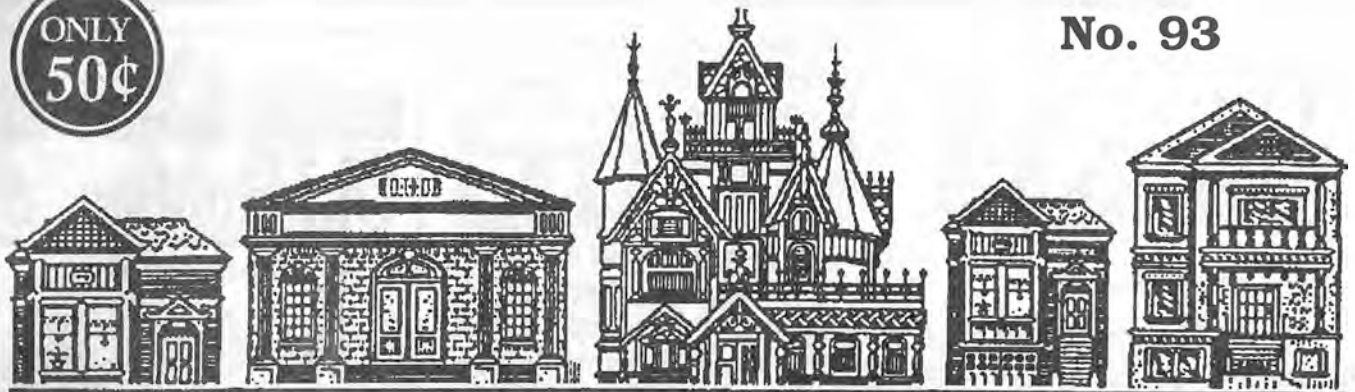


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No. 93



Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY



The Klan Rags

The Ku Klux Klan was all powerful in Huntsville. It controlled the politicians, made its own laws and had its own judges and juries.

No one dared oppose them except for one young Jewish emigrant who worked as a rag dealer.

He had traveled thousands of miles to come to the land of the free and no one was going to take his dream away from him.

If Louis Miller had to fight for the right to call Huntsville his home he was ready.

Also in this issue: "The Alabama Slave Code"

The Klan Rags

by Larry Weiss

When Louis Miller, owner of the Tennessee Poultry and Hide Company, arrived at work one morning sometime in the 1920s his attention was riveted by a crude handwritten notice nailed to the front door. "GET OUT OF TOWN. [signed] KU KLUX KLAN."

Feelings of shock, anger and disappointment clouded his mind as he read and then reread the scrap of paper.

He had thought America was going to be different.

Many years later Miller told his son Buddy, how he felt after he read the notice: "I was mad as hell. I had traveled half way around the world to find a place where I could live in freedom, and I'll be damned if I was going to let those sons of b.....s run me out of Huntsville!"

Miller had immigrated to the United States in 1913. "Ever since I could remember, I wanted to leave Russia and come to America," he would tell his children in later years. In the Czar's Russia, Jews were periodically attacked by anti-Semitic thugs who stole property, burned homes and businesses, and vented their hate by murdering Jews. Louis only had a seventh grade educa-

tion by the time he arrived in New York because anti-Jewish quotas in Minsk schools prevented him during some years from attending class.

Miller later said that the most beautiful sight he had ever seen was the Statue of Liberty as the ship which brought him to the United States pulled into the harbor of New York. The statue represented a dream that he had ever since he was "old enough to think." He wanted to come to this country, and now he was here. Freedom from quotas and murdering gangs. Here he was in America!

His father had been a Melamed in Minsk, Russia - a teacher who taught young boys Hebrew. It was an honorable profession, but very poorly paid. Just before Louis left Minsk to come to America, his father said to him: "We have a lot of famous Rabbis and people well known in our family. If you change your name as most people do when they go to America, nobody will know who you are."

Label Mishkind - Louis Miller's name at birth - promised his dad that he wouldn't change his name in America. It turned out, though, that Label couldn't keep his promise. He stayed with his older brother in Brooklyn who had already Americanized his own name to "Miller" when he first came to this country. Before Label could speak English people had already started calling him "Louis Miller"



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because of his brother. After some time, Label Mishkind legally changed his name to Louis Miller because everybody called him that anyway.

Miller thrived in the freedom of the new land. By day he worked for his brother who owned a small candy store, and by night he went to school to learn English and take citizenship classes. Patiently, he studied, worked and saved his money, determined to become an American citizen. He had already fulfilled the dream for which generations of his family had prayed - he was in a country where a person was judged by his own merit and free to practice his own religious beliefs.

After a few years in New York, Louis ventured out to Paris, Tennessee, to visit a sister who lived there. His first exposure to Southern culture came as somewhat of a shock. He later laughed as he

told the story of how people he passed in the railroad station would smile and say, "Good morning, how are you." As he walked down the street complete strangers greeted him in a friendly manner. This was quite unusual, but certainly pleasant for the young emigrant.

Miller chuckled in later years as he remembered his feelings, "I thought I must have looked like somebody they know, otherwise they wouldn't be speaking to me. In New York people who lived next door to each another rarely spoke to one another, much less complete strangers."

After Miller realized it had not been a case of mistaken identity, but rather that the South was simply a friendlier place than New York, he decided to settle here. Traveling down to Decatur, Alabama, he quickly found a job, and sent his brother a telegram ask-

ing him to pack up his stuff and send it south.

Hard work and attention to details soon made Miller a prized employee, and when his boss purchased another company in Huntsville in 1918, he asked Miller to manage it for him. The company, named the Tennessee Poultry and Hide Company, dealt in items such as poultry, hides, eggs, furs, wild roots, scrap iron, and wiping rags. The store quickly became a boon to the community and began to prosper. For many of the rural farmers it proved to be a blessing in the off season when they were unable to farm. Whole families would gather ginseng and run trap lines for furs which Miller bought, often providing the only income they had during the winter months.

The community soon learned that Miller was a fair man, paying fair prices and keeping his word.

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In time, his reputation literally became the business, a fact that his employer probably realized when he agreed to sell the company to Miller.

Louis Miller was an asset to his adopted hometown. He joined the local Temple, became active in community affairs and was an outspoken advocate of the individual right to freedom.

Unfortunately he was so outspoken he soon came to the attention of the local Ku Klux Klan.

Huntsville's original Klan had been founded in 1867 as a means to combat the consequences of Reconstruction. In 1872, after a Congressional hearing held in Huntsville exposed many of its brutalities, the Klan disbanded only to rear its ugly head again in the early 1900s in response to the release of the film, "Birth of a Nation."

By 1920 the Klan had become a powerful organization in Huntsville. They had their own laws and government and even conducted their own trials. They had become, as one historian put it so aptly, "the invisible government."

Businessmen felt they had to belong in order to do business, and politicians felt they had to

belong in order to do politics. Even if you did not agree with them, the local wisdom was that it was better to keep your mouth shut. In a perverse fairness it must be stated that the local Klan did not discriminate - they hated everyone equally - Blacks, Jews, foreigners, and Northerners.

Miller fitted most of the above criteria, a fact that the Klan quickly realized.

Louis Miller hated the Klan, and he publicly took issue with them. He simply could not understand how, in a land of the free, a group of bigoted night-riders could intimidate a whole community. In his anger at the Klan he said in public more than a few times that, one day, he was going to buy those Klan robes and tear them up into wiping rags.

He had no idea at the time of how prophetic his words would prove. Miller's threats infuriated the Klan who soon put out word that he was a marked man.

After finding the Klan eviction notice on his door, Miller sent word to the Klan leaders that if they came after him, he would be ready for them. At five-foot-four he was not physically a very imposing man, and he wasn't really

a very good shot, either. However, at that time there was a shooting gallery next door to the Tennessee Poultry and Hide Company. Every day Louis visited the gallery, plunked down his money, and practiced shooting with rifles and pistols. After a while he became a superb marksman, a fact he made sure that everyone knew. He also made sure that the Klan realized that if they came after him, they might get him, but they were likely to lose some of their own in the process.

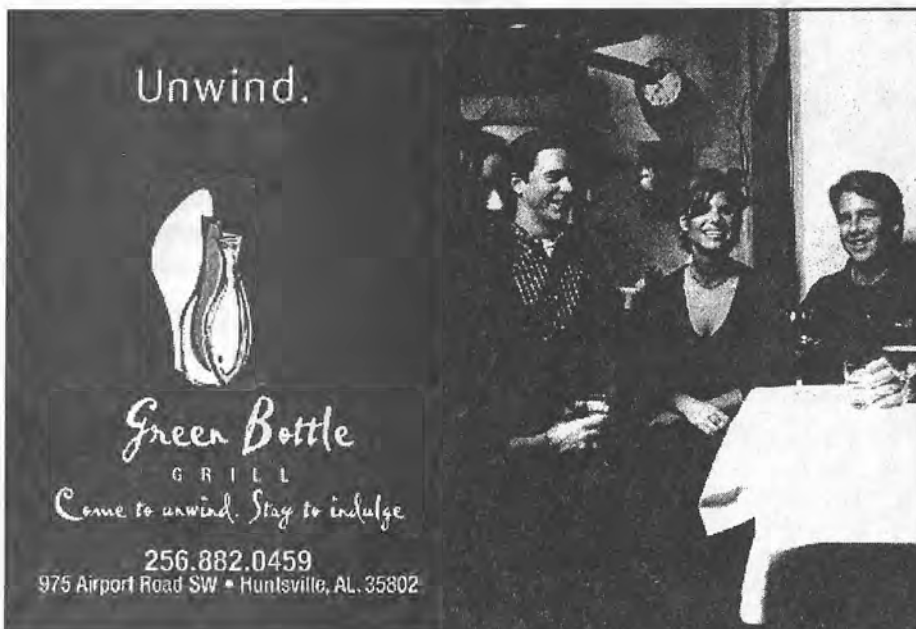
Still, despite his bravado, he realized the danger. He constantly kept a gun close by, at work and at home. His orders to his wife were: "If anybody knocks at night when I am not at home, don't open the door." Not knowing when the Klan might come after him, Miller would answer the door with a rifle or pistol in hand.

The citizens of Huntsville probably expected a bloody confrontation, most likely ending with someone lying dead in the streets, but suddenly, for no apparent reason, the Klan stopped its harassment of Miller. It would be years before he ever knew the reason why.


Miller had a few friends and business acquaintances who were also members of the Klan, and it was one of them who eventually told him the whole story.

The Huntsville Klan had put Louis Miller on trial in absentia at a special Klan meeting called for that purpose. Louis was charged with speaking in public against the Klan. Among other specific examples, he was charged with insulting the Klan by threatening repeatedly in public to tear its robes into wiping rags.

The trial was a major event in the local Klan community. Both a prosecuting attorney and a defense attorney were designated.



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A black and white photograph of three people (two men and one woman) sitting at a table in a restaurant setting, smiling and looking towards the camera.

The man who eventually told Louis the story offered to serve as defense attorney. Klan members in the hall were the jury.

When it came time during the trial for the defense attorney to say his piece, he argued, "I've known Louis Miller for a number of years. In fact I've known him ever since he came to Huntsville. He left Russia to find a place of freedom - I know that because he told me. Yes, he is in disagreement with the Klan. Louis Miller has a right to speak against us just as any other American does. He even has the right to speak against his government, but he is speaking against the Klan. I don't find that to be anything he should be put on trial for. I don't think it is wrong."

During his summation the defense attorney made his point as strongly as he could: "I joined the Klan because I thought it was a worthwhile organization but, I'm submitting my resignation from the Klan tonight, because I don't feel like it is the kind of organization I need to belong to."

He did resign, and eventually he told Louis about the trial. In part because one solitary person had dared to oppose the Klan, it quickly began losing public support. Members drifted away and in a few years the Huntsville Klan had almost disappeared.

The story might have ended there if it had not been for a phone call Miller received in the early 1930s.

"Louie, are you still dealing in wiping rags?"

Miller, thinking it was just another business call in an already hectic day replied, "Yes, if the price is right."

The caller went on to explain the purpose of his call. "I've been renting a meeting hall to the Ku Klux Klan, but they haven't been

active for a couple of years and they haven't been paying any rent. I'm going to have to rent it to somebody else, but I got a bunch of their old robes on the floor in a pile in the meeting hall, and I was just wondering if you would be interested in buying them."

Remembering his threats years earlier to sell the Klan's robes as wiping rags, he tried to control his excitement. "Where are you now?" asked Miller.

The caller replied, "I'm at the meeting hall," and gave Louis the address. The rag buyer was already grabbing for his hat and coat as he yelled into the phone, "Don't you leave! I'll be there in ten min-

utes. I'll buy them from you. I'll buy them all from you!"

On the short trip to the now defunct meeting hall he began having second thoughts about the price, "I want to buy them, but there's only so much I can pay for them to make them into wiping rags." But then he thought about what was really important to him. "It doesn't make any difference," he thought to himself, "no matter what he wants for them, I'm going to pay that. I'm going to get them. I'm going to do what I said I was going to do."

So Louis Miller, Jewish dealer in wiping rags, soon showed up at the former Klan meeting hall

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to buy a pile of Klan robes. With little dickering, the deal was struck. They shook hands with Louis telling the seller, "I'll send two or three men to the hall in about an hour to pick up the robes and I'll send you a check today."

Actually, if it had not been for the hate the robes represented they would have been quite attractive. Made out of white linen, the robes were decorated with large colorful embroidered dragons and Celtic crosses.

If people were wondering what a Jewish dealer wanted with Klan robes they soon found the answer. Every morning Miller would have an employee push a pallet loaded with Klan robes out to the space between the sidewalk and the street. They would remain there all day, every day as a reminder to people of what the robes really were - simply a pile of discarded rags.

Miller often sat in his office watching the reactions of people as they walked by. The robes were in a pile, but you could tell what they were because all of the embroidered Klan emblems. Some people would stare. Some would do a double-take. Some people simply hung their heads and pretended not to see the pile.

After a couple of months of dis-

playing the robes, a friend of Miller's called. "Louie," the friend said, "I know that you said you were going to buy these robes and make them into wiping rags, and I know you've had a lot of fun displaying them. But, you know, I was a member of the Klan. Don't you think you've had enough fun with those robes now?"

Miller responded to his friend's question with a question of his own:

"Let me ask you this; are you asking me, or are you telling me?" His friend gently, and probably sheepishly, replied, "I'm asking you."

Louis said, "Well, OK, but if you were "telling" me, those

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2. Harvie Jones Retrospective, Vol. II by Historic Huntsville Quarterly of Local Architecture & Preservation (\$6.00).
3. History of Jackson County, Alabama by John Robert Kenamer, Sr., \$25.00.
4. Shadows On The Wall: The life and works of Howard Weeden, \$15.95..
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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damn things would stay on display for years! But we'll take them in and I'll do what I said I'd do with them."

One day, shortly after he agreed to stop displaying the robes, Louis received a call from a widow woman who was a friend of his and who had heard about the robes.

"Louie," she asked, "what are you going to do with the embroidered emblems?"

"Well, I guess I'll have to take those off before we make them into wiping rags." The robes were made out of first class white cotton, and they would make a premium grade of wiping rag.

The widow woman then explained her proposition. "If you send those uniforms out to my house, I'll take the emblems off them, and all you'll have to do is wash them and tear them up into wiping rags. I won't charge you anything, but I want the emblems."

Miller quickly agreed to the deal and had an employee take the robes out to her house.

One day, long after Louis got the robes back without the emblems, and long after all the Klan robes had been torn into wiping rags, Louis got a call from his friend, the widow woman. "Come by the house sometime and I'll show you what I did with the emblems."

A few hours later Miller was standing in the ladies house, in awe of her creation. Transforming the symbols of hate into a thing of beauty, she had sewn a gorgeous patchwork quilt out of the emblems. The biggest emblem was in the middle, surrounded by the next biggest emblems, and those surrounded by the next biggest in swirling, colorful profusion to the very edges of the quilt. As he stared at the

women's extraordinary creation he said, half to himself, "you know, I would haver never thought that something so bad could be turned into something so beautiful."

The daughter of the woman who made the quilt now has it, and she still lives in Huntsville. Louis Miller, the young man who emigrated from Russia in search of freedom, died in 1966. The Tennessee Poultry and Hide Company is now known as L. Miller & Son, Inc., and is operated by Louis' son, Buddy, and Buddy's son, Sol.

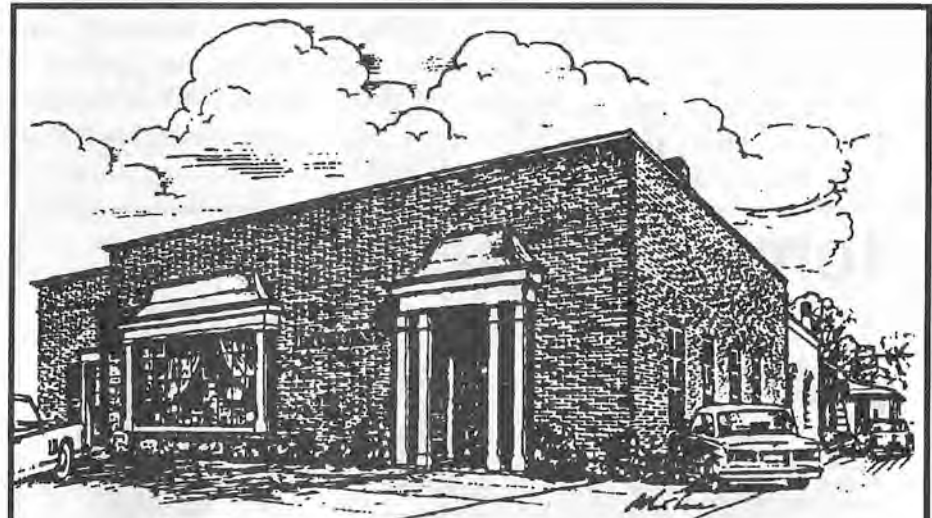


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Growing Up Southern

by Fred Ashcraft

John J. resembled an over-anxious cockroach, probably the consequence of snorting embalming fluid while growing up in his father's funeral parlor, located in the small Southern town of our boyhood.

He had matured into a despicably bona fide Evil Genius by the arising of the singular episode of Miss Gates and her Beckoning Bedroom Window.

Miss Gates taught seventh grade. As a teacher she reminded you of Gracie Allen. She countered by being drop-dead beautiful with a tendency to favor tight sweaters and short skirts.

Miss Gates, who occupied a



room next to John J's on the top floor of the funeral home, soon evidenced a further tendency - neglect about pulling her shades!

Noting this provident dereliction, John J. convened his fellow degenerates, to discuss ways and

means of maximizing our viewing prospects.

Any such concepts were biased by the fact that the windows of John J. and Miss Gates, although adjacent, were six feet apart and 15 feet above the ground.

Slick the Primal, a no-frills throwback to the Paleolithic, advocated kicking down her door and marching in like Storm Troopers for a close-up presentation.

Moderate Marvin eschewed such barbarism, maintaining it (1) lacked finesse and (2) heightened the probability we'd spend the rest of our lives in the seventh grade.

Reluctantly agreeing, we settled on a course suggested by John J., the Evil One. He rigged a mirror on a cane pole and extended the mirror in front of Miss Gates' window.

The view it provided was sublime until John J. in his zeal, leaned too far out the window and took a head first power dive earthward, whereupon the cane pole stabbed the driveway and lofted John J. into a world-class pole vault onto an adjoining lawn.

We all sped to his rescue, including Miss Gates, drawn by the commotion and frantically running to and fro in her scanties, providing an unrestricted view which totally trivialized our previous observations.

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The hubbub turned deathly quiet when Miss Gates, no dummy, put two-and-two together. Her eyes spat blue ice as she smiled at us with the cordiality of a Cobra.

"Take a good look boys," she invited, pirouetting prettily, "Because you'll spend the next semester paying for the view. And also because I dearly want you to always remember how you have humiliated me."

We watched in silence as she marched away, head erect, a trace of extra waggle to her stride.

The ensuing semester in her class verily did seem 10 years long, although she never referred to the debacle. Even so, I made a shabby grade because it's tough to be a scholar when you can't look your teacher in the eye.

Miss Gates left town after that year. I never knew what became of her. I always wanted to catch up with her someday and tell her that I learned things from her about dignity and pride - and scanties - that she didn't teach me in school.



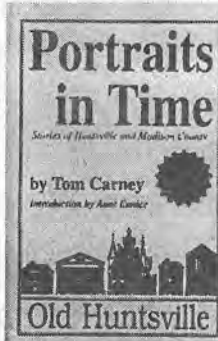
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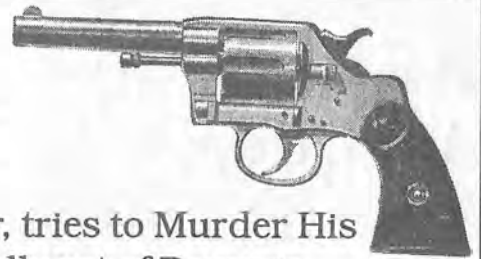
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Her Teeth Saved Her



John Underwood, Miser, tries to Murder His Sweetheart in Dastardly act of Revenge

As the result of a bad quarrel growing out of jealousy, John Underwood, a local miser, shot his sweetheart, Mary Pratt, in Huntsville on Saturday.

The bullet entered her mouth at close range and the woman fell to the floor, but soon arose and spit out the leaden missile, together with two teeth which it had knocked out upon entering. Otherwise she seemed unhurt. Supposing that he had killed her, Underwood fled as soon as she fell. Some say that her teeth, which were sizable, saved her from a sure death.

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A Tribute To My Dad, Marshall Derting

By Garland Derting



If you ever needed to unload your troubles and get them back with a silver lining, you needed to pull up a chair and talk to my dad for a spell.

His schooling didn't come from classroom books, some say my dad was sixty percent lawyer and forty percent horse trader. My talks with Dad will always be branded in my mind. He was gifted with his knowledge of speech. When Dad spoke of his life's journeys his mind and heart drew a picture. With every word he spoke you could see the subject he spoke of. If he told of being in cold weather the cold wind brought a chill to your body. When dad talked of his Hobo adventures I would clear my eyes and get ready to see our great country. When he spoke of going for days without food my stomach would growl and get all knotty.

I was always a homely boy, my

own travels would cover four states, and that would be in the comfort of a greyhound bus. But Dad seen to it that I would see our big country without leaving home. When he talked of his journeys I saw them all through a box car door. He showed me the tumble weed spaces. I walked through windy city Chicago and he pointed out certain spots of the Big Apple he knew. And in some lonely spots the silence would be broken by a chugging train creeping up a steep grade.

I pulled a sack in the cotton

fields of Mississippi and shucked corn in the fields of Ohio. I saw the Great Smoky Mountains with a beauty that no artist has captured.

All these things I have seen as my dad spoke. I have stood on a busy New York corner asking a stranger for a handout. I have faced the danger working on the Hoover Dam. I picked fruit in California and took shelter in a Kentucky barn from a cold wind. For weeks my home trailed behind a long freight. A sip of Jack Daniel put me to sleep as I listened to the click of the rails. And I can almost see a man of the world asleep under the Texas sky.

And when I get a desire to re-live all these adventures I pull up a chair and day dream of my dad that let the howl of the wind move his restless heart to follow distant roads that led to cold hard rails.

The best thing about having stoves is that we can always clean them when we don't know what else to do.

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Cavalry Troop Now Has More Men Than Are Needed

Local Cavalry Will Be Mustered In Monday - Ordered To Camp For Full Training

Hurrah for Huntsville! The new cavalry troop now has more than the minimum amount of men and more are signing every day. There are more than seventy-five men who have signed all necessary papers and are now members of the First Alabama Cavalry.

The boys will begin to draw their salaries beginning next Monday night, September 18th, at which time they will be mustered in by Major R. E. Steiner and Captain Roberts.

The men will all assemble in the event house and await the organization by these officers. Then they will drill once a week until ordered to go to the training camp to complete their training as to the duties of a soldier.

Secretary Aiken of the of the local Chamber of Commerce will be on hand to render all the assistance he can and will at the regular meeting of that body to-

night do what he can to have an understanding with the businessmen of this city who will no doubt agree to give the boys their jobs back when they come back from the training camp.

One businessman said yesterday he was glad Huntsville had succeeded in obtaining a military organization. It is a protection to the town of all sorts of riots and disorders. Cavalry has never yet been called out to protect a negro against a mob, and that is one reason we are glad Huntsville has a cavalry company, but nobody expects to see anything of the sort here.

America first is the way they look at it and they all give the boys their old positions. Many corporations are paying their men their regular salaries and the men are also drawing pay from the government.

The Huntsville troop will assemble in the event house at 7:30 Monday, September 18. Everybody will be there.

*(Taken from a 1904
Huntsville newspaper)*

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Letters To The Editor



Dear Editor,

I would like to take this opportunity to tell you how much I enjoy your magazine. I am not a native of this area but have been living here for over 30 years. Some of the material brings back memories, but most of the articles are brand new and in some cases they explain things I had heard about but did not have all the information. I think you perform a great public service to the city and people of Huntsville by making us aware of the history of our community. The recent publicity about the cemetery under Huntsville Hospital is a good example. Thank you for your work.

Beverly Ashford, Huntsville

Dear Editor,

While visiting my hometown over the holidays it was brought

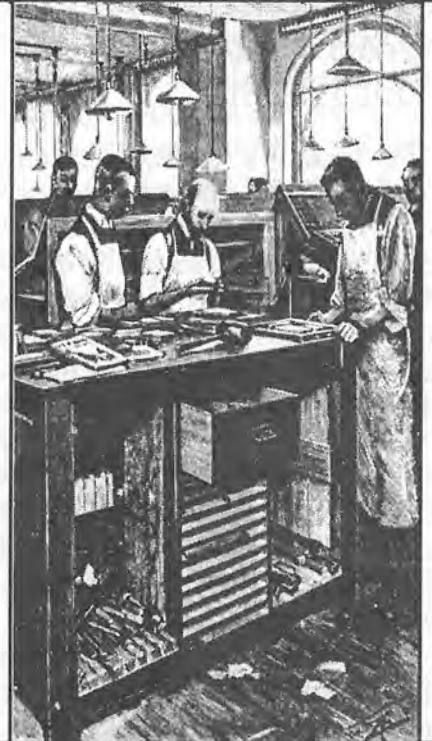
to my attention the stories you write of Huntsville, one especially about Redstone Arsenal. I was just a teenager when they moved the soldiers into the arsenal. I met a soldier and married him. Later he was discharged, and we moved back to his hometown. I also read the story about Booger town - it was a very well written story, but I don't remember the part about the mill houses. I remember the houses that were all built under one roof. My sister and I used to go to the movies at the Center Theater and if we walked home we had to pass Booger town and we would run all the way scared to death. Don't recall what we were scared of-- just some old stories about it perhaps. I enjoy reading about all the stories. Keep on writing.

*Betty Williams Gordon
Jacksonville, Fla.*

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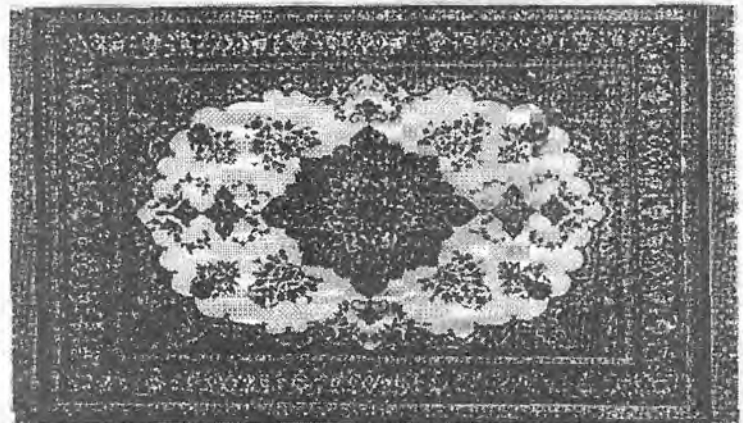
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From Around the World



Absurd News

From a 1935 Chicago newspaper: George Pajala, a 45-year-old Polish immigrant, began experiencing severe abdominal pains, and with no money for surgery, George decided to operate on himself. Taking his pocket knife, he made a 4-inch incision and drew forth several inches of his intestines. Mr. Pajala then cut off the part which he thought was causing the pain, and tried to thrust the rest back into place. Failing that, and growing weaker, he finally sought medical help. Doctors removed his inflamed appendix, patched him up and sent him home.

Henry Kleine, a Kentucky confectioner, has built a "tree of a thousand wishes" out of 1,000 wishbones he saved from the wild and tame fowl on which his family has dined for the past 35 years.

In Fox Lake, Illinois, a 28 year old man was throwing a 1/4 stick of dynamite into the lake to catch fish. The explosive floated back under the boat and exploded, blowing a hole in the bottom of the boat. A friend in the boat swam to shore, but the fisherman, who wasn't wearing a life jacket and couldn't swim, drowned.

In Wichita, Kansas, a 22 year old man was arrested at the airport for trying to pass \$32.00 in counterfeit bills. The clerk was suspicious of the two 16-dollar bills.

From the Greeneville Herald, 1883: An old man would not believe that he could hear his wife talk a distance of five miles by telephone. His better half was in a country store several miles away, where there was a telephone, and the skeptic was also in a place where there was a similar instrument. On being told how to operate it, he walked boldly up and shouted: "Hello; Sarah!" At that instant lightning struck the telephone wire and knocked the man down, and as he scrambled to his feet, he excitedly cried, "That's Sarah, every time!"

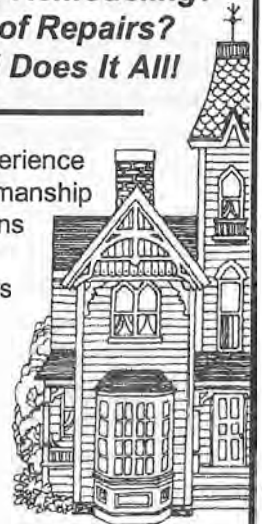
There's no such thing as
excess eating, only
inadequate activity.
Dorothy Harris

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A Yankee in Gray

Of all the Civil War veterans who called Huntsville home, Major S. F. Sweinhart must have been the most unusual. An ex-Yankee soldier who moved to Huntsville after the war, he earned the respect of his former enemies and was accorded an honor unique in Huntsville's history.

Major Sweinhart was a member of an Ohio volunteer regiment and had participated in some of the bloodiest fighting of the war. While stationed in Alabama, he was captivated by the warm climate and the natural beauty of the Tennessee Valley. At the time he wore a Yankee uniform, so it is doubtful that he was exposed to the legendary "Southern hospitality" our region has become famous for.

When the war was finally over and the soldiers had stacked arms for the last time, Major

Sweinhart moved to Huntsville, determined to make it his home.

Feelings were running high at the end of the war, so it is not surprising that he was greeted with scowls and bitterness.

"Damn Yankee," the Huntsville natives would say as they passed him on the streets.

"Damn Rebels," the Major would mutter under his breath, while looking straight ahead.

But time has a way of healing all wounds, and as the Major grew into old age, he began taking his place on the old courthouse bench, reliving and refighting the battles of his youth. An old Yankee officer and a group of old Confederate veterans, with nothing in common except the blood spilled on battlefields years before.

Slowly the town began to accept the old soldier and the scowls he used to encounter on the streets turned to smiles. Sweinhart became involved in the community and became active in veterans' affairs. Of course, the only other veterans in Huntsville were ex-Confederates.

In 1927, Major Sweinhart was awarded the highest accolade ever

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given to a Yankee by Confederate veterans. The story can best be told by a newspaper article of the day:

"He was invited this week to attend a dinner given by the Daughters of the Confederacy to members of the Egbert Jones Camp of Confederate Veterans at the home of Robert A. Moore, acting adjutant for the Third Brigade, Alabama Division.

"He was welcomed with hand clasps and smiles. After dinner, the old veterans invited him to attend their business meeting. When discussions lagged a little, Major Sweinhart, who had remained in a corner deep in thought, rose and stood at attention.

"Men," he said, with a shake in his voice, "I've lived down here so long I feel like I belong here." His voice quivered again as he added, "And by golly, I want to belong to you."

"The Confederate veterans gave a hearty cheer, and one of them proposed Major Sweinhart for membership. The proposal was accepted immediately and the major was accepted as a member of the camp by unanimous vote.

"He now belongs to the Egbert Jones Camp of Confederate veterans and is believed to be the only Union soldier in the country who has experienced such a transformation."

When Major Sweinhart died, an honor guard consisting of ex-Confederate soldiers stood guard during the funeral ceremony. His body is buried in Maple Hill Cemetery, next to the other veterans he had grown to love.

I didn't climb to the top of the food chain to be a vegetarian.
Nan Childress

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1 tablespoon honey

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My mother could be a travel agent for guilt trips.
Sherry Dougherty

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Huntsville Coffee Talk

by Aunt Eunice

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



Well, this year is getting off to a good start. I have had lots of my friends stop by to see me. We sure are lucky to live in a place like Huntsville!

Last month's photo was **Floyd Hardin** and the lucky winner was **Berlin Moore** from 5 Points Beauty Salon. He says he's coming by soon to get his free country ham breakfast for guessing the picture. If you want to win a free breakfast just be the first to call me at 534-9550 to guess the mystery photo.

My sympathy goes to the Walker family in their loss of one of Huntsville's finest businessmen, **Mr. Rayford Walker**, owner of 5 Points Restaurant. He will be missed by so many.

My favorite senator sure shook up the political community this month by switching parties and becoming a Democrat. That **Jeff Enfinger** is always busy--

first dancing with the **Way Out Line Dancers** at the Senior Center and now this! Jeff, I love you and think you're doing a wonderful job for all of us!

Can you believe how much money **Mrs. Mayor** has already raised for her upcoming race - even though no one has said they will run against her! Loretta has done a super job and we are all proud of her. Wake up Huntsville, we need to keep her right where she is!

Speaking of politics, wonder what's up with **Sheriff Joe, Councilman Watson and Judge Little**? They recently had breakfast with me and sure were huddled together talking. With those three you never know what to expect but one thing I do know is that they are three of my favorite boy friends!

Come on **John Glenn**, when are you going to let us know which

office you have decided to run for?

Keep a close eye on **Stephen Brooks**, running for Mayor of Madison. He is a nice guy and is getting a lot of support.

Everybody sure is excited about this year's Golf Tournament, April 3 at the Valley Hills Country Club, to benefit the Senior Center. This year's honoree is **Mike Gillespie**, Chairman of the County Commissioners. My good friend **Susan Kirkland** is really excited about the corporate teams that have signed up for the tournament. If you want to sign up just give Susan a call at 880-7080 ext. 222.

Happy birthday to my dear friend **Joe Reid** of Reid's Hardware who just celebrated being 70 years young! Also birthday wishes to my son-in-law **Larry Sledge** who just celebrated his. Can you

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: "Well known Huntsville dentist."



Last month's photo was
Floyd Hardin

A Helping Hand

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



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believe I'm his mother-in-law and he won't even tell me how old he is!

Boy, business sure is so good at the Out Back Restaurant that the hard working owner, **Loyd Tomlinson**, is having to take a rest and go to Florida to play in a golf tournament! Must be tough, Loyd! Don't pull any muscles swinging those clubs.

I just found out that **John Malone** is coming back home to help me M.C., this year's Wal-Mart Senior Expo to be held on June 9 and 10 at the VBC. I'm so excited because I just heard that our entertainment this year is going to be the **Coasters!** Boy, do they put on a show!

Congressman **Bud Cramer** sure stays busy. Bud was just home to help the Children's Advocacy Center kick off their campaign to raise money for their new building. He is always doing so much for others. Now, let's help him out and vote him back into office! Keep up the good work you do Bud, I love you!

The young people at the **Twickenham Church of Christ** gave the older folks a wonderful Valentine's Day party. It was Great! Thanks to everyone who had a part in it!

It's so good to have our very own astronaut, **Jan Davis**, living here and eating breakfast with me again. Jan we are all proud of you!

My sympathy to my dear friend and employee, **Ramona** on the death of her brother **Jake Douglas**. He will be missed.

Boy, did we have a family reunion for breakfast the other day. Attending were **Frank and Ruby Petcher, Faye Shelton, Lowell Anderson, James Anderson Jim and Susan Tucker, Dan and Frances Anderson, Donald and Cricket Anderson, Paul Shelton and Alvin and Carolyn McBride.**

It was just like the old days watching them put away the biscuits, ham and gravy!

We hear that my dear friend **Bubba Riddick** recently had surgery but is doing good now. Bubba, come on by sometime and I'll share a biscuit with you!

I had my car washed and vacuumed at **Cousin's Car Wash** the other day. The owners, **Richard and Betty White**, sure do a great job! Keep up the good work.

I hope everyone saw the recent special, **Os Confederados**, on channel 31 recently. **Pierre Kimsey** did a great job on it. Ever since he first read about it in *Old Huntsville* years ago he had been wanting to do a special on the story.

Question of the month: Why do tornados always seem to hit around the South Parkway and Airport Road Area? Come on weathermen, help us out!

That's all for now but remember folks, I love all of you!

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Chocolate Chip Meringue Pie

25 Ritz crackers, coarsely
crumb

1 c. chopped pecans
1/2 c. semi-sweet chocolate
chips

3 egg whites
1/4 t. baking powder
1 c. sugar
1 t. vanilla extract
1 c. heavy cream, sweetened
& whipped

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees, and butter a 9-inch pie plate. In a bowl combine the crackers, nuts, and chips, stir. In another bowl beat the egg whites til foam, add the baking powder and beat til soft peaks form. Gradually add the sugar, beat til stiff. Add vanilla, beat.

Fold the cracker mixture into the egg whites and pour into your pie plate. Smooth top, and bake

for 20 minutes til lightly browned and crispy on top. Cool, then refrigerate til ready to serve. Top with the whipped cream.

Old-Fashioned Rice Pudding

3 c. cooked white rice
1 c. sugar
4 T. butter, melted
3 eggs
2 c. milk
1 T. vanilla extract

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees and butter an 8-inch square baking dish, that is at least 3 inches deep. In a large bowl combine rice, sugar, butter and mix well. In a medium bowl combine the eggs, milk and vanilla. Beat with fork til mixed well, then add to the rice mixture. Mix and pour into the baking dish, bake for 40-45 minutes and pudding is set.

Orange-Walnut Pie

3 eggs
1/2 c. light corn syrup
1/2 c. orange marmalade
2/3 c. firmly packed light
brown sugar

4 T. butter, melted
1 1/2 c. chopped walnuts
1 pie crust, thawed out

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees, then combine the first 5 ingredients. Mix well, then add your walnuts. Pour all into the thawed, unbaked pie crust. Bake for 50 minutes and filling is set. If your crust edges are browning too fast, just cover with strips of aluminum foil.

Deep South Praline Crescents

1 box (2 round pastry sheets)
refrigerated pie crust pastry
4 oz. cream cheese, softened
1/4 c. firmly packed light
brown sugar

2/3 c. pecans, finely chopped
1 c. confectioner's sugar

Allow frozen crusts to thaw out and preheat your oven to 375 degrees. In a small bowl combine the cream cheese and brown sugar and beat til smooth. Spread half the mixture on each of the pastry sheets. Sprinkle each with 1/3 cup of the pecans. Lightly press the nuts into the pastry. Cut each pastry into 12 wedges. Start-



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ing with the large end of each wedge, roll toward the small point. Place your crescents on ungreased cookie sheets and bake for 18-20 minutes, and they are lightly browned. Immediately remove cookies and sprinkle with the confectioners sugar.

Apple Cinnamon Cobbler

1 20-oz. can of apple slices (not pie filling)
 2/3 c. apple juice
 2/3 c. sugar
 1 1/2 T. all-purpose flour
 4 T. butter
 1 8-count can refrigerated cinnamon roll dough

Pour the undrained apple slices and apple juice into a 2-quart casserole dish. Preheat your oven to 375 degrees. In a small bowl mix the flour and sugar and sprinkle this over the apples. Dot with butter. Place the unbaked cinnamon rolls, cinnamon side down, on top of the apples and bake for 40 minutes and apple filling begins to thicken. If the rolls brown too quickly, cover loosely with aluminum foil.

Surprise Balls

2 sticks butter, softened
 1/2 c. confectioners sugar
 1 t. vanilla extract
 2 1/2 c. all-purpose flour
 1 c. pecans, finely chopped
 45 chocolate covered malted milk balls
 confectioners sugar to coat
 Combine the first 4 ingredi-

ents in a large bowl and mix till well-blended. It will be quite stiff. Stir in the pecans. Take a tablespoonful of the dough and shape around each of the malted milk balls, so that your ball is about 1 1/4 inches in diameter. Place them on ungreased cookie sheets, about an inch apart. Bake in oven that you have preheated to 350 degrees, for 12-15 minutes - don't overbake. Remove from cookie sheets and roll each cookie in confectioners sugar. After they have cooled, coat again with the confectioners sugar. If you prefer, wrap the dough around a pecan half or whole toasted almond.

Chocolate Munchies

1 stick butter, softened
 1 c. sugar
 2 c. all-purpose flour
 1/4 t. salt
 1/2 t. baking soda
 3 T. cocoa
 2 eggs
 1 c. coconut, shredded
 20 candied cherries, halved

In a large mixing bowl combine first 7 ingredients. Beat well, then refrigerate for 30 minutes. Preheat your oven to 375 degrees and line several cookie sheets with aluminum foil. Shape the chilled dough into balls that are about an inch in diameter. Dip the top of each ball in the shredded coconut, then place each ball on the cookie sheets, coconut side up. The balls should be placed about 2 inches apart. Finally, take a

cherry half and place one on each ball, on top of the coconut. Bake for 10-12 minutes - as always, better to underbake than overbake. Remove from cookie sheets to cool.

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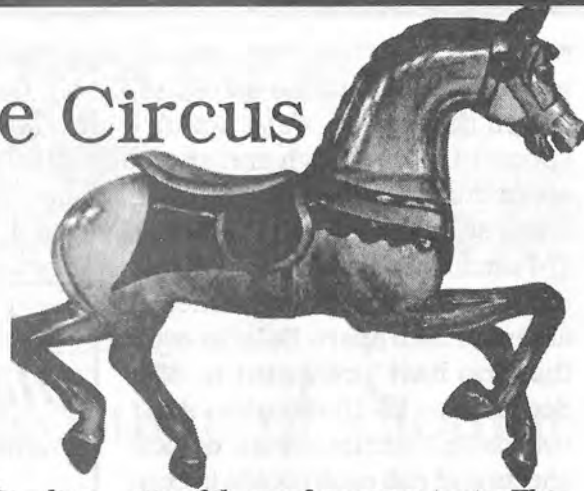
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When The Circus Came To Town



by Judy Wills

In late October, 1916, Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circus, already billed as the "Greatest Show on Earth," came to Huntsville. P T. Barnum sought entertainers from all over the world and local people could hardly wait to see the circus freaks as well as the wild animals. This particular circus featured over 130 horses, performing ones as well as the wagon pulling variety.

In those days, the circus parade was a major event. Howard Harbin, a retired Madison County employee who had seen the parade as a small child, recalled that the parade would stop every now and then to put on a small skit. This was meant to whet the appetite of the crowd to come and see the main performance. The parade was to move along Jefferson Street and then Washington Street until it came to the

site of the performance tents. This was a cleared tract of land on the east side of North Washington Street near the Southern Railway depot.

There had been great debate about whether the city of Huntsville should extend its corporate limits to include the site where the circus would be held. If the site had been inside the city limits, the city would have received \$150 plus a payment of \$75 for a permit to hold the parade. Some of the citizens felt that the circus was a bad thing to have and could contribute to the decline of morality in Huntsville, but the mayor and council were in favor of having the circus inside the city limits so that the city, instead of the county, could benefit from the sale of a privilege license to the circus. Other local cities had derived as much as \$1,000 from a visit from

the circus. The opponents of extending the city limits were in the majority and the city lost the opportunity to receive a larger portion of the \$300 collected by the county.

Howard Harbin recalled that his family, who lived in Maysville, loaded into the wagon early in order to be in town before the pa-

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rade started. In 1916, it was a two and a half hour trip to Huntsville by wagon. The Harbin family found a good spot to watch the parade on Washington Street. When the parade broke up, the Harbins joined the crowd that followed the menagerie to the circus site. As they neared the site, a great commotion broke out. Harbin and his family saw smoke coming up from a little rise, just ahead of the big top. They moved away from the crowd to a place behind a grove of trees.

Just at that moment, horses started galloping in panic from over the hill. More than 100 horses had been stabled in a tent just over the rise. They had been visited by scores of onlookers and horse fanciers. It isn't known exactly how the fire started, but most of the men were smoking cigars and apparently a discarded cigar butt was tossed into the hay. The weather had been very dry that month and it did not require much to start a fire.

With so many of the circus employees involved in the parade, there were not enough workers to put out the fire. The workers started cutting the horses loose, but the fire was spreading faster than they could release them. The tent caught fire and the screams of the horses were horrendous. Before the day was over 27 of the most seriously injured horses

were shot to death and in the end a total of 130 horses had died of burns or been shot.

The disposal of animals had always been a problem in the city. The carcasses were hauled to a site that was at the corner of present day Owens and McClung, then the site of the pest house. This disposal was of a magnitude that had not been anticipated before. State law provided that carcasses be hauled to a site where the odor of burning them would not reach residences. This was not possible on the pest house land so the circus officials contracted a local man who claimed that he could bury them at the required two foot depth. The local contractor was paid \$100 for his efforts and started digging trenches.

The circus fire had been on Saturday and by the following Wednesday it was apparent that the job was too much for the man who had taken it on. Rather than allow the matter to grow into a law suit instituted by angry residents, Judge Archie McDonnell and Mayor T. T. Terry went to the site and put to work every available truck and wagon they could procure. Eventually, all the dead horses had been hauled to the site and enough trenches had been dug to hold them.

It was not the sort of revenue enhancing event that the city fathers had anticipated. The city and the county had to pay for al-

most all of the labor involved plus the hiring of the trucks and wagons. Efforts were begun immediately to get the circus to pay for the disposal but it was not an easy task and it would be forty-nine years before Ringling Brothers, Barnum and Bailey would visit Huntsville again.

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The Well Digger



Patrick Hughes took a contract last week to dig a well. After he had dug down about twenty feet down it caved in and filled nearly to the top. Patrick looked cautiously around, and upon seeing no one, took off his coat and hat and hung them in a windlass, then crawled underneath some dense bushes to await events.

In a short time the citizens discovered that the well had filled in, and spotting Patrick's coat and hat

on the windlass, supposed he was at the bottom. With great shouting and energy, and a few hours of brisk digging, they had cleared the loose earth from the well. When they got to the bottom and saw no body, Patrick emerged from the bushes.

He good-naturedly thanked them for relieving him of a sorry job. Some of the tired diggers were disgusted, but the joke on them was too good to allow anything but a hearty laugh, and some gin and sugar which soon followed.

From Huntsville Mercury
1915

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Housing related threats, harassment, intimidation or violence is a crime, and victims have individual remedies under the law. Because in addition to any

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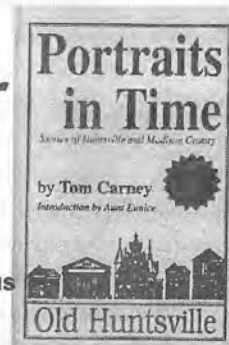
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A Woman's Work

by Peggy Montana

It is an unforgettable scene in *Gone With the Wind*. - Scarlett O'Hara is standing at the window and clutching the emerald green draperies bordered with gold fringe. She is frowning as she thinks about her financial troubles. Her dress is worn, faded and certainly not in the latest fashion. Never one to be conquered, Scarlett suddenly realizes that these draperies can be put to better use. It is not long before she appears wearing a dress of green velvet and a hat trimmed with flowing gold fringe.

The truth is that during the Civil War in America, many women did the same thing. Well, maybe they were not that dramatic, but they often had to do the best they could with what they had.

In December of 1900, Virginia Clay Clopton wrote an article for *The Tribune*, a Huntsville newspaper. In the article she gives us a glimpse of what the women of our county were doing to clothe themselves and their families. The women told how they cut up their dresses to



make clothes for the children. One family had some white wool blankets; the mother had them dyed and made a suit for her son.

A "Miss Laura" remembered that once during the war, Mrs. Frank Mastin amazed her friends when she appeared wearing an attractive outfit. Her friends wanted to know where she had obtained such a beautiful fabric. She was reluctant to tell but it did finally come to light that she had made her dress out of one of her bedspreads. Many a dress was made out of both lace and muslin curtains. The women and girls learned to make hats out of straw, trimming them with real flowers. The hat boxes were used as a base

for a hat, while old silk dresses and scraps of silk or velvet were used as a covering.

For more practical clothing, stories were told of how every scrap of woollen cloth was "carefully picked to pieces and spun into thread and knitted into socks or gloves." William T. Bennett, of nearby Gurley, told of his mother making shirts for her son who was home on furlough from the army. Her son had only one shirt and it was ragged. She had a black silk dress that she used to make some shirts for her son before he returned to join his unit.

Mr. Bennett also said that his mother raised a few sheep. She would card, spin and weave the wool into cloth. The children had to clean the wool (Mr. Bennett said they "had to pick it") before it could be carded. He said that he had rather "plow in the pouring rain with the water following me in the furrows" than have to help clean the wool.

The women did sewing for the Confederate soldiers. According to Mr. Bennett, the fabric was given out and when the garments were finished, they would be returned to a location in Huntsville. The scraps of fabric that were left over, sometimes as much as a yard in length, were used to tie up the clothing before it was returned. These scraps of cloth were given to the women as payment for their work. Mr. Bennett said that they were glad to get it. There was enough fabric to make a coat or shirt for a child.

Cotton bedspreads, lace curtains, wool blankets or emerald green velvet draperies-- It was all that an ingenious woman needed to provide a new outfit for herself or a member of her family.

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Have just received from Philadelphia and New York, and are now opening in the Brick store at the S. W. corner of the public square, an extensive & well selected assortment of

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Memories Of An Old Soldier

written in 1905 by R. Harris

In March, 1861, I enlisted in the first company to leave Jackson County, Ala., for the war. We were sent to Fort Morgan, and remained there several months under Gen. Hardee. While on outpost duty at night at Navy Cove, near Fort Morgan, I was shot at by one of a crew of blockaders who had landed to pick off some of our chain pickets or videttes. He missed me, and I brought my gun to bear on him instantly, but it failed to fire, and he escaped through the lagoon. I think this must have been the first shot fired on Alabama soil. I was mortified at the failure of my gun, but a few days after this the *Wilder*, a small blockade runner, was grounded near this same point. Daylight showed Yankees to be on her, and several of us got a few shots at

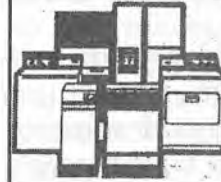
her from sand hills till we were shelled out of our position. We could not tell the damage we had done till the second morning, then thirty-nine Yankees were washed ashore and buried by our men.

From Fort Morgan we went to Fort Gaines and on to Fort Pillow, where we were discharged at the end of twelve months, our term of service. Most of the regiment reenlisted at once; but, determined to join the cavalry, I went to Corinth, Miss., where the battle of Shiloh was being fought, made my way to some Alabama troops, secured a musket, and took a hand in the battle. The next night I left on foot for home, and in a few days I was mounted and with Col. Starnes, who soon completed his regiment, the Fourth Tennessee. I became a member of company F under Capt. F. Rice; the members were about two-thirds Alabamians and one-third Tennesseans. I was soon joined by my brother, Polk Harris, who had served in the Virginia army and had passed through all the battles from First Manassas to the seven days fighting about Richmond before he was seventeen years old.

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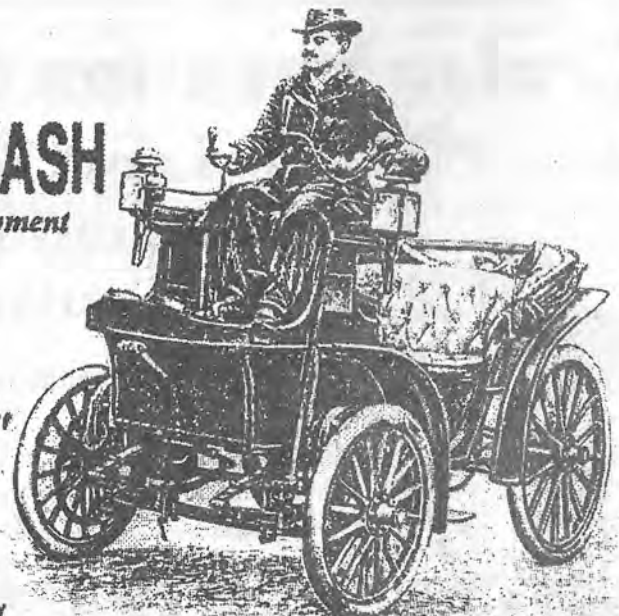
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We were on the move all through Middle Tennessee. Col. Starnes, with most of his regiment, went into McMinnville late one evening and found that a major commanding one hundred scouts had just left, headed for Murfreesboro. He called for a hundred volunteers to go with him and we followed them all night, finding them at daylight at Readyville eating breakfast. William Whitworth and I captured the picket at the front gate of the Burton House (I think that was the name). Before our men could reach us we were discovered by a Negro boy, who ran around the house giving the alarm. About thirty men were here, and they rushed for the front and began firing before I could get to the end of the house. Whitworth fired from the side into the dining room, from which came screams: "We surrender." We captured eighty-seven of the hundred, only losing two horses killed, and no man hurt much.

I was with Braggs march into Kentucky, and with the advance guard of Kirby Smith's Division, commanding five men in extreme advance. We were being bushwhacked every few hundred yards by citizens, several of whom we captured. One I got out of a hollow log, and Gen. Smith turned him over to his wife, who lived near by and came screaming and begging for his life, followed by ten or a dozen children. Both kissed the Bible that they would be non-combatants in the future.

Tom Hunt and I came upon four surgeons at a spring just outside of town with four young ladies, and we demanded their surrender. One of them requested that I bring forward my colonel for him to surrender to, as that was his rank; but when I replied, "No foolishness" he promptly surren-

dered. The young ladies were all pretty, and one of them abused us very much, saying if she had a pistol she would shoot me. I handed out one, and she grabbed at it and I believe would have shot me if she had gotten it.

After Hood's retreat from Nashville I passed back through my home country in north Alabama, and saw how the Tory companies, as we called them, were stationed at almost every railroad station in the country and learned of their daily robberies, murders and abuses of the old men and good women in the country.

I felt sure then of our defeat, but went into the Federal lines, in command of a few picked and tried men in advance of Col. Russell's Fourth Alabama Cavalry. We had several engagements, and I was one of eighteen who fought eighty-seven in Wills Valley commanded by Hanflin and Springfield, and where we killed two and captured forty-seven horses.

The time from then till the close of the war I spent in the Federal lines with a small band of tired men fighting as we had opportunity-- never, from ambush, but always in the open and mounted. So far as I know, I made about the last fight of the war with five men against sixteen. Of these, there were two Indians, one Negro, and thirteen Tories of North Alabama. We charged upon them in close quarters, killing five and wounding two. Out of the six shots

I made with my revolver, I think five struck home, and am sure that I was shot at twenty-one times in close quarters.

Having learned that our commanders had surrendered and ordered all soldiers to do so, I sent in a note to Col. Evans at Larkinsville, asking to surrender and his adjutant assured us that we would be paroled as our command had been.

We were sent to Huntsville and allowed the liberty of the streets for a while, and were told to report at a given hour for parole. As I was passing along the street a finely dressed officer accosted me with: "Yes, you are whipped at last, are you?"

I replied, "No sir: we are more overpowered than whipped."

He then said, "We could have slaughtered all of you," to which I replied that I bet he belonged to the 'bomb proof' department, and never fired a gun at the front and that if only I had the chance I would whip him.

He turned to two sentinels and ordered me taken to jail, but I was released within thirty minutes by a sergeant of the guard, who stated that he had heard all that passed between us and had reported it to the officer of the day, who ordered my release and had the other man under arrest. I am sorry I did not get the sergeant's name, but he told me that night that the man who had me arrested was a Capt. P., and that he belonged to the ordinance or quartermaster's department.



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I am proud now of this united country. My grandfathers were revolutionary soldiers, and I had a son in the Spanish American War but I believe the volunteer army of the South, facing such insurmountable odds, were some of this country's most heroic soldiers.

Wants To Find Son Before She Dies

I am trying to find any information about Pvt. James Forrest of the Confederate Army. He left home, from Athens, Ala., at the age of 14 to enlist in the army. His last letter was posted from Shelbyville, Tenn., in July of 1864. There are no official records of his enlistment.

Any information will be highly valued. His mother is suffering infirmities of age and desires her son be laid to rest before she meets her maker.

Anyone desirous of contacting her should write to Mrs. Wade Forrest at Decatur, Ala. or she may be contacted through this paper.

from 1888 newspaper

Seeking Mother

Seeking members of family. My mother belonged to Mr. Grant Hughes of Franklin, Tenn. Her name was Rose and she was a cook for the quarters. I was sold to Mr. Thomas Perry of Morgan County, Ala., in 1854 and have heard nothing of my family since.

I can be contacted by writing Jasper Davis at Corinth, Miss.

from 1869 newspaper

Trying To Find Family

I desire to find my mother and sister, who used to belong to Mr. Angelo Steele. My mother's name was Sarah Steele and my sister's, Harriet Steele. I was carried from Huntsville to Canton, Mississippi during the war and have never seen or heard from them since until my return to Huntsville on August 20th in search of them. I have learned that my mother married a man at Bridgeport, Alabama by the name of Jolly who has since died.

Write me at 1237 Ferrett Street, New Orleans, Louisiana where I now live or leave notice with the Editor of this paper and I am greatly obliged.

from 1896 Huntsville newspaper



If you want breakfast in bed, you might try sleeping in the kitchen.

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Shootout At Hazel Green

We learn of two serious difficulties in the Hazel Green district last week. On Tuesday night, a Mr. Talent shot William Weaver in the head, the ball passing through the only good eye Weaver had, leaving him totally blind. They were in a quarrel at Key's Mill, and it is said that there was a good deal of whiskey around. Talent was arraigned before Justice Fowler and after an investigation was discharged. Weaver was alive when last heard from and may recover.

The second affair was between two brothers by the name of Holloway, in the same district four miles from Hazel Green, last Friday, in which Gabe Holloway was cut in the abdomen by his own brother. There was a game of cards going on and Gabe Holloway was trying to induce his brother, who was engaged in the game, to quit playing and go to work, whereupon his brother grew angry, according to our information, and cut him. He is in very critical condition.

from 1878 newspaper

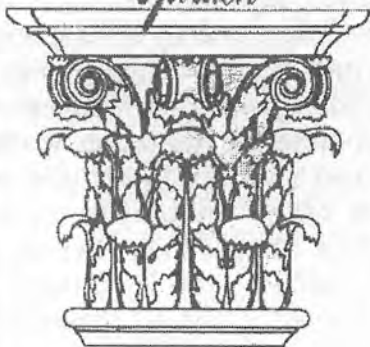
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Battle At The Baptist Church

by Charles Rice

Christian churches are supposed to be Houses of the Lord, places of sanctuary where one can go to escape the worries and woes of the everyday world. However, a Baptist Church in Huntsville's Lincoln Mill village became anything but that one strange September night some half a century ago. In fact, the sleepy little church suddenly exploded into a raucous free-for-all in which the women matched the men in ferocity.

The bizarre incident apparently came about at least in part over the efforts of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) to unionize the mill workers during those bleak depression years of the 1930s. Union backers felt the CIO would stand up for their rights and improve their standard of living. Union foes feared the Northern owners would retaliate by closing the mills and moving

elsewhere, something the Yankee capitalists had already done several times in the South.

The labor dispute seems to have spilled over into the church, where Rev. C. V. Headrick enjoyed the backing of the union. The CIO's opponents had become dissatisfied with their minister, apparently feeling he was meddling in matters that didn't concern him. There were other complaints against the preacher as well, but the union dispute obviously was the major grievance. Headrick's adversaries already had tried several times to have him replaced. On the night of September 3, 1939, their impatience finally got the better of them.

Rev. Headrick was presiding at a conference in the divided mill village church. William Adcock, the local CIO leader, was on hand to give his support to the clergyman, which can only have angered the union opponents. Near the end of the meeting, a woman member of the congregation at last rose from her seat and forcefully shoved the preacher out of the pulpit. Other women quickly intervened, and the Lincoln ladies went at it hammer and tongs--kicking, punching, kneeling, slapping and pulling hair.

Not to be outdone by their spouses, the male members of the congregation promptly chose up sides and joined in the brawl.

World War II was just breaking out in Europe, but a visitor at the Huntsville church might well have thought he was at the battlefield in Poland.


According to newspaper reports the next day, two men (Ingle Gant and Tom Bragg) were stabbed, while several others were taken to Huntsville Hospital emergency room with head injuries. A number of the ladies were somewhat bruised and battered, but none required medical attention. Only one person was arrested, Dillard Adcock, who had stabbed Tom Bragg before being struck over the head by Olen Graham. Labor leader William Adcock, Dillard's brother, had also been hit over the head with a heavy object, probably a chair.

Tensions obviously remained high and Christian behavior was clearly the loser that day in Lincoln Village. In fact, it was later learned that another fight had taken place nearby several hours earlier on Meridian Street. A union organizer named Pearson had called a nonunion worker named Sharpe a "scab" and several other uncomplimentary names. Sharpe took offense and attacked Pearson. An unamused Judge Price issued arrest warrants for both men.

All things considered, the Lord just might have preferred to look elsewhere on that incredible September day. Brotherly love was certainly lacking in that part of our always surprising city.

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Growing up is optional.

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Joe Smithy

The Alabama Slave Code of 1852

In 1852, Alabama passed a "slave code" regulating the actions and conduct of all slaves within its boundaries. With slaves being considered property, violations often resulted in the owner being fined or punished.

ARTICLE I

1005. No master, overseer, or other person having the charge of a slave, must permit such slave to hire himself to another person, or to hire his own time, or to go at large, unless in a corporate town, by consent of the authorities

thereof, evidenced by an ordinance of the corporation; and every such offence is a misdemeanor, punishable by fine not less than twenty nor more than one hundred dollars.

1006. No master, overseer, or head of a family must permit any

slave to be or remain at his house, outhouse, or kitchen, without leave of the owner or overseer, above four hours at any one time; and for every such offence he forfeits ten dollars, to be recovered before any justice of the peace, by any person who may sue for the same.

1007. Any owner or overseer of a plantation, or householder, who knowingly permits more than five Negroes, other than his own, to be and remain at his house, plantation, or quarter, at any one time, forfeits ten dollars for each and every one over that number, to the use of anyone who

Below: While some slaves did fight for the Confederacy, the vast majority accompanying the Army had no choice, as this extremely rare contract between the Confederate Government and Huntsville resident William Holding shows. Especially interesting is the fact that if "Calvin" ran away, was captured or killed, Holding was to collect the full value of his slave.

SPECIAL CONTRACT

March 5th 1863

HEAD QUARTERS VOLUNTEER AND CONSCRIPT BUREAU, }
COLUMBIA, February 6, 1863. }

The Confederate States have hired of *William Holding*.....
One Negro man named Calvin.....
Twenty Dollars..... negro men—slaves to be employed as Teamsters in the Confederate Army. The Government agrees to pay for such Teamsters so furnished, Twenty Dollars per month, (to be paid quarterly,) so long as said negroes are retained in said service; to feed and clothe them; to have them treated with kindness and humanity; properly provided with medical attendance when sick; and if captured or killed, or lost by death or otherwise, from carelessness of its officers or agents, to pay their value for them. If not returned, to be paid for, unless the Government shall show death from natural cause, without neglect.

This contract will be executed by Maj. M. Cheatham, A. Q. M., C. S. A. By order of

Geo. S. Pelham

Brig. Gen. C. S. A. and Chief of Bureau.

H. C. Lusk

I have received of *William Holding*.....one negro man named *Calvin*.....aged *24*.....years, of which the above order constitutes the contract.

M. M. Cheatham
Major A. Q. M., C. S. A.

may sue for the same, before any justice of the peace; unless such assemblage is for the worship of almighty God, or for burial service, and with the consent of the owner or overseer of such slaves.

1008. No slave must go beyond the limits of the plantation on which he resides, without a pass, or some letter or token from his master or overseer, giving him authority to go and return from a certain place; and if found violating this law, may be apprehended and punished, not exceeding twenty stripes, at the discretion of any justice before whom he may be taken.

1009. If any slave go upon the plantation, or enter the house or outhouse of any person, without permission in writing from his master or overseer, or in the prosecution of his lawful business, the owner or overseer of such plantation or householder may give, or order such slave to be given, ten lashes on his bare back.

1010. Any railroad company in whose car or vehicle, and the master or owner of any steamboat, or vessel, in which a slave is transported or carried, without the written authority of the owner or person in charge of such slave, forfeits to the owner the sum of

fifty dollars; and if such slave is lost, is liable for his value, and all reasonable expenses attending the prosecution of the suit.

1011. In any action under the preceding section, it devolves on the defendant to prove that the owner has regained possession of the slave.

1012. No slave can keep or carry a gun, powder, shot, club, or other weapon, except the tools given him to work with, unless ordered by his master or overseer to carry such weapon from one place to another. Any slave found offending against the provisions of this section, may be seized, with such weapon, by any one, and carried before any justice, who, upon proof of the offence, must condemn the weapon to the use of such person, and direct that the slave receive thirty-nine lashes on his bare back.

1013. Any justice of the peace may, within his own county, grant permission in writing to any slave, on the application of his master or overseer, to carry and use a gun and ammunition within his master's plantation.

1014. No slave can, under any pretense, keep a dog; and for every such offence must be punished by any justice of the peace



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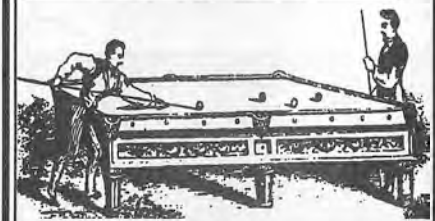
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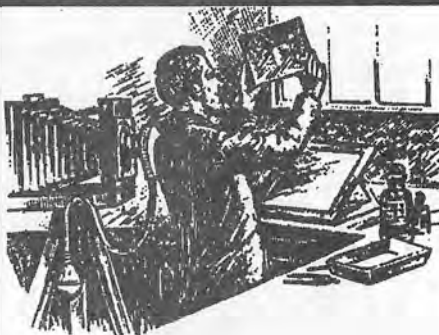


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with twenty stripes on his bare back. If such dog is kept with the consent of the owner or overseer, he must pay five dollars for every dog so kept, to the use of any person who will sue for the same before any justice; and is also liable to any person for any injury committed by said dogs.

1015. Riots, routs, unlawful assemblies, trespasses, and seditious speeches by a slave, are punished, by the direction of any justice before whom he may be carried, with stripes not exceeding one hundred.

1016. Any person having knowledge of the commission of any offence by a slave against the law, may apprehend him, and take him before a justice of the peace for trial.

1017. Any slave fire hunting in the night time, must be punished with thirty-nine lashes, by order of any justice before whom he may be carried. If such fire hunting by the slave is by the command of the master or overseer,

the slave must not be punished, but the master or overseer forfeits the sum of fifty dollars, one half to the county, and the other half to any person who may sue for the same before any justice of the peace.

1018. No slave can own property, and any property purchased or held by a slave, not claimed by the master or owner, must be sold by order of any justice of the peace; one half the proceeds of the sale, after the payment of costs and necessary expenses, to be paid to the informer, and the residue to the county treasury.

1019. Any slave who writes for, or furnishes any other slave with any pass or free paper, on conviction before any justice of the peace, must receive one hundred lashes on his bare back.

1020. Not more than five male slaves shall assemble together at any place off the plantation, or place to which they belong, with or without passes or permits to be there, unless attended by the master or overseer of such slaves, or unless such slaves are attending the public worship of God, held by white persons.

1021. It is the duty of all patrols, and all officers, civil and military, to disperse all such unlawful assemblies; and each of the slaves constituting such unlawful assembly, must be punished by stripes, not exceeding ten; and for the second offence, may be punished with thirty-nine stripes, at the discretion of any justice of the peace before whom he may be brought.

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1022. Any slave who preaches, exhorts, or harangues any assembly of slaves, or of slaves and free persons of color, without a license to preach or exhort from some religious society of the neighborhood, and in the presence of five slave holders, must, for the first offence, be punished with thirty-nine lashes, and for the second, with fifty lashes; which punishment may be inflicted by any officer of a patrol company, or by the order of any justice of the peace.

1023. Runaway slaves may be apprehended by any person, and carried before any justice of the peace, who must either commit them to the county jail, or send them to the owner, if known; who must, for every slave so apprehended, pay the person apprehending him six dollars, and all reasonable charges.

1024. Any justice of the peace receiving information that three or more runaway slaves are lurking and hid in swamps, or other obscure places, may, by warrant, reciting the names of the slaves, and their owners, if

known, direct a leader of the patrol of the district, and if there be none, then any other suitable person, to summon, and take with him such power as may be necessary to apprehend such runaway; and if taken, to deliver them to the owner or commit them to the jail of his proper county.

1025. For such apprehension and delivery to the owner, or committal to jail, the parties so apprehending shall be entitled to twenty dollars for each slave, to be paid by the owner.

1026. The justice committing a runaway, must endeavor to ascertain from the slave, and from all other sources within his reach, the true name of the slave, and his owner's name, and residence; and must include all such information in the commitment, which must be preserved and filed by the justice.

1027. On the reception of a runaway slave, the sheriff must, without delay, cause advertisement to be made in a newspaper, published in the county, if there be one, if not, in the one published nearest to the court house of such county, giving an accurate descrip-

tion of the person of the slave, his supposed age, the information contained in the warrant in relation to the slave, and his owner, and such other facts important to the identification of the slave, as the sheriff may be able to obtain

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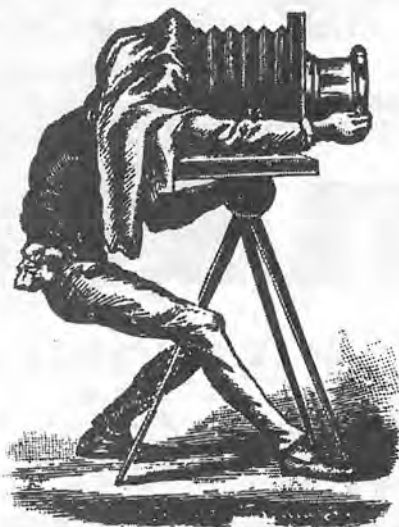
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from the slave, or from any other source, which must be continued for six months, once a week, if the slave is not sooner reclaimed by the owner.

1028. If the slave is not reclaimed within six months, the sheriff must advertise and sell him for cash, in the manner slaves are sold under execution. The proceeds of the sale, after all expenses are paid, must be paid to the county treasurer for the use of the county.

1029. The owner may regain the possession of the slave before sale, or the proceeds after sale, by appearing before the judge of probate of the county, and proving, by an impartial witness, his title to the slave; which proof must be reduced to writing, sworn to, subscribed, and filed in the office of the probate judge.

1030. Thereupon, and upon the payment by the owner of the costs of advertising, and all other expenses attending the imprisonment, the judge of probate must, by order in writing, direct the jailor, if the slave has not been sold, to deliver him to the applicant. If he has been sold, then the order must be directed to the county treasurer, to pay him over the proceeds of such sale received in the treasury.

1031. The title of the purchaser of such slave is not affected by the claim of the owner, or by an irregularity in the advertisement or sale.

1032. The fee of probate judge is two dollars, and the sheriff is allowed the same commissions as on sales under execution.

In addition to the above code there were numerous other state, county and municipal laws that applied to every facet of slavery.



1895 Editorials

We Would Like to Know

We would like to know why it is that in Huntsville, where the relations between the races seem to be better than anywhere in the South, a colored man cannot be elected policeman, or drawn on jury. Colored people enjoy most all the rights of other citizens here, but the mayor and aldermen are always afraid to elect one on the police force. When we had Democratic mayors we had a colored man on the police force but under our Republican mayors we are given the cold shoulder. We would like to know why it is thus?

A Young Man's Ability

There are few young men in this country who have succeeded to the control of business, and who have managed it with such decided ability as Mr. Ike Shiffman. As the public knows, Mr. Shiffman's uncle, Mr. Solomon Shiffman, was one of the brightest business men ever in our city. He was noted for his executive ability and popularity with trade. Death removed him from our business circles much too early. Mr. Ike Shiffman has maintained the popularity of the firm and is adding to it daily. We are pleased to see his success and hope a most profitable business will always reward his labor.

from 1895 newspaper



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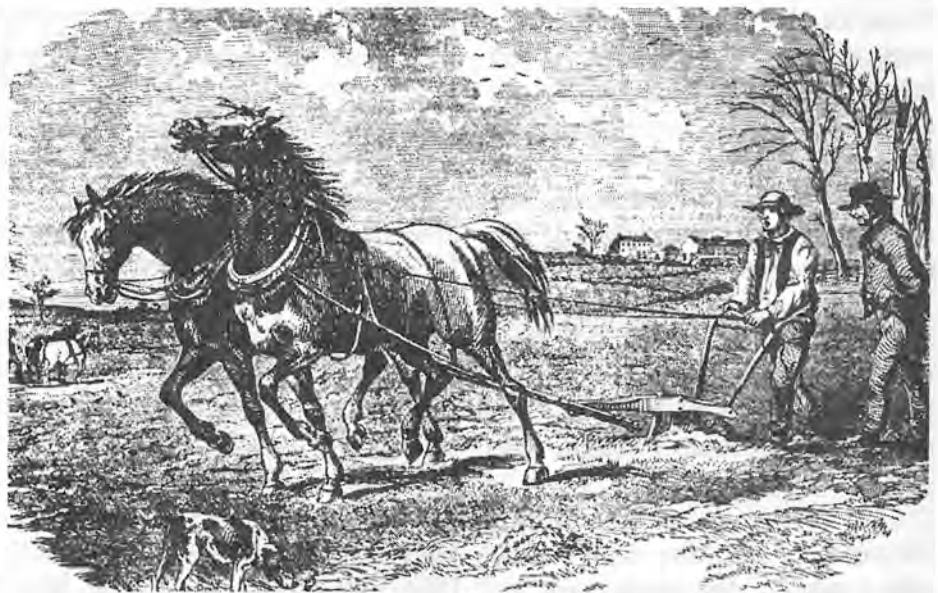
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A Short History of New Hope

by Jack Harwell

The land which today makes up the southeastern corner of Madison County was not within the original county perimeter as it was drawn in 1818. At the time, that area was still part of the domain of the Cherokee nation, the Indians making up most of the population of the Alabama Territory. But the area was not unknown to white settlers - even at that early stage of Alabama history.

Before Madison County was



even established, there was a Tennessee River ferry crossing not far from the modern city of New Hope. Andrew Jackson built a road to the site in 1813 as part of his campaign against the Creeks in south Alabama. Earlier, the general had established a military supply depot about four miles south of New Market. He called the depot Fort Deposit; the road which led thence to the river became the Deposit road and the ferry became the Deposit ferry.

Due to its strategic location, the road became one of the busiest thoroughfares in those parts, and in 1819 a tavern was opened on the road by one George Russell. Other businesses soon opened nearby, which catered to the in-

creasing number of settlers thereabouts. Immigration was initially limited due to the fact that the land still technically belonged to the Cherokees. But by 1826, all the area down to the Paint Rock River had been incorporated into Madison County.

During the 1820s, a man named William Cloud operated a trading post near George Russell's tavern. For unknown reasons, Cloud became more closely identified with the little settlement than did Russell, and the folks there began to call their town Cloud's Town. But Cloud moved on in 1825, purchasing a large tract of land on the Tennessee some miles west of the town. That area is still known as Cloud's Cove.

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When land in southeastern Madison County went on sale in 1830, there were plenty of takers. Among these were James McCartney and Robert Owen, who bought a quarter section (160 acres) at Cloud's Town and laid off lots for a proper city. It was incorporated under the name Vienna in 1832. But the city fathers ran into trouble when they tried to open the post office. Unbeknownst to them, someone else had already set up a town in south Alabama named Vienna, which also had a post office. The postal authorities informed the people in the northern Vienna that they would have to come up with another name for their facility. Looking about for ideas, the frustrated Viennese took note of the New Hope Methodist Church there in town, and decided that "New Hope" would be a fine name for their post office. Later, many of the locals came to refer to the entire town, not just the post office, as New Hope. In 1881 the name change was made official, and it has been New Hope, Alabama, ever since.

New Hope, nee Vienna, prospered for many years as a stop-over for southbound travellers. Although it never gained the prominence of its large neighbor to the northwest, the city did become a crossroads of sorts. In addition to the road leading to the river, another road led to the riverside settlement at Whitesburg. This road appears on an 1850 map of the county and today, Hobbs Island Road follows this same route very closely. In fact, the modern bridge across the Flint River is at almost exactly the same location as Ashtons Ford, where the old road crossed the river.

During the Civil War, New Hope was not spared the ravages that armed conflict frequently vis-

its on noncombatants. Confederate irregulars in the county harassed occupying Federal troops on a regular basis. Unable to pin down these partisans in a set-piece battle, the soldiers would often vent their frustration on civilians, who were less likely to shoot back. They may have felt that such people were giving aid and comfort to their enemies; more often than not, they were right. New Hope would suffer its worst damage at the hands of the bluecoats late in the war. On December 15, 1864, the entire town was burned down. Returning Confederate veterans found their town a smoking ruin. Only the Masonic lodge and the post office survived the invaders' torch.

Eventually, the town was rebuilt and recovered its former attractiveness. But during the latter part of the 19th century, New Hope's people would suffer a different kind of calamity which would become all too familiar to their descendants. Due to its location in the lowlands watered by the Flint, the town was flooded on a regular basis. The worst such deluge came in 1886. It was reported at the time that the waters rose so high, merchants could row into their stores in boats. Another damaging flood occurred in 1896. The construction of

dams along the Tennessee River has lessened, but not eliminated, the danger of flooding in the lower Paint Rock valley.

In our century, the road from Huntsville to New Hope was paved and became part of the Florida Short Route. Many a northern traveller passed through the town on his way to a Florida vacation. But when the new highway was built, it bypassed the center of town, passing about a mile to the west, leaving the city in its repose. In recent years, new businesses have opened up on the new road, which at this writing is being widened to four lanes all the way to Guntersville.

Today, New Hope doesn't get as many overnight visitors as it did in pioneer days, but it is still the largest town in the southeast corner of the county. Our modern age may take little note of it, but its historical importance cannot be denied.

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Huntsville News From 1907

Material for Street Paving is expected in a few days

The city street force and Superintendent Murphy is making improvements in various portions of the city. California Street is being graded and put in good condition. Granitoid pavements are being placed on Locust Street in accordance with the promise made the realty firm that developed the property further out this street.

Foot bridges are being put down wherever needed. Good use is being made of the street force and the convicts who are sentenced to hard labor are required to do the good work.

Mr. Murphy said today that he was looking for the arrival of the material for paving the square any time, and when it does arrive here then his job will begin.

The Police Court Record is again Broken

The fines, forfeitures and sentences in the police court this morning broke all previous records in Huntsville, amounting to \$590 or something more than 1180 days of work for the city. The 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. R. Dervis, drunk and disorderly, was fined \$20. F. L. Oates, drunk, was fined \$10 and John Sutherfield for drunk and disorderly and for carrying a pistol was given a term of 60 days. L. Larkin, Lake Walker, H.H. Harris, Dave Jordan and Will Allison were fined \$10 each for drunkenness. We've seen Dave Jordan many times this year for this same offense.



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An Undying Love

from 1893 newspaper

A citizen of Limestone County, who is buying cotton in the city, related to a reporter yesterday an interesting story of the Enoch Ardin variety.

When the flowers were blooming in the spring of 1861, a young farmer named John Holland, who resided near the Mississippi line married Miss Lucy Brock, the daughter of a well-to-do planter in that neighborhood.

The young lady's parents bitterly opposed the match and the young people were compelled to leave home to marry. Their honeymoon was spent visiting Holland's relatives and waiting for the father of the bride to forget his anger.

In the early autumn a regiment was raised in that neighborhood and Holland was one of the first men to enlist. When it was known that her husband was among the battlefields of Virginia, Mrs. Holland's father relented and invited her to come home. She decided to accept the invitation and remain at her father's house until her husband should return from the war.

For several months the young bride heard from her husband at regular intervals, but when the spring had come again, his letters ceased and by and by news came that he was dead, killed in the battles around Richmond.

Soon after the news of Holland's death, Mr. Brock and his family moved west. They settled first on the Mississippi River, a short distance below Memphis, but a year later they

moved to western Arkansas. They left few relatives or intimate friends in Alabama and in a few years their old neighbors had forgotten them, and no one knew their address.

Holland owned a small farm near the river and when the news of his death was received his relatives took charge of the place.

About two months after the close of the war John Holland came back to his old home, to the great surprise and joy of his relatives and friends who believed him dead. He had only been severely wounded and taken prisoner, when it was reported that he was killed, and was a prisoner on Johnson's Island when the war ended.

Holland was unable to learn the whereabouts of his wife's family, and it was not long before a vague and uncertain rumor informed him that his wife was dead. He made every effort to find her or learn her fate, on receiving no news he at last believed her to be dead.

He took charge of the little farm and in a few years was making a comfortable living. Two years after his return he married the daughter of one of his neighbors and the two lived happily together for twelve years when his wife died, leaving him four children.

When the Brock family went west they left some property in Alabama and about a year ago the

surviving members of the family came back to the old homestead. Among those who returned was Mrs. Holland, now Mrs. Lucy Morris, a widow of five years with three small children. She had married in Arkansas, fifteen years ago and had been a widow for five years. When she heard that her first husband was living she refused to believe it until Holland himself stood before her. When the two again stood face to face time had wrought many changes in their appearances, but the old love light beamed in the eyes of each. They are united now after all these years of separation and their children play together as happy as larks.



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