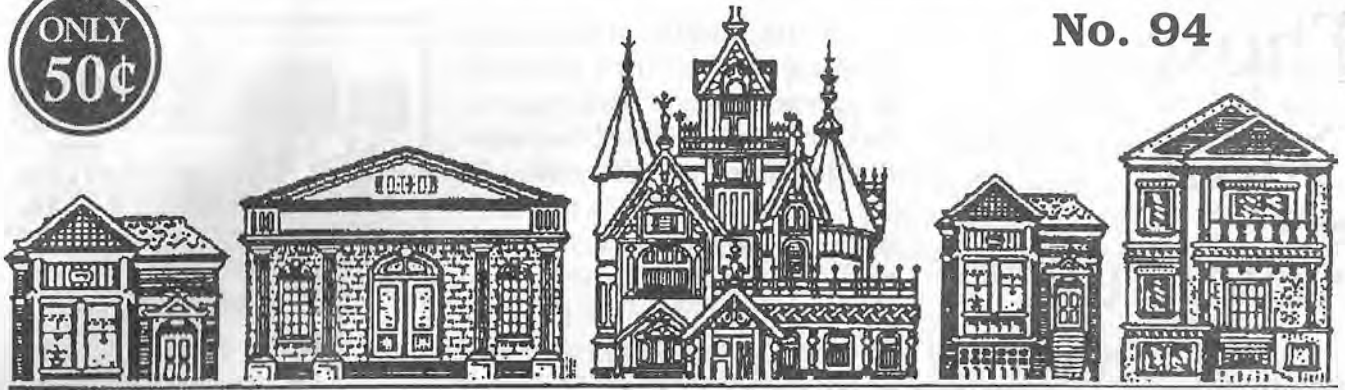


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Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY



Those Damn Revenuers

Guiding the boat carefully so as not to make any noise, the two men eased toward the faint shadows on the north bank of the Tennessee River. The night was pitch black with clouds obscuring the faint glow of the stars. The cold fog that hung over the river bottom made the night seem even more ominous. Several hundred yards away, in a small clearing, was an illicit distillery with seven or eight mash vats sitting nearby.

It was going to be a long night for the revenuers.

Also in this issue: The Murder Of Flossie Putnam

Those Damn Revenuers

Guiding the boat carefully so as not to make any noise the two men eased toward the faint shadows of the north bank of the Tennessee River. The night was pitch dark with clouds obscuring the faint glow of the stars. The cold fog that hung over the river bottom permeated the rough clothes the men wore, making the still night seem even more ominous.

Leaving the boat tied to a small sapling, the two men silently began walking cross country. With no trail to follow the men relied on instinct alone as they waded through a mixture of swamps, brambles and briar patches. After walking for several hours the men came to an abrupt halt at the top of a small rise. Several hundred yards in front of them the faint glow of a fire was flickering against the background of the dark forest.

Silently, the man in the lead made a slight motion of his hand, telling his partner to circle around to the left. Crawling on their stomachs, being careful not to break twigs or make any noise, both men approached the fire from different directions until they were but yards away.

In the middle of the small clearing was an illicit distillery with seven or eight mash vats sitting nearby. One man was stoking the fire while others were in the process of filling half-gallon jars with the illicit brew. The men were in a jovial mood; there would be a payday as soon they finished. Suddenly one of the men paused as he saw a shadow at the edge of the clearing. Before he could fully determine what it was, the shadow spoke in a loud authoritative voice:

"Federal Agents! You're under arrest!"

Almost immediately, two of the men at the furthest edge of the clearing began to run. Within yards, their flight was interrupted, however, when another man stepped from the shadows of a tree.

"Going somewhere, boys?" he asked grinning while dangling a pair of handcuffs in his hands.

Shrugging their shoulders, the two would-be fugitives gave up while muttering under their breath, "Damn Revenuers!"

The men the moonshiners were talking about were Don Taylor and Kent Blankenship, who between them, struck terror in the hearts of North Alabama moonshiners for well over a decade. During their careers, they busted almost a thousand moonshine stills and sent thousands of violators to jail.

During the 1950s and 60s, North Alabama was awash with



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illicit distilleries. Contrary to the popular notion of moonshiners being folk heroes trying to eke out a living with a small still, many already had criminal records and were drawn to moonshining simply as a way to make an easy dollar.

With an investment of between five and six hundred dollars, a person could set up a still and buy the raw materials. The whiskey cost less than a dollar a gallon to produce and could be wholesaled at between five and eight dollars, ensuring the moonshiner a profit on his first run. These enormous profits helped finance other criminal enterprises, ranging from automobile theft to kidnapping, and even worse, in many cases helped to corrupt the justice system. In one year alone, it was estimated that over 7000 gallons of moonshine was transported to Atlanta daily.

When Kent Blankenship was transferred to Huntsville as the resident Treasury Agent he'd al-

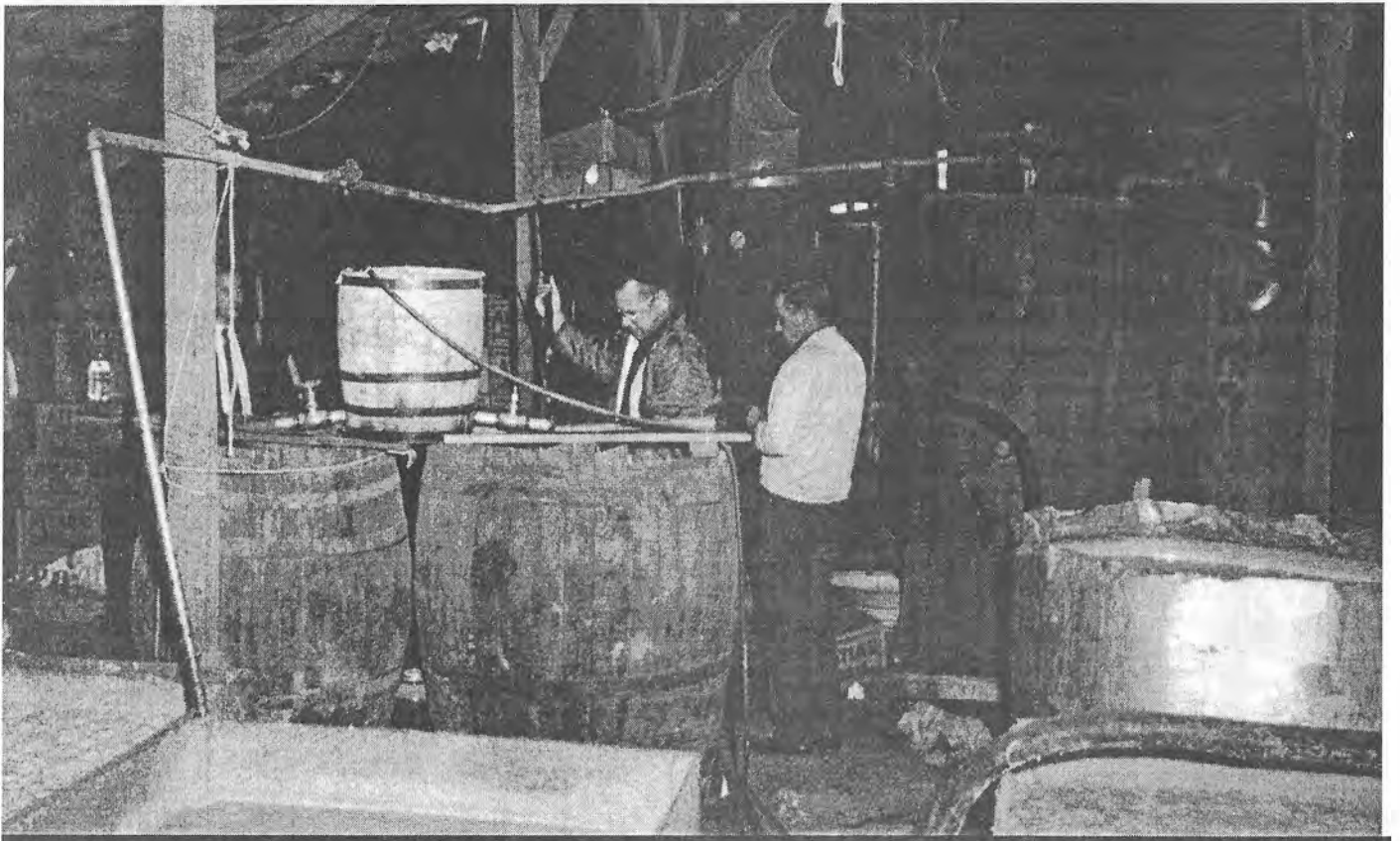


Above: Moonshine stacked in the back of a trip car

ready had a colorful career. While working in south Alabama he had infiltrated a large moonshine organization and worked undercover for several weeks actually helping to manufacture the liquor. As a result of his work the ring

Below: A still in Jackson County

was broken up with many of its members being convicted and sentenced to long terms in federal prison. Possibly, realizing it would be fruitless for him to attempt to work undercover in the area again, it was decided to transfer him to Huntsville where he was not as well known.



Blankenship laughed as he recalled his first day in Huntsville. "I had just moved here and didn't even have my things unpacked when Don Taylor, a State Investigator called. He said he had a tip on a still over in Marshal County and wanted to know if I could give him a hand."

"We parked the car near Honeycomb and started up the mountain. We must have walked four or five miles, up mountains and down mountains. Just about the time when I was starting to wonder if there was any flat land in North Alabama, Don motioned me to be quiet and pointed up ahead. His informant had been right—the still was running full blast and the hands were busy bottling the liquor.

"Don just casually walked into the clearing like he belonged there and said "Hello, boys." Before they could react we had handcuffs on all of them.

"Later, while we were getting ready to dynamite the still, Don asked me how I liked Huntsville. "Too many damn mountains!" I said. "I didn't know at the time that we would eventually walk over almost every mountain in North Alabama."

Informers were an important asset to the revenuers. Often a moonshiner would inform on his neighbor because of some long forgotten feud, or in some cases, simply to put the competition out of business. A few small-time bootleggers were allowed to operate on the condition they would keep the agents informed on who was buying and selling. Most of the time, however, violators would turn informer when confronted with a long stretch in prison.

"Often we would arrest a violator," recalled Don, "and Kent and I would play "good guy—bad guy." "Kent would act as if he

wanted to make a Federal case and I would say that maybe I could get the case in the state court. Federal laws about moonshining were much more severe.

"Of course," I told the violator,

"You're going to have to give us something!" When faced with doing hard time in Atlanta most of the violators talked. The funny thing about them though was that regardless of how they got caught,



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most of them thought they had been informed on. When arrested they would always ask who told on them and when we wouldn't tell them they started asking if it was this person or that person.

"Their pride wouldn't let them admit that they might have gotten caught because of their own carelessness."

Generally speaking, though, moonshiners were a crafty bunch. They knew all sorts of tricks that warned them if somebody had been snooping around their stills.

Much the same way a big game hunter stalks his prey, the revenuers studied the moonshiners habits and became expert woodsmen. The smallest detail, such as a broken limb in the woods or a trail leading across a field to nowhere could have a significant meaning.

One old time moonshiner whom we'll call Jed, (he prefers to remain anonymous) recalls trying to outwit the revenuers. "We used to try and put our stills on a dead end road. We'd find someone who lived on the road to watch out for us. Kin folks were better 'cause they wouldn't talk. Then if they saw someone suspicious they would hang a blanket on the clothesline to warn us. Around the area of the still itself we would

string black thread-- then if it was broken we would know someone was prowling about.

"Those damn Revenuers got to where they would watch for that thread and they would just step over it-- even at night!"

Stealth and cunning was essential in planning a raid. The agents would observe a location and try to determine which way the violators would run when they were confronted. Then with one agent making the arrest the other one would hide on the trail he thought the violator would take. If that failed there was no choice but to try and run them down on foot.

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8. A Man Called Gurley - Nathan Bedford Forrest's Notorious Captain by Colonel Donald H. Steenburn (\$19.95).
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an agent tells about the time he was chasing a violator who wouldn't give up. The agent chased him for miles through swamps and briar thickets. He finally narrowed the gap to about 50 feet of the runner but couldn't gain any more ground. Every time he would stop to catch his breath the violator would stop, too. Then when he started running again, so did the violator. Finally, the agent at the point of collapse, pulled his gun and yelled to the violator, "I'm just going have to shoot you. I can't run anymore!"

The violator gave up.

Many moonshiners proved innovative in choosing sites for their operations. Besides the normal location in the woods or mountains, many stills were placed in caves, chicken houses, and barns. "We raided a still in Jackson County," remembered Don, "that was actually built under a hog pen!"

Once a still was located, the officers would sometimes hide and observe it for days, trying to accumulate evidence on as many people as possible and waiting for the most opportune time to raid it. The best time would be when the operators would be in the process of running it off, an operation that normally required the presence of everyone involved. Sometimes though, the surveillance took an unexpected turn.

"I was up in a tree hiding, watching a still on a back road with a pair of binoculars," recalled Kent, "when the whole road started to fill up with cars. I was right in the middle of a 'lovers' lane' There was people parking all over the place with no idea that a still was just over the rise!"

"Sometimes if an operation was a big one we would hold off about raiding it for a few days. We'd follow the cars picking up

the whiskey and when they got far enough away from the still so they wouldn't be suspicious we would arrest them. On one still we must have arrested 12 or 14 trippers before we ever raided the still itself. They never knew they were being watched the whole time!"

The trippers, so called because they got paid per trip, were the men who hauled the whiskey from the stills to the customers. The cars they drove were normally high performance, with the seats removed to make room for the gallon jugs. The rear end of the cars were sometimes equipped with special springs to compensate for the weight of the load. A car driving a back road at night with its rear end sagging was a

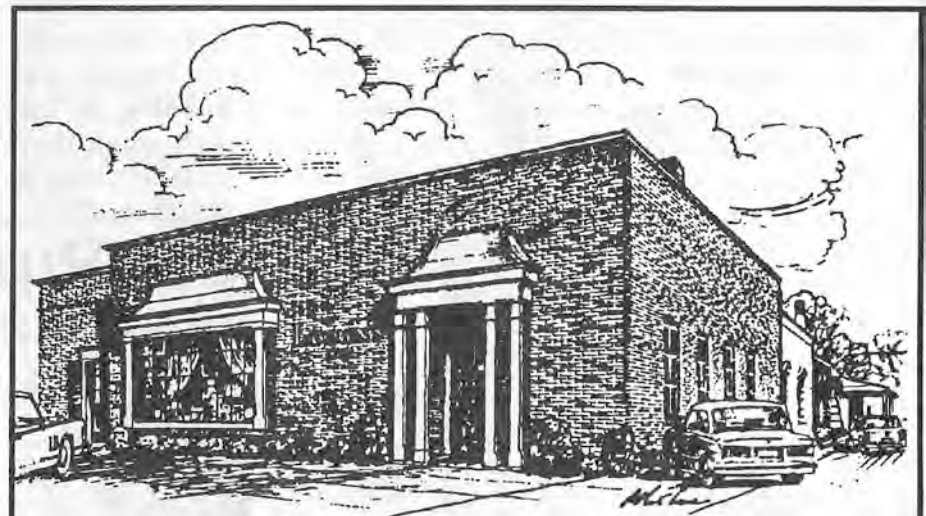
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dead give away to the revenuers. "Some nights," recalled Kent, "we would park a few feet off a road that we knew the trippers were using and watch the cars. We had a spotlight and if you flashed it just right you could you could hit the rear end of the car without the driver ever knowing it.

"Once a car was spotted with its rear end riding low we would take off and try to ease up behind it before we turned our headlights on. Normally the trippers would be so surprised they would not try to run. If we knew we might have a runner coming down the road that night we would call for a driver."

A "driver" was an agent known for his skill in handling an automobile. Often barreling down winding twisting country roads at high speed in pitch black darkness with no headlights, it was not a job for the fainthearted.

"Hell, back then," laughed Don, "I'd rather chase a liquor car than eat when I got hungry. I got word one night about a tripper that was going to be on a road up near the state line. I got up there and waited and sure enough, in a little while here he came, driving slow and peaceful just like he was going to church or something.

"I got behind him and flipped my headlights on expecting him to pull over. Well, that boy put his

foot to the floor and took off like a bat out of hell. We probably ran for eight or ten miles and I realized he wasn't going to slow down so I eased up next to him and gave him a little nudge— just enough to send him into the ditch. That boy didn't run any more whiskey for a long time!"

Kent Blankenship laughed as he remembered how paranoid the violators became. "There were so many people telling on everybody that some violators would hide the liquor on the side of the road to be picked up. That way they didn't have to be around when it was picked up.

"We got a call one day about some trouble they were having with a road crew up in Jackson County. There was only one guard, with a shotgun, and about 15 or 20 prisoners. Anyway, the prisoners were working on the road clearing brush when they found a stash of whiskey waiting

to be picked up. Before the guard realized what had happened the prisoners started drinking and by the time we got up there they were running around the woods whooping and hollering and preaching.

"After we got them all rounded up and sent back to the jail, we hid in the brush and waited. In a few hours, about the time the sun started going down, a guy driving a souped-up Chevy pulls up and starts searching the brush. He went to jail, too."

However exciting the job might have been at times, it consisted mainly of old fashioned police work— sitting for hours copying tag numbers, meeting with informers and sharing information with the local law enforcement agencies. Sometimes if the agents had a minor violator but could not build a strong case, local authorities would go ahead and issue an

cont. on page 29

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"But what is it good for?" *Engineer at the Advanced Computing Systems Division of IBM*, 1968, commenting on the microchip.

"There is no reason anyone would want a computer in their home." *Ken Olson, President, chairman and founder of Digital Equipment Co.*, 1977.

"This 'telephone' has too many shortcomings to be seriously considered as a means of communication. The device is inherently of

no value to us." *Western Union internal memo*, 1876.

"The concept is interesting and well formed, but in order to earn a better than a 'C', the idea must be feasible." *A Yale University management professor in response to Fred Smith's paper proposing reliable overnight delivery service. Smith went on to found Federal Express.*

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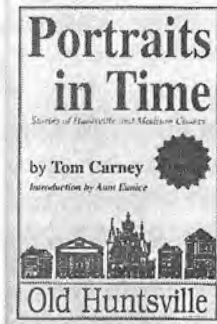
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History Comes Alive At Maple Hill Cemetery

by Jacquelyn Procter Gray

Union General Ormsby Mitchel thundered into Huntsville surrounded by his army in April 1862. He was angry and he wanted revenge in the worst way. "Bring me LeRoy Walker!" he bel-lowed before the dust settled around his boots. As the Confederacy's first Secretary of War, Walker had ordered the first shot fired by the South on Federal troops at Ft. Sumter. His telegraphed instructions brought this terrible war to reality, and Mitchel wanted to see him punished.

Tipped off by friends, LeRoy Walker, grandson of LeRoy Pope and son of John Williams Walker, who was President of Alabama's Constitutional Convention in 1819, left Huntsville that April day quickly and quietly, and went into exile.

Although Huntsville's LeRoy Pope Walker was a pro-secession

antagonist, he never believed the talk of war would come to fruition. He had a distinguished political career, but as Secretary of War under Confederate President Jefferson Davis, he was afflicted with slow decisions and poor judgment. Walker's arrogance angered the Union army even more than his historic order to fire. He gave a speech the day after the firing on Ft. Sumter where he announced, "The flag which now flaunts the breeze here will float over the dome of the old capital at Washington before the first of May." So confident was he of an easy victory, that he said he would "wipe up with my pocket handkerchief all the blood shed as the result of the South's withdrawal from the Union." In just a few months however, his removal from office would be a mutual decision between he and President Davis.

Walker, who died in Huntsville in 1884, is buried in historic

Maple Hill Cemetery. On Sunday May 7, 2000, Walker will be portrayed in costume, along with eighty other fascinating people from Huntsville's past in the annual Maple Hill Cemetery Stroll. From 2-4:30 PM, visitors will enjoy hearing interpreters tell, in first person, facts and fables of the people they represent.

Revolutionary War soldier Albert Russel will be represented along with his famous descendant, Albert Russel Erskine, who became the millionaire president of Studebaker Automobile in Indiana. Erskine brought the company through the first disastrous years of the Depression, only to dramatically take his own life on July 1, 1933.

Dr. William Burritt, whose life was shrouded in mystery and suspicion, will be represented at his family tomb near the grave of Tallulah Bankhead's mother. Between sips of her dry martini, Tallulah will talk about her glamorous Hollywood life while visiting her mother's grave. Governor Clement Comer Clay will greet guests, as will Governor Robert Patton, who tragically lost two sons in the bloody Civil War. Early Huntsville entrepreneur Mollie

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Teal will discuss her generous donation that established Huntsville's first hospital. Of course, Mollie's famous house of prostitution required slight modification before accepting patients. Governor Thomas Bibb will speculate on the rumors that his body was shipped back to Alabama in a barrel of whiskey after his unexpected death in New Orleans.

A widow weeps over the graves of the unknown Confederate soldiers, who, among many others interred at Maple Hill, are a testament to shattered hopes and faded dreams, lying peacefully beneath a field of beloved Alabama soil.

Mollie Walton will visit her unmarked grave this year and talk about her friendship with Mooresville minister C.B. Sanders, known as the Sleeping Preacher for the extra-sensory powers he possessed, yet despised. While in a trance, Sanders was known to describe events miles away, and read and write in languages he never studied. At a party one night, several disbelievers decided to compile a list of difficult questions for the Reverend, in an attempt to reveal him as a fraud. When the designated messenger arrived at Reverend Sanders' home with the questions, he was startled to find the Sanders waiting for him at his door with the completed list of answers.

Miss Walton carried a reputation as well. Reputed to be meaner than a bulldog on a gunpowder diet, but she was tolerated due to her generosity to the Mooresville Brick Church, which still contains one of the elaborate chandeliers donated by her.

Legend says that Miss Walton loaned money to her half-brother, Major James Woodroof, also of Mooresville. When he attempted to repay the debt in worthless Confederate money, she cut him out of her will in a fit of anger. When she died nearly twenty-five years later, her brother's family claimed that Miss Walton had forgiven her brother and the debt, and had written a new will leaving her sizable estate to the Woodroofs. Because the new will could not be produced, the Woodroofs sued the Hundleys, primary benefactors of the original will. Three times the Alabama Supreme Court upheld the terms of the original will, and the Woodroofs received nothing. Miss Walton's grave remains unmarked - perhaps out of spite - in the Woodroof family plot which ironically faces the Hundley plot.

A gentle spring breeze scatters dogwood blooms across old world headstones that were damaged when occupying Union forces used these beautiful monuments for target practice during the Civil War. This event, sponsored by the Huntsville Pilgrimage Association,

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will once again use the donations from the Cemetery Stroll to restore monuments ravaged by time. Held in conjunction with the Cemetery Stroll is the Historic Home Tour on Saturday, May 6 from 10-12 noon and 2-5 PM. This year's event, titled "Porch Gatherings and Other Past Times," will feature six Twickenham residences along with two churches for a cost of \$20. Box lunches will be available for purchase at the Freeman House on Lincoln Avenue. Proceeds from this event will also be applied to the Maple Hill Cemetery restoration project.

The highlight of the Cemetery Stroll will be the dedication of a new flagpole, graciously donated by the ladies of the DuMidi Club. At 4:15 PM, a trumpet will announce the call to assembly at the cemetery headquarters and a color guard will march from the Erskine mausoleum to the main entrance to begin the closing ceremony. The American flag will be presented by U.S. Rep. Bud Cramer, and the Alabama state flag will be presented by Alabama Rep. Howard Sandefur.

The Maple Hill Cemetery

Stroll is free, and best of all, it appeals to all generations of budding and potential students of Alabama history. For more information on the stroll, please call (256) 536-5737.

Test of True Love *from 1875 newspaper*

He was on his knees to her. His face was flushed, his eyes gleamed passionately into hers, he talked rapidly: "Nothing shall separate us ever more, my darling. For your sake I will beard the lion in his den! I will face death on the battlefield! I will endure all hardship, all suffering, all misery!" He paused and looked eagerly to her with his whole soul quivering in his eyes.

"Will you do all this for the sake of my love?" asked she, gazing earnestly into his burning eyes.

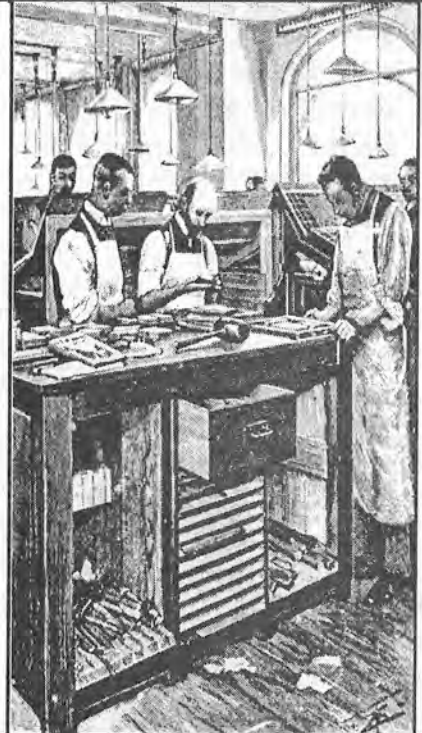
"Yes, yes, a thousand times yes!

"And if we wed," continued she, will you get up first thing every morning and build me a fire?"

With a shriek he was gone.

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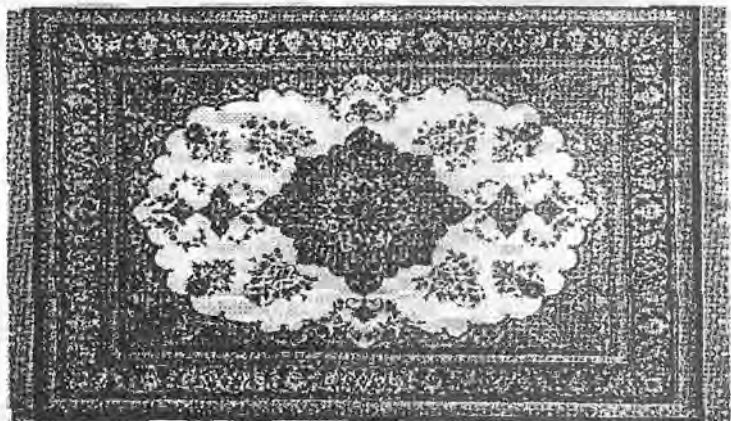
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From Around the World

Huntsville In 1904

Ever wonder what Huntsville was like around the turn of the century? Below is a partial listing of businesses in Huntsville that were in operation in 1904:

- 3 saw and planing mills
- 2 carriage and buggy factories
- 4 latest approved steam cotton gins
- 3 cotton oil mills
- 2 fertilizer factories
- 2 sheet and tin working establishments
- 2 bottling works
- 1 soap factory
- 1 electric light plant and electric railway
- 2 steam laundries
- 3 daily newspapers
- 6 weekly newspapers
- 2 lime kilns, latest improved
- 1 cabinet factory
- 8 commercial printing offices
- 1 business college
- 3 bakeries
- 1 foundry
- 1 gas company
- 3 cold storage plants
- 2 monument works
- 1 cotton compress
- 2 candy factories
- 6 nurseries
- 5 sash, door and blind companies
- 1 stave factory
- 11 cotton mills
- 2 spoke and handle factories
- 1 hoop and stave factory
- 1 fiber and veneer factory
- 1 roller factory to supply cotton mills
- 1 mattress factory
- 1 ice factory
- 1 flouring mill
- 1 broom factory
- 2 machine shops
- 3 brickyards

Military Reasoning

Confederate Gen. D. H. Hill had a fine eye for posterity and a soldier's furlough.

He approved one request for leave, endorsing on it: "Approved for the reason that a brave soldier ought to be allowed to go home whenever practicable, else all the children born during the war or within the usual period afterwards will be the offspring of the cowards who remain at home."

Robert E. Lee was beloved by his army as few generals have ever been, and his personal influence in critical moments was immense. On one occasion Lee was riding through the ranks of his men just before a conflict. He uttered no word. He simply removed his hat and passed bareheaded along the line. "It was," said one who witnessed the act, "the most eloquent address ever

delivered." And a few minutes later, as the men advanced to the charge, this witness heard a youth, as he ran forward, crying and reloading his musket, shout through his tears that "any man who would not fight after what General Lee had said was a coward."

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Woman Arrested As Male Impersonator

Swore She Was A Man But Wife Knew The Difference

from 1878 newspaper

Marancy Hughes, of this town, was married in September last to a person who was known as Samuel M. Pollard. Her relatives opposed the match, but she eloped and was married without their knowledge. A short time after their marriage, Pollard confessed to her that he was really a woman; that she had had trouble with her relatives in the East; had lost her property and assumed the disguise of a man for the reason that avenues for making money would be open to her in the character which would be closed to her as a woman.

Pollard has never given her any particular reason for doing

her this great wrong, but is believed to have been actuated by foolish pride in appearing in the character of a married man. The victim was ashamed to acknowledge that she had been so imposed upon and shrunk from admitting the truth.

Pollard, without actually threatening her life, repeatedly intimated that it would be bad for Marancy if she exposed her, and she kept silence until a fortnight ago, when her aunt got a perception of the fact and questioned her closely, and she related to her the whole story.

The victim says that the woman's real name is Sarah M. Pollard, and that her trunk is filled with feminine apparel. A complaint was file yesterday by J. C. Howerton, accusing Pollard of perjury in swearing when he took out the marriage license that he was a male.

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Civil War News From Jackson County

*Huntsville Daily Confederate,
Feb. 13, 1864*

From Jackson County, Alabama. Recent advises from Jackson County, Ala., represent the terrible devastation throughout the county, except where there are mountain defiles and fastnesses favorable for guerrilla operations.

We are told that Maj. Lemuel G. Mead is operating in that county with five companies, and with good effect — that he, recently, captured and brought out 20 prisoners. He remains, with his men, in the county and subsists them there, at points, where it would be dangerous for the Yankees to travel and they are discreet enough not to attempt it.

There are three Tory companies there — one raised in Jackson County, the Captain of which is [Ephraim] Latham, who deserted from the 50th Ala., (in which he held the rank of Lieutenant), about a year ago. The other two companies are from DeKalb County, Alabama.

The Yankees feel contempt for them and stigmatize them as the

1st Alabama Tory Battalion. We are told that one of the miscreants — Sample by name, not long since, went to the house of Elias Barbour, a true Southerner, and beat Mrs. Barbour with a hickory withe, and only desisted when her daughter, heroically, seized an axe and drove him off.

We are, also, told that an old "Rebel" woman, living near Bellefonte, was struck by a Yankee, with a stick, on the back of her neck, breaking it. The Courthouse and all of the block on the West side of the Square, in Bellefonte, have been burnt by the Yankees.

One of the parties from whom we get our information, represents that he was under arrest at Stevenson and had an opportunity of learning the sentiments of Sherman's Corps on the question of reenlistment, and they, generally, declared that they would not reenlist. Another said, he did not believe over ten men to a company had reenlisted.

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Huntsville Coffee Talk

by Aunt Eunice

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



Well, spring is here and I hope everybody is enjoying our beautiful city where everything is so green and the flowers are blooming. This month's photo was **Lee Segrest** and the lucky winner used to sit behind Lee in the 5th grade! **Gary** is going to enjoy a good home cooked meal for guessing Lee's picture.

My sympathy goes out to my two son-in-laws, **Larry** in the loss of his daddy on March 3, and **Wayne** in the loss of his mother on March 2. I love these two families so much and am very sad.

Glad to see some dear friends that came to see me recently, **Larry Robinson** and **Joyce Russell**. Also **Bill** and **Joyce Counce** and **Ann Hallmark** from Florence.

I'm so proud of my good friend, **Julie Arnett** who was chosen teacher of the year of the County School system. She

teaches Special Education at Madison County Career Academy.

My sympathy to **Terry Hatfield** and his family on the death of his dad. I love you all.

Congrats to **Mayor Spencer** on the great job she's doing for Huntsville. People moving here tell me that this is the greatest place they have ever lived.

Of course, we have always known that!

Channel 19 gave **Robert Reeves** a beautiful surprise birthday party. Boy, was he surprised! They say he is 50 years old but he only admits to 30!

So many of my friends have had birthdays this month - **Tim Morgan**, **Howard Bailes**, **Susan Kirkland**, **Ramona Rodgers**, **Whitt Merrill (my grandson)**, **Toni Lowery** and **Jim Heard**.

Doris Lumpkin celebrated her birthday with **Martha Delaney** and **Kathy Isbell**. They

had a great time!

I sure was surprised recently when **Travel America Tours** brought a bus load of people from Milwaukee, Wisconsin to have breakfast with me. You should have seen them put away the ham and biscuits!

Boy, Have I got a bone to pick with **Loyd Tomlinson**, owner of the **Outback Restaurant!** I was eating dinner down there and he was at my table and started talking about the great breakfasts at the **I-Hop** restaurant. Loyd, just let me catch anyone else trying to feed you and your lovely wife breakfast! You know where you are supposed to come!

My boyfriend, **Tom Glynn**, director of the Senior Center, just returned from Florida with his cute wife **Jennie**. Jennie was on a business trip with her company,

Photo of The Month

The first person to identify this child in the picture below wins a breakfast at Eunice's Country Kitchen. So stop by and tell Aunt Eunice who you think it is!

Hint: Local restaurant owner who I love very much and who also has the sweetest wife!



Last month's photo was
Lee Segrest

A Helping Hand

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



...or tell us what you need! Call 603-4377

Carlton Cove. Tom didn't say what he was doing but he had a great sun tan!

Man, can you believe how many folks **Jane Smith** fed at her Kick-off party? Her volunteers said they fed over 1,000 people ... I'll tell you one thing, Jane will make a great Circuit Court Clerk and she deserves the chance at it—she's been there for 28 years.

Well, the "big" deadline is coming up (April 8th) and so far no one is running against anyone—judges, commissioners, etc. Guess we'll know for sure on April 9th.

Have you noticed my new coffee pourer ... **Roger Jones**? Roger sure is being seen all over the place. Politics sure keep a body busy and everyone knows that Roger is running for County Commissioner because **Harold Harbin** is retiring. Good luck Roger!

My deepest sympathy to my dear, dear **Jeff Enfinger** in the loss of his grandmother, **Mrs. Annie Wade Hayes**, and my sympathy to her children, **John** and **Jimi Hayes**. She was a very special lady.

Hope everyone is getting ready for the **Wal-Mart Expo**, June 9 and 10 at the VBC. Remember, all the proceeds go to benefit the Senior Center. My sweet friend, **Susan Kirkland** of the Senior Center has got the fabulous **Coasters** coming to the Expo, and our own **John Malone** and I are going to MC the event again this year! So, all of you **SENIORS**, mark your calendar!!! Free admission, free health screenings, free parking, and lots of fun.

By the way, speaking of **John Malone**, he came to see me and brought his wife **Julie** and their darling children to eat some good ole biscuits. Hope Nashville is treating all of you well ... Huntsville sure misses you.

Judge Riddick, Huntsville will never be the same without you as Probate Judge, but, if someone has to take over I can't think of anyone better than **Tommy Ragland** to do the job.

City Councilman, **Glenn Watson** came by last week and I sure did enjoy my visit with him. He's already out and gathering votes for his election. Good luck, Glenn. One more thing, **Jim** and **Susan Kirkland** are so excited about the future marriage of their son, **Mike Homrich** to **Julie Evarts**. They are going to Ft. Lauderdale, April 29. They're getting married on the beach, and then they're setting sail for 7 days for the Bahamas! Did I mention that Jim and Susan are sailing, also? Have fun on your honeymoon, Mike and Julie, and just know that Aunt Eunice loves you both real good!

Everyone have a safe and happy Easter. Come see me and remember that I love each and everyone of you.

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From Memphis With Love

The following recipes are taken from the Memphis Junior League's, "The Memphis Cookbook."

Cheese Boxes

- 1 loaf unsliced bread
- ½ lb. butter
- ½ lb. sharp Cheddar cheese
- 1 t. cream
- ½ t. garlic powder
- ½ t. salt
- 1 unbeaten egg white
- Tabasco

Cream the cheese and butter til smooth, add egg white, cream, garlic powder, salt and Tabasco to taste. Chill til mixture can be easily spread. Remove crusts and slice the loaf of bread into 1-inch slices. Cut the slices into 1-inch cubes. Spread five sides with cheese mixture, place sixth side down on cookie tin and bake at 375 degrees for 15 minutes or golden brown. These can be frozen after you've spread them with

cheese, and taken out when ready to bake.

Red-Devil Balls

- 1 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese, room temp
- 1 4 ½ oz. can deviled ham
- 1 c. pecans, finely chopped

Blend the cream cheese with the deviled ham, refrigerate til easy to handle. Shape into 30 small balls. Roll in the chopped pecans or walnuts, refrigerate just long enough to firm up again. Serve with toothpicks, alone or with olives or crackers.

Cream of Onion Soup

- 4 medium sweet onions, sliced
- 2 T. butter
- 1 T. flour
- 2 c. of heavy cream
- 2 c. milk
- Salt and Black pepper to taste

Saute onions in butter. First, blend flour in a little warm milk. Heat remaining milk and pour over the onion, then add the flour paste, blending well. Add the cream and sprinkle Parmesan cheese over mixture. Serve with croutons.

Barbequed Ribs

- 5 lbs. spareribs
- 1 t. salt
- 1 t. pepper
- 1 lemon, sliced thin
- 1 large onion, chopped fine
- 1 c. ketchup
- 1 t. chili powder
- 1 t. celery seed
- ¼ c. each brown sugar, vinegar, Worcestershire sauce
- ½ t. mixed herb seasoning
- 2 c. water

Cut the spareribs into serving size pieces. Spread, meaty side up, in a large shallow pan. Sprinkle with salt and pepper, put a slice of lemon onto each rib, and sprinkle the chopped onion over all. Brown 30-45 minutes in a 450 degree oven. Mix the remaining ingredients and bring to a boil for barbeque sauce. After 45 minutes pour off the grease, add the sauce to the ribs and roast uncovered for 1 - 1 ½ hours more. Baste, turn occasionally. Add water if sauce gets too thick.



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Artichoke Hearts with Roquefort Dressing

1 can Artichoke hearts
1 wedge Roquefort cheese
½ lb. butter
Lemon juice to taste

In a double boiler melt butter, add the Roquefort and lemon juice. Drain the hearts, add to the butter sauce and serve hot with toothpicks. It's a romantic and supposedly, aphrodisiac snack.

Southern Fried Okra

2 c. sliced fresh okra, sliced crosswise

1 c. corn meal or flour
salt and pepper

Dredge the okra with the corn meal or flour, that has been seasoned with the salt and pepper. Drop in deep hot fat, drain. Serves 4-6.

Hawaiian Delight

2 pkg. lemon Jell-O
2 c. hot water
2 c. ice water
1 large can crushed pineapple, drained
½ pt. sour cream

Dissolve Jell-o in hot water, add the ice water. When Jell-o begins to thicken, whip with an egg beater til fluffy. Mix the pineapple with the sour cream and fold into whipped Jell-o. Pour into

pretty mold and chill til firm. Before serving, garnish with fresh fruits.

Sauces

Chocolate Sauce

2 cakes bitter chocolate
½ c. sugar
½ pt. heavy cream

Melt the chocolate over low fire, add sugar and cream. Heat and stir til sugar is dissolved and sauce is smooth. Serve hot or cold over cake or ice cream.

Caramel Sauce

1 c. sugar
¾ c. heavy cream
1 heaping T. butter
1 t. vanilla

Caramelize ½ cup of the sugar by heating it in a heavy saucepan over very low heat and stirring constantly as it melts and browns. Place the other ¼ cup sugar and all the cream in the top of a double boiler over boiling water, heat til very hot. Add the caramelized sugar and stir til all the caramel is melted. Remove from heat and add butter and vanilla. Beat well, keep in jar in refrigerator. Can be heated over hot water.

Sabayon Sauce

1 whole egg
3 egg yolks

½ c. sugar

½ c. Curacao or Grand Marnier liquor

1 t. grated orange peel

Combine ingredients and place in double boiler over warm water. Heat mixture, beating constantly til sauce is thick and smooth. Serve over fresh fruit compote.

Quick Spiced Peaches

1 large can peaches
½ c. white corn syrup
½ c. vinegar
1 T. pickling spice

Add the spice and vinegar to the syrup. Boil 10 minutes. Add peaches and simmer 5 more minutes. Chill and serve.



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Mystery Of The Confederate Treasury



As the Confederate States began to collapse on all fronts, a fortune in gold bullion disappeared from the Confederate treasury. For years historians have debated about what happened to this treasure. Now a recently discovered letter, written in 1882 by James Benaugh, of Athens, Alabama, may help shine light on the events surrounding the disappearance of a fortune in Confederate gold bullion.

Reading the current publication in regard to the funds said to be in hand when, "the bottom dropped out of Dixie" recalls to memory some facts which may tend to shed some light on the subject.

On May 3, 1865. I received - from Brig. General A.R. Lawton, C.S.A., an order in regard to turning over "tax in kind" stores to the Georgia Railroad Company. Far into the night he sent for me again on the premise that the C.S.A. Government owed the Georgia Railroad Company over one million dollars, and that the paroled soldiers of our army needed the railroad in order to return home, gave us the instructions "the trains must not be stopped," and to this end invested me to confer with

Jno. P King, president of the railroad, and act in concert with him. In continuing the trains and aiding the transit of returning soldiers. I was also directed to inform president King that a sum of money (\$1,400 to the best of my recollection) in silver coin would be sent to him the following day to aid in this purpose.

The money was sent to King and declined by him as likely to produce some collision with the Federal authorities, and the last I heard of it, it remained in the hands of the messengers - awaiting the softening of president King or the reorganization of the Confederacy.

In this interview with Gen. Lawton, I was given to understand that this silver was sent to aid in

running the railroad, that its bulk and weight had prevented the fleeing Confederate officials from taking it with them. I was also informed by Gen. Lawton that they had but a lean supply of gold to take the party to a foreign country, if even it was sufficient to carry them to the coast.

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and Mallory took with them. I know naught, but when the next day, the presidential party proper crossed the Georgia RR near Union Point, their small wagon train could not have carried any large treasure. Some 10 days afterwards it was my fortune to be on the train which brought ex-president Davis and Senator Clay from Atlanta to Augusta, stopping at Crawfordsville to scoop up VP Stephens. Mr. Davis' baggage certainly showed no treasure chests, and I heard from his captors, exulting in his capture, no boasts of rich spoils.

In this connection light may be had by another incident. When president Davis left Washington, Ga., there was a large amount of specie there, said to belong to Virginia banks. This was in charge of the bank officers, chief of whom was Mr. William P Taylor.

Several days after Mr. Davis left Washington, these 10 or a dozen gentlemen, each armed with his individual respectability, a copy of the 8th commandment and an army colt, undertook to convey a wagon train loaded with gold from Washington to Richmond, Va. They proceeded safely a day's journey, then camped, detailed guards from among themselves, arranged their reliefs, and then retired to rest their weary bones and blistered bottoms, unused to forced marches, army saddles and high trotting horses.

About midnight a raid was made upon them. Thirteen cavalrymen ran in and, "gobbled the capoodle." Treasure and guards, escorts, wagons, teams and teamsters were all captured.

And now the flickering light of the campfires revealed a scene to interest fun loving gods as well as greedy and needy men.

On one side was to be seen a platoon of sleek bank clerks,

cashiers and presidents, with faces whiter than their hoary locks, reading to the raiders the commandment, "Thy Shall Not Steal," and striving to convince them how wrongly they were acting.

On the other side, 13 veterans of the gray, in full cavalry uniform, standing appalled by their luck.

Four million in gold - about 20,000 pounds of dead weight - if they carried it off in wagons they would be pursued and lose all. If they loaded their horses they could carry scarcely it all - only about \$30,000 each for the poor ragged confeds.

It was almost better never to have gained the capacity for such loss. Stoutly and sadly, each knight of the road and the lost cause loaded his horse and then rode away, sadly cursing his enforced moderation.

The bulk of the treasure remained safe by its sheer bulk and weight.

This writer interviewed Mr. Taylor the next day in Washington as his shaking hand wrote out placards offering rewards for the recovery of the money. Mr. Taylor stated the loss to be between \$360,000 and \$400,000. How much was ever recovered, if any, I never heard.

May not this be the money upon which is founded the wonderful tales of the, "Lost Confederate Treasure?"

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- * 117 have bankrupted at least two businesses
- * 3 have been arrested for assault
- * 71 cannot get a credit card due to bad credit
- * 14 have been arrested on drug-related charges
- * 8 have been arrested for shoplifting
- * 21 are current defendants in lawsuits
- * In 1998 alone, 84 were stopped for drunk driving



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Know Your Rights

Right To Redeem Real Estate

A right which has been a part of Alabama law since 1842, but which is only occasionally used, is the right to redeem real estate. Because of the complexity of the law in this area, a person purchasing such land or a person seeking to redeem the land would be well advised to seek the assistance of a lawyer.

If you purchase land that becomes available on the market because of an execution, judgment or foreclosure, the purchase is subject to the right of those who lost title to redeem the property.

The right to redeem must be exercised within one year from the date of the execution, judgment or foreclosure sale. However, there may be circumstances where this time limit could be extended (i.e., under the terms of the Soldiers and Sailors Relief Act).

There are a number of interested persons who have the right to redeem the property, including the mortgagor, his/her spouse, chil-

dren, heirs or devisees, a holder of a second mortgage, or a judgment creditor, among others. A person in possession of the property on the date of execution, judgment or foreclosure loses the right to redeem if s/he fails to deliver possession of the property to the purchaser within ten (10) days after a written demand for possession.

To redeem the property, an eligible person must pay or tender (offer to pay) the purchase price of the land and all other lawful charges plus interest. Other lawful charges might include the costs of permanent improvements, taxes, insurance premiums, etc.

To learn what it will cost to redeem the property, the eligible person can make a written demand of the purchaser for a written statement of the debt and all lawful charges claimed. The purchaser must provide the list within ten (10) days after demand and forfeits all claims or right to compensation for improvements if s/he fails to do so. If the person who desires to redeem disagrees as to the value of the improvements, s/he has ten (10) days time to appoint a referee to ascertain the value of the improvements.

Upon payment or tender of payment, if the new owner refused to transfer title back to the person seeking redemption, the

Court can be asked to enforce the person's redemption rights.

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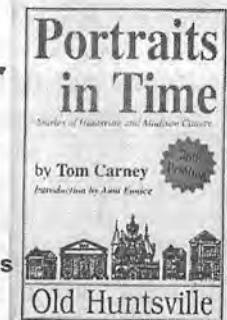
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Fooling The Revenuers

by Jim Harris



We lived in a little house on the Cabiness Farm on Harrison Cove Road about a half mile or so from the intersection of Gurley Pike, or if you were going the other way, Maysville Road. There was a little church building next door and a cemetery across the road. We lived there two years.

Every weekend during the two summers we lived there, an older couple passed by on their way into Harrison Cove to their "country cottage" which was located at the upper end of the Cove and about a quarter mile up the side of the mountain.

The place was a small farm that had been reclaimed by the mountain long before this couple came to possess it. One of them had inherited it, and they were determined to reclaim it. I visited the place several times when we lived on the Houk Farm a mile or so further up in the Cove.

It had a fenced garden. The fence was overgrown with honeysuckle, but you could still tell the fence was there. The orchard still had a few fruit trees standing. There were several springs that

ran year round near the house.

The house was originally a one-room log house, but had a room built on some time later. The addition had no floor, though. The road to the farm, overgrown with vegetation, still had visible ruts. It appeared to have been heavily used at one time.

Late in the second summer the couple stopped by to rest; it was a good two mile walk from their place to our home. This became a weekly ritual and, evidently, we had gained their trust, for this visit was a shade different. After a few minutes the man pulled a pint jar from his pocket and offered my Dad a drink. He refused it but the man told this story about the contents of the jar.

He had put a floor in the side room of his cabin to make it a kitchen with an old cast iron cook stove. Now the kitchen was on the downhill side of the house and the floor was elevated up off the ground. He built a still under the kitchen floor with the flue running up through the floor and into the flue of the cook stove.

Revenuers came calling one

day trying to find his still. Earlier that day, he had killed a copperhead snake and thrown it across the garden fence-- remember that the fence was overgrown with honeysuckle vines. The Government men had sticks they used to separate and lift vegetation so they could see the ground. When they stumbled across the snake they began shouting and hitting at it with their sticks-- they just about beat that fence to death before they left.

They never found his still nor his supply of moonshine, and all the time he had his liquor in Mason jars in the honeysuckle vines directly beneath that snake.



Cracklin Cornbread

2 cups stone ground yellow wheat meal mix, 1 1/2 cups milk or buttermilk, 1 egg beaten, 1/2 cup oil, 1 cup crackling, 1/2 teaspoon onion powder, 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder salt if desired.

Mix all together in bowl til smooth. Pour 1/4 cup oil in skillet and heat. Bake at 450 for about 25 minutes.

A Merciful Judge

A judge in Tennessee decided a jury went a little far in recommending a sentence of 5,005 years for a man they convicted of five robberies and a kidnapping. The judge reduced the sentence to 1,001 years.

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Courting In The Old Days

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In the U.S., courting was not all full of sweetness: During the Colonial days, a romantic date consisted of sitting around the hearth with a dozen family members, and whispering sweet nothings in her ear through a long, hollow tube with mouth and ear pieces.

In one American Indian tribe, courting was a game of hide-and-seek. After the man received permission from the lady's family, she hid in the woods. If two out of three times he could find her, she

was his. If not, he could try again two weeks later. If he failed again, he had to give up.

Other countries had some pretty strange customs, as well:

In an Australian tribe the man shot the woman with barbless arrows and then was kind enough to offer to take her home and take the arrows out.

The wedding ceremony of a certain group of Eskimos involved a curious ordeal. The groom had to drag his betrothed to his hut.

She would be kicking and screaming, fighting him vehemently, until safely in the hut. Once inside she cheerfully assumed her new station in life.

Potatoes on the Half Shell

Bake 6 large potatoes. When soft, cut in halves lengthwise, and scoop out the inside. Mix with butter, a bit of cream, pepper and salt, and the whites of two eggs beaten to a stiff froth. Whip the potato mixture until white and fluffy. Put mixture back into the shells, and return to the oven and bake until brown on top.

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It Was The Law



No fireworks were allowed in the city in 1860 without the consent of the mayor, who specified when and where they were to be exhibited.

A person was permitted to burn out a stove pipe or chimney flue only when the roof was wet from rain or covered with snow.

A fine of from \$10 to \$50 was assessed upon any individual who carried an unguarded candle or lamp into a stable, or who kept ashes in barrels, boxes or wooden vessel of any kind.

All persons attending a fire, and not a member of any company, were required to assist the firemen, if called upon, or pay a fine of \$10.

All businesses except hotels, boarding houses and apothecaries were required to close on Sundays. Barbers could keep their shop open until noon.

A fine of \$1 was assessed upon any person who bought goods or commodities of any sort

on Sunday. An exception was made in the case of sickness or necessity.

No sports, public exercises, exhibition or game was allowed on Sunday. Violators were subject to a \$5 fine. A similar penalty was required of any person who loaded or unloaded a wagon, or drove horses, cattle, sheep or swine through the streets, except in case of necessity, on that day.

If a person erected a frame building on the public square, or within 300 feet of its boundaries, he was fined \$50 for each day the structure was allowed to stand, either in process or after completed.

A tax of \$1 per head was levied for each hog more than six months old and for each hog more than six months old and for each litter of pigs found at large in the city limits.

A tax of .50 cents per head was levied annually on dogs.

Kite-flying was banned as a misdemeanor.

Bathing in the Big Spring branch within less than 300 yards below the dam, between the hours of 4 a.m. and 10 p.m., constituted another misdemeanor.

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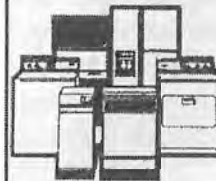
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Coal Oil Discovered in Madison County

Taken from the Weekly Democrat, 1880

Huntsville has a new sensation in the discovery of coal oil on the farm of W. T. Crawford, who resides on a part of the old Mack Jones plantation, 34 miles in a northwestern course from Huntsville. We learn that Mr. Crawford commenced digging a well near his ginhouse last October and after reaching a depth of about 40 feet stopped digging on getting to a seam of limestone rock. Subsequently, he began to blast the rock, and reaching a depth of 12 or 15 feet, encountered a strong smell of coal oil.

Having had some experience in supplying pumps for the oil wells in Pennsylvania, his attention was arrested, as he believed, by the discovery of an abundant source of oil. A piece of the excavated rock retained a strong oil smell some time after it was brought to the surface of the ground, and the surface of the water in the well is covered with oil.

These indications of a coal oil bonanza have so impressed Mr. Crawford and some of his friends that they set about getting up a company to establish a coal oil factory. The following persons have united to form a coal oil company: T.B. Crawford, J.M. Moss, L.W. Day, Henry McGee, A.W. McCullough, J.D. Vandeventer.

This is not one of the "we four and no more" enterprises, of which we have heard, but the books are open for more subscribers.

The Company, under the name (we believe) of T.B. Crawford & Co., believing that like indications of coal oil exist in this section, propose to procure from owners of land leases of large tracts - say 10,000 acres - with a view of sinking wells for oil, and we have seen one or their printed blank leases. We trust that the enterprise will prove successful, and that there may be "millions in it." Huntsville - indeed, all North Alabama - needs something to stimulate the dormant enterprise and energies of our people, and we trust that propitious Nature, in the plenitude of her mercy and beneficence, has opened the way, in this instance, to test the wisdom and capacity of our people to avail themselves of her bounty, and they will respond with alacrity, and reap rich profits from their investment.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

After a brief flurry of activity, Madison County's interest in oil speculation quickly died down when it was discovered there was not enough oil to make the drilling profitable. Over the years other wildcat drilling rigs attempted their luck but all would prove unsuccessful. The last well was drilled in 1937, near Madison, where for many years afterwards it was used as a deer stand.



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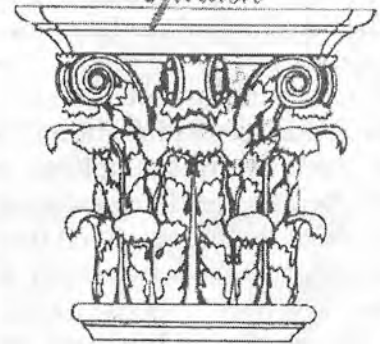
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Mass Transit

by Jim Harris

Huntsville had a mass transit system when I grew up in the thirties and forties. It was still going strong when my family moved out into the county in 1946.

Actually, the part of Lincoln Village I grew up in was still in the county in 1946. The city limits were about halfway between Oakwood Avenue and 5-Points, as I remember. We still were not more than a mile from downtown.

The transit system was probably the best public service this city has ever had. It was also affordable, even in those days. A nickel or dime is all I ever remember paying for a ride downtown. If a kid had a quarter, he could go to a movie, at least at the Elk Theatre, have a Coke, a bag of popcorn and ride the bus downtown. If a candy bar or ice cream cone was more important, he could walk. I don't remember riding the bus back home that often. It could be that I seldom saw a coin larger than a quarter. Even then, a quarter would buy only so much.

The route my bus took ran north on Meridian Street to Oakwood Avenue. Right on Oakwood Avenue to Andrew Jackson Way (Lee Highway at the time). Then right on Andrew Jackson to downtown. The buses

I haven't spoken to my wife
in 18 months - I don't like
to interrupt her

ran often enough that to miss one meant only a short wait until the next one. If you were in a big hurry, you could probably walk fast and beat it.

Somewhere along the way something went wrong. When the masses got scattered out into the suburbs as far as the eye can see,

we got rid of the mass transit system. But then, we also got rid of many good reasons to go downtown.

I suppose whoever was in charge of the system decided that if there is no reason for a bus to go downtown it may as well go nowhere.

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Revenueurs

cont. from page 8

indictment without arresting him. Much of the time the violator would then simply disappear, leaving one less violator for the agents to worry about.

Sugar was the curse of moonshiners. Immense quantities of sugar was required to operate a still and it had to be purchased— a fact the agents were well aware of. Weeks at a time were spent poring over receipts of grocery warehouses and sugar distributors. Once the agents established that the business were dealing in large amounts of sugar that could not be explained it would be presented with a “letter of demand.” The order basically required the business to document all the sugar sold, as well as reporting the purchasers names and tag numbers.

“In the end,” recalled an old moonshiner, “it was the sugar that put us out of business. We couldn’t buy any locally so we had to truck it in from Nashville or Chattanooga. The wholesalers knew what we wanted it for so they jacked the price up sky high. It just got to where there wasn’t any money in making whiskey anymore.”

By 1978, moonshining in North Alabama was practically extinct. Many of the people who had once made their money in the liquor business began turning to

drugs. The same people who had once built stills in hidden coves began growing marijuana and the trippers replaced their loads of moonshine with kilos of pot.

There’s not much demand for people to bust moonshine stills anymore. A younger generation of law enforcement officers, people who have never seen a still and probably never will, have taken the place of people like Kent Blankenship and Don Taylor. The only reminders left are the memories.

Stop by Aunt Eunice’s Country Kitchen some morning and look for two elderly men sitting quietly in a corner drinking coffee. Maybe they will invite you to sit down and if you’re lucky, they will be telling stories of a time gone by; of a time when they were known as, “Those Damn Revenuers.”

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The Murder of Flossie Putnam

At the sound of the car horn blowing, young and vivacious Flossie Putnam, who had been a beauty contest winner at the age of 16, jumped to her feet. Glancing in the full-length mirror standing in the hall, she checked her makeup and shapely figure one last time. Her mother, sitting in a chair and watching, was agitated that her daughter was going out again. It seemed to her that Flossie was always on her way to another date.

"Going out again tonight?" asked the mother. "Who are you seeing now?"

"My number one boy friend!" replied the daughter gleefully. "The one I really love."

"Please don't stay out too late, honey," the mother pleaded.

Flossie kissed her mother lightly on the cheek, and pausing only long enough to tell her not to wait up, she dashed for the door.

Mrs. Putnam watched as her daughter departed. Her whole life was wrapped up in Flossie, an only child and her sole support.

Mother and daughter lived in a modest house on O'Shaughnesy Avenue in the village of Dallas, a cotton mill section at the edge of Huntsville.

As darkness closed over the hills and valleys that night of April 30, 1937, angry clouds were gathering on the western horizon to swoop down on the countryside in one of the worst storms ever experienced in the Tennessee Valley. Within an hour after the daughter's departure from home, lightning flashed and thunder cracked with a fearsome fury. This was followed by a gale of hurricane proportions and then rain came down in torrents. As the storm increased in violence, Mrs. Mae Putnam, alone in her house, felt almost psychically worried about her daughter's safety for the first time in her life.

Flossie, however, was safe from the elements of the night. She was comfortably seated in a darkened corner of the White Castle, a popular roadhouse four miles north of Huntsville. Oppo-

site her sat a companion, and on the table between them were two glasses filled with whiskey.

The popular tavern was almost empty of patrons on this stormy night. Besides Flossie and her date, there were only a few others present. No one paid any attention to the young couple until they began arguing in loud voices. The man seemed to be doing most of the talking, his voice thickened by the whiskey he had already consumed. As suddenly as the argument had begun, it ended, with the couple leaving the bar holding hands.

For the next hour the remaining patrons of the tavern continued to drink and talk as the storm raged outside. Two of the customers were preparing to leave when suddenly the door flew open and Flossie Putnam, her face and clothes splattered with blood, stumbled through the entrance.

The patrons anxiously gathered around the young girl offering to take her to the doctor, only to be met by a curt refusal.


"Leave me alone," Flossie cried angrily. "Please go away."

Just then the door opened and the girl's escort walked in. He, too, was splattered with blood and appeared to have been heavily intoxicated. Grabbing Flossie by her arm, the man angrily ordered her to leave with him. Neither spoke a word as they left.

Through a window, those in the tavern saw the couple climb into a pickup truck and drive away.

The following morning, when Mrs. Putnam realized her daughter had not returned home, she became scared. She began calling her daughter's friends only to be told that they had not seen her. One of them did tell her, however, that the man Flossie had been

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seeing was named Jim.

Mrs. Putnam next notified H.C. Blakemore, Huntsville's chief of police. Anxiously she told the Chief of her daughter dating someone by the name of Jim, and of her concern.

Recalling the fact that Flossie had joked about getting married, Blakemore said there was nothing he could do in case of an elopement since Flossie was of age, but he would do what he could.

Blakemore began searching for the man who had been with Flossie the night she had disappeared. Finally after much hard work, he was able to narrow the list of possible suspects down to five whose first names were Jim. Four of the suspects were able to give alibis for the night Flossie disappeared. The fifth, James McAnally, lived only a short distance from Blakemore's home. McAnally was married and was known as a devoted husband and the father of eight children.

With attributes such as these, Blakemore was at first hesitant about even considering McAnally as a suspect. Despite his personal feelings, the Chief nevertheless decided to question McAnally.

During the course of the next several weeks, Blakemore visited McAnally's residence several times, only to be told each time by Jim's wife that he was not home. Finally Blakemore demanded an explanation as to why McAnally was never home.

Obviously worried, the woman said Jim had disappeared. "I know I should have reported it sooner but I kept thinking that he would come back."

The woman said she had not seen her husband in almost a month.

Upon questioning the woman, Blakemore was able to establish that McAnally had disappeared

the same night as Flossie Putnam. Now the investigator was faced with two mysterious disappearances instead of one. As rumors begin to spread across Huntsville, the general feeling was that McAnally had abandoned his wife and children and ran off with the attractive Flossie Putnam.

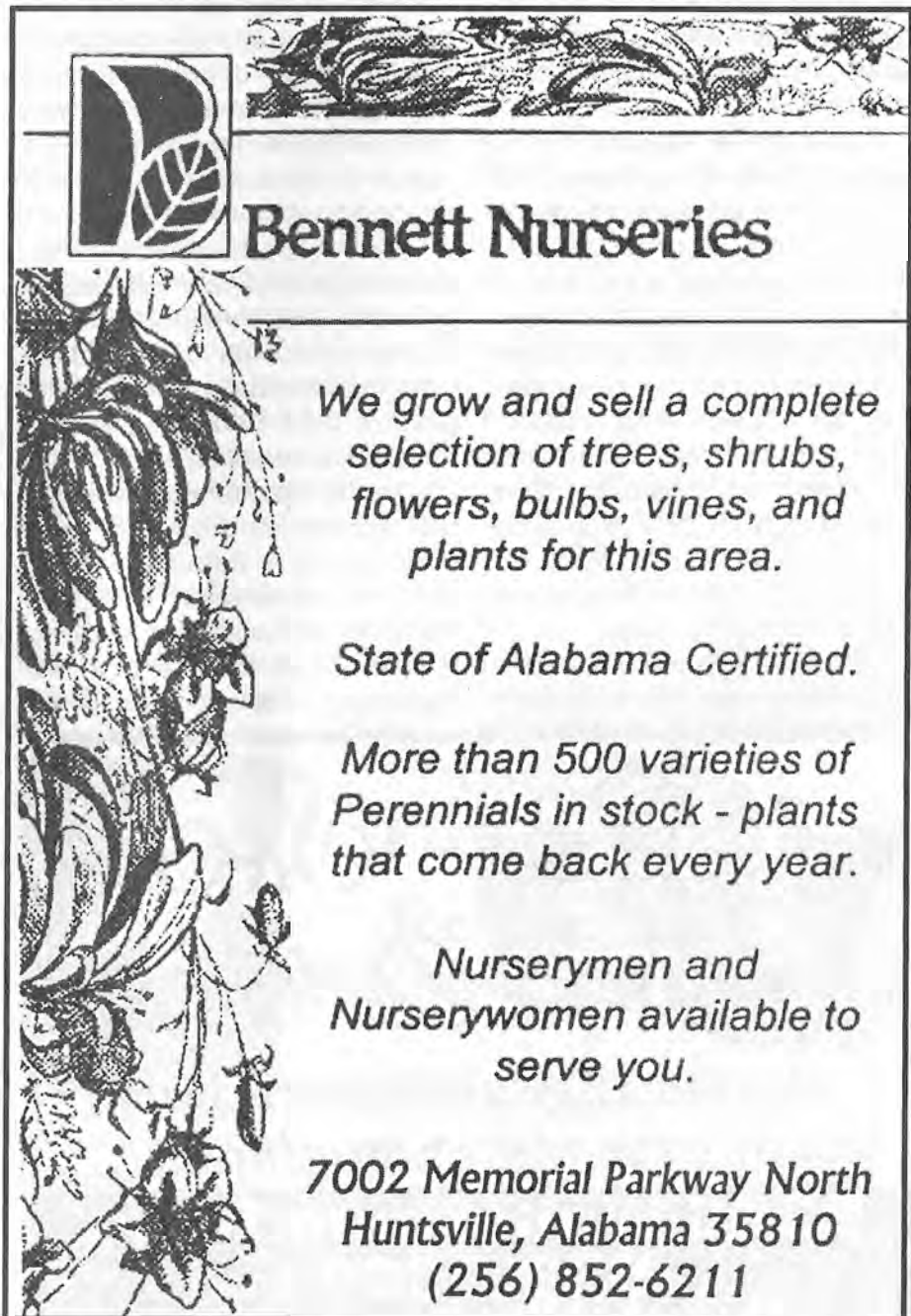
The whole case had stalemated when Mrs. McAnally appeared at headquarters one day, three months later, to tell the Chief that she had heard from her husband. He was working in Texas,

had a good job and was about to send for her and the children.

"Did he say why he left so suddenly without telling anyone?" Blakemore asked.

"He just said that he had an unexpected job offer and he wanted to make sure it worked out before telling anyone." The look on her face showed that even she knew it was a flimsy excuse.

Then, as the woman was leaving the office, Blakemore said he would like to talk to her husband about the disappearance of



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Flossie Putnam.

Indignantly, the woman replied that Blakemore was mistaken in his assumption that her husband had anything to do with the Putnam girl. "My husband has never been unfaithful to me!"

"Mrs. McAnally, I'd like permission to search your place before you leave for Texas."

Upset by the thought of police prowling about her home, and certain that her husband was in no way connected with the disappearance of Flossie Putnam, she refused. She could not understand the Chief's attitude nor his request as she stalked out of the office.

The state of Alabama had a peculiar outlook regarding the search of private property, regardless of the nature or seriousness of the case involved. A legal search could be made only with the consent of the resident, or with a warrant sworn out in his name whenever the consent was refused. When a search was made with proper warrant, should the officer fail to find what he was looking for the resident had recourse against the officer and superiors in the courts of the state.

So Chief Blakemore refrained from searching the McAnally

home and premises; he had no proof of his vague suspicions. Jim McAnally had turned up alive and there was the possibility that the girl whose name had been linked with his might likewise be located. Until he had proof that the girl had not merely run away, the police official had no intention of subjecting himself to a costly damage suit.

There were many conflicting and baffling possibilities in the events surrounding that stormy evening. Had the Putnam girl dashed into the roadhouse that night because she was fleeing the man who tried to kill her? If so, why did the man follow her into the bar where other people were bound to see him? And why did she leave with him again?

Every promising trail the investigating Chief followed seemed to lead to Jim McAnally, and then dissipate into thin air. Especially intriguing was his mysterious departure from home at the time of the girl's disappearance.

Surely Jim McAnally was not the "number one boy friend" mentioned by Miss Putnam, nor the one to whom she referred in jesting about an elopement. What attraction could there be in an insignificant married man of 41

years for the attractive and popular beauty with countless admirers? Yet, there seemed to have been numerous clandestine meetings between the two .


After months of diligent work, Chief Blakemore believed the girl might be dead, the victim of a jealous suitor. But his investigation along those lines was stalemated until some evidence of the body--or the murderer could be located. To hunt for one involved dangerous financial risks and to look for the other was a colossal undertaking, with the name of Jim and a general description that might fit hundreds of men the only clue to his identity. Where to look for either was a mystery as dark as the stormy night into which the girl and her friend had disappeared.



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Months and then years passed. Finally, the summer of 1939 rolled around with still no trace of the missing Flossie Putnam. In the long span of time the residents of North Alabama had practically forgotten the former beauty, and many changes had occurred in the lives of the principal characters in this strange drama.

Chief Blakemore had resigned his position as head of Huntsville's law enforcement body and had been elected sheriff of Madison County. In his new capacity he had not forgotten the baffling Putnam mystery, now more than two years old. The McAnally home was now occupied by the owner's father and mother, who had moved in when McAnally's wife and eight children left for Texas.

Reports from Texas told of McAnally's success. He had acquired half ownership in a garage and had purchased a home for his family.

Blakemore never heard from Jim McAnally though he still wanted to question him in regard to the missing Flossie Putnam. He also still wanted to search the house in which McAnally had resided while in Huntsville but his repeated requests had been met with stern refusals from the new occupants. There was strong resentment of any thought that anything could be wrong. And a search was still impossible with the meager information available.

On the morning of August 13, 1939, Sheriff Blakemore received in his offices at the county courthouse a visitor with what appeared to be an important bit of information. This visitor was a neighbor of the McAnallys in West Huntsville.

"For the past few days," the man said, "my dog has been acting strangely around the McAnally

house. He has been digging under the kitchen in the rear. I watched him again this morning through the fence. He digs a while, sniffs the hole he is making, and then digs again. I am sure there is something buried under that house."

Sheriff Blakemore decided to act immediately, to risk his judgment against a possible lawsuit. After obtaining a search warrant and accompanied by two deputies armed with shovels and digging irons, he went to the home which had previously been McAnally's residence. There he saw where the dog had been digging but the opening was too narrow to permit the entry of a human body. The sheriff and his deputies then entered the kitchen and their attention was immediately drawn to a section of the flooring which had a different appearance from the remainder of the boards. The elder McAnally explained this section had rotted and he had repaired it several days after his son went to Texas. Sheriff Blakemore ordered his men to remove the boards.

Directly beneath the floor was a mound of earth, large and oblong in shape, which had partly caved in. The aged occupant of the

house, still unaware of the purpose of the unusual procedure but asking no questions, explained that his son had started to excavate for a cellar with the intention of installing a furnace but had abandoned the plan just before he went away. The sheriff ordered his men to start digging.

Four feet down in the earth, which was loose and easily removed, Deputy Smith struck something hard with his shovel. Reaching down, he brought to the surface a small shoe, almost disintegrated, which contained the bones of a human foot. The officers continued their digging with renewed vigor and soon uncovered the skeleton of a woman. The shoes and a few fragments of clothing remained among the

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bones. These were carefully removed to a mortuary, where an hour later Mrs. Mae Putnam, torn with grief, identified the bits of cloth and leather as part of the dress and shoes worn by her daughter the night she disappeared.

Flossie Putnam's strange disappearance was finally solved.

A long-distance call to the sheriff's office in McKillney, Texas requested the immediate arrest of Jim McAnally. Within an hour, a call came from the Texas city stating they had arrested one James McAnally.

When McAnally was returned from Texas he was brought before Solicitor Jeff D. Smith and Sheriff Blakemore for questioning. The man had made no statement since his arrest and the officials expected a continued denial of the murder.

Sheriff Blakemore addressed McAnally. "Jim," he said, "it looks pretty bad for you and we want to hear your story of what happened that night."

Calmly and without any outward sign of remorse, McAnally began to tell his story of what had

transpired that night. He admitted to being out that night with Flossie Putnam, whom he said he had known about a year. He told how they rode around for hours talking and drinking whiskey.

When the storm was at its peak, he said he parked the pickup truck off the New Market road. It was here, according to his story, that the girl fell out of the truck and cut her face.

"The next thing I remember," he continued, "a man was shaking me to wake me up and get out of his way so he could drive into his home. After moving the car I tried to arouse Flossie and she didn't answer. Well, the woman was dead.

"I didn't know what to do so I went home, took the body out of the truck, and carried it into the house, placing it in the closet in the downstairs room. I then fell asleep.


"I was wakened soon after daylight by my wife and children moving about in the house. I thought of the body, and knew I had to dispose of it. So I told my wife to take the children and go to the home of my parents.

"I had planned to dig a basement and had actually started it. So after the family left, I removed the floor in the kitchen and deepened the hole. Then I placed the body in it and covered it up, nailing down the floor tightly. When my wife and children returned at 11 o'clock they were none the wiser. I left the following morning and finally landed in Texas. You know the rest."

Though the story sounded feasible, it was a lie. Medical evidence had already shown that the girl died from a gunshot wound.

The trial began Nov. 1, 1939. McAnally offered a plea of "not guilty because of insanity." Solicitor Smith recounted the mass of testimony against the accused man and demanded the death penalty for a brutal murder.

Three days later a jury deliberated four hours and returned a verdict of guilty and fixed punishment at life imprisonment. Notice of appeal was filed at once but this was withdrawn two weeks later and McAnally was taken to prison.



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Some Days You Can't Win

Letters have been edited for content and clarity.

Dear Editor,

Please cancel my subscription. I was born here in Huntsville almost 70 years ago so I know a little about its history. I think it is offensive that you do so many stories about black people and slaves. That is not what our history is about. There were white people, too.

E.H., Huntsville

Dear Old Huntsville

You have made a mockery of our history by insisting on doing stories about the Confederates. They lost the war and you should realize it. There is, and was, nothing glorious about a bunch of rabble trying to secede from their country so they could continue to own slaves. I will refuse to read your magazine anymore until you begin printing stories about the other side.

H.H., Huntsville

Dear Editor,

I used to enjoy your paper until I bought a copy of one of your books. There was a story in it that was about an illiterate man (Oliver McPeters) whom Huntsville elected Sheriff as a joke. Get real! Who do you expect to believe that!

C.B., Huntsville

Dear Editor,

In a recent issue you mentioned my great-great grandfather and spelled his name as Lowther. The correct spelling is Lawther.

You also printed he was born in 1839 - the correct date is 1840. I expect you to correct the error and print a retraction. Be forewarned that I am consulting an attorney as to my legal rights.

K.E., New Market

Dear Editor,

This letter is to serve notice on you not to print anything else about the Judge Lawler murder. I have been researching this story for almost 15 years and intend to publish a book about the case. If you continue to print information about subjects I am interested in I will have no choice but to take legal action.

T.H., Huntsville

Dear Old Huntsville,

Several years ago you ran a story about one of my husbands relatives. I don't know the name but he lived in the last century and was a soldier. Please find the article and I will call soon for the information.

P.S. Please make four copies.

J.O., Gurley

Dear Editor,

I am writing to offer my services to you magazine. I am a gifted clairvoyant and believe I can use my gift to help solve many of the mysteries from Huntsville's early days. I can work at a discount.

G.H., Athens

Dear Editor,

I have a good ide for a book. If you will rite it for me I will give you 25% of the book money and 10% of the movie rites. I think it will be a blockbuster only I can't spell to good.

R.Y., Nashville

Dear Sir,

In the Maple Hill Cemetery records on your web site there are no African-Americans listed. This is obviously another example of your blatant racism. I think you should remove it until it is corrected.

G.D., Huntsville

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Enraged Citizens Hang Huntsville Child Molester By The Neck Until Dead

Mob Of 1500 Citizens Sees Justice Done

Huntsville, Ala., July 23, 1909 — Elijah Clark, the man who yesterday assaulted Susan Priest, a thirteen year old girl, was taken from the jail in this city this evening and lynched near the spot where his crime was committed. His body was riddled with bullets.

Sheriff Fulgham defended his prisoner to the last, but a dense smoke from a combination of tar, feathers and oil, fired by the crazed mob, was too much for him, and he was dragged from the jail and placed under a

physician's care. William Vining, an employe of the street railway company, who attempted to rush through the crowd and up the jail steps to assist the sheriff was shot and dangerously wounded. A crowd of one hundred and fifty men, principally employes of the big cotton mills at Dallas, a suburb of this city searched the woods all night for Clark who was identified at the time he assaulted Miss Priest, by her little sister.

No success attended their efforts, and early this morning Sheriff Fulgham started out with a posse, and before nine o'clock had captured Clark on Beaverdam Creek, ten miles from Huntsville. He was soon landed in jail, and by one o'clock the news of the prisoner's capture was heralded to all parts of the city. A mob, composed of mill operatives and men of all callings, was soon formed and marched to the jail, where they stood for a time, apparently waiting for a leader. Sheriff Fulgham, quickly seeing that he had a desperate crowd to combat,

wired Governor Johnson the facts in the case. The governor responded to the effect that he had ordered the militia at Birmingham, Montgomery and Decatur to proceed with all haste to the scene. The sheriff then telephoned Judge S. M. Stewart, and asked for an immediate trial of the man, and the judge replied soon after that he had arranged for a special session of court at three o'clock before Judge H. C. Speake. The mob by this time had assumed alarming proportions, and the sheriff, thinking to quiet the storm, appeared at a window and announced that a special trial had been arranged for the prisoner, and that he would be brought before the court at three o'clock in the afternoon. This was greeted with jeers by the crowd of citizens and the cry "Revenge!" went up.

The outer door to the jail, a wooden barrier, was soon battered down, and the mob gained entrance to the first floor. Here they encountered the sheriff's wife, who pleaded with them to refrain from violence, and let the law take its course. Sheriff Fulgham, however, on hearing the door being forced, retired with his prisoner to the third floor, where he locked himself in with Clark. A large amount of tar, feathers and oil was secured and piled upon the cement floor of the jail, and a match applied.

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A suffocating smoke arose, and spread quickly throughout the jail. The sheriff again retreated to the corner farthest from the fire, taking his prisoner with him. More tar and feathers were brought in and ignited. Fulgham was finally dragged from the jail in a semiconscious condition, and taken to the city hall, and doctors summoned.

The sheriff's departure was the signal for the mob to proceed to their work, and they quickly took complete possession of the stronghold. Fully an hour was consumed in breaking the lock to the cell in which the culprit was confined, but as soon as this was accomplished, two men secured Clark and quickly appeared with him on the front steps of the jail. A plow line was placed around his neck, and he was guarded by twenty heavily armed men in fours. Clark was then dragged out of the jail yard. The mob was followed by fully 1,500 people. The doomed man was taken before his victim and positively identified. The identification complete, the wretch collapsed, and had to be taken up and carried on the shoulders of his captors. The rope around Clark's neck was thrown over the limb of an immense tree by Miss Priest's brother. The victim was thrown across the back of a horse and the animal was led out from under him. The body was riddled with bullets.

Just as the work was finished the Decatur militia arrived at Huntsville.

Editor's Note:

Latèr reports estimated that one person in five living in Huntsville at the time either attended or assisted in the hanging-- but there were no witnesses.

Strange News From 1875 Newspapers



A man was found dead on a country road in Kentucky, with fourteen bullet holes in him, and the coroner's jury rendered a verdict of "death by undue excitement."

The maddest man in Georgia is James Leigh. He was a candidate for member of the Legislature and being a conscientious man voted for his opponent, who was elected by just a one vote majority.

A lazy man fell a distance of fifty feet the other day, escaping with only a few scratches. A bystander remarked that he was too slow to fall fast enough to hurt himself.



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For Sale One Ship Yard

by Col. Don Steenburn

The headlines on the front pages screamed "Decatur's River front Debated," "Chip Mill Planned Along Waterfront," "Senator Wants More Time For Comments On Chip Mill Report," and "Commercial Development Still In Slump, Real Estate Agents Say."

A proud chapter in Decatur's history was on the block and the industrialists and the environmentalists were going at it hammer and tongs.

At stake were just a few weed-choked acres and some abandoned buildings that represented a real success story- Decatur's world contribution to shipping and shipbuilding.

As far back as 1886, Commodore Steven Decatur's hometown was known as a "Steamboat Town" and, in fact, as late as 1910 it boasted the only boat yard between Chattanooga, Tennessee and Paducah, Kentucky.

This original facility was known by the unlikely name of the "Boatyard of the American Oak Leather Company". This company used to manufacture an extract used in tanning leather. When the local chestnut trees were killed by the blight in 1887, this company was defunct.

In 1937 a branch of the Ingalls Steel and Iron Works began shipbuilding operations on the site. Today's industrial ghost town of weeds, rust and neglect are in sharp contrast to the bustling shipyard during World War 11. Working 24 hours-a-day seven days a week, over 1,500 workers built over 3,000 barges, landing craft and "Liberty Ships". In ad-

dition, a contract was also completed with the Dutch Government to build 15 cargo ships.

The new navigation channel on the Tennessee River, not yet completed at the time, was crowded with tows carrying military jeeps, trucks and ambulances. The ocean-going vessels

constructed at Decatur were sent down river to the Gulf.

This local shipyard was known as one of the pioneers in the new techniques of building ships with welded hulls.

As late as 1968 the firm was engaged in large scale building and repairing of steel barges. In

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1983 the shipyard was closed. Various attempts have been made to parcel the land for sale or development involving the United States, Mexico, Japan, and Europe, all to no avail. One commercial Realtor commented, "While there's hope for one parcel, so far there has been no serious offers."

Lately the proud heritage and major contribution to the war effort and local economy has been all but submerged in the controversy surrounding the wood chip business.

The "E for Excellence" rating gained during the war years has been drowned out by opposition to any such use of this land.

We hear "noise from the plant," logging truck traffic near Leon Sheffield Elementary School, "destruction of local hard wood forest," "use of riverfront property for less than 10 jobs," "we have a major channel and reservoir that are beautiful," "long term effects," "depleted oxygen," "industrial discharges," and of course, "runoff."

I guess one City Father said it all when he was quoted as saying "Anything that brings dollars in should have priority."

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