Davis, you cannot be permitted to do this, Sir. You must take another berth." Jeff Davis reportedly replied, "It's none of your business, Sir. I decline to leave. I have paid for both these berths, and will occupy the one I choose." Hess continued to protest, but Davis would not be moved. "The lady discretely turned her face," said the newspaper, "and took no part in the discussions."

Hess waited a full half hour for the Confederate President to return to his upper berth. But Davis did no such thing.

Finally, Hess notified the conductor of the train, a Mr. Miller. Hess and Miller then went to confront the aging Romeo. "Mr. Davis" said Miller. "We can't allow this kind of conduct on this train. You must take another berth, sir, immediately!"

At last realizing the attention he was attracting, Jefferson Davis knew he had reached his Appomattox. He quietly surrendered, "in deep disgust," said the newspapers, and retired to spend the rest of the night alone.

The conductors later reported

the incident to the assistant superintendent of the railroad, a Mr. Ryan. Ryan angrily passed the tale on to the Memphis & Charleston's superintendent. However, the railroad agreed that it was best simply to let the matter drop.

Davis and his companion continued on to Huntsville, and apparently nothing more was ever said about the incident. However, tongues must have wagged in our city since the secret could hardly be kept once had it appeared in the papers. (Understandably, Huntsville's newspapers refused to carry the account.)

Speculated the Louisville Daily Commercial. Perhaps Jefferson Davis "might have deemed it his duty as President of the Southern Life Insurance Company to devote his personal attention to the safety of the 'lady under his charge.' That in case of accident his insurance company might not suffer. Possibly the husband of the lady who was so kindly protected by the distinguished et cetera will view it in this light."

The lady's husband, however, had never really recovered from his prison ordeal and spent most of his remaining years seeking solace in the bottle, which possibly explains his wife's conduct. The man died comparatively young not long afterwards.

Oh. The distinguished woman's name? Well, Jefferson Davis would never tell on a lady.

And neither will I.

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