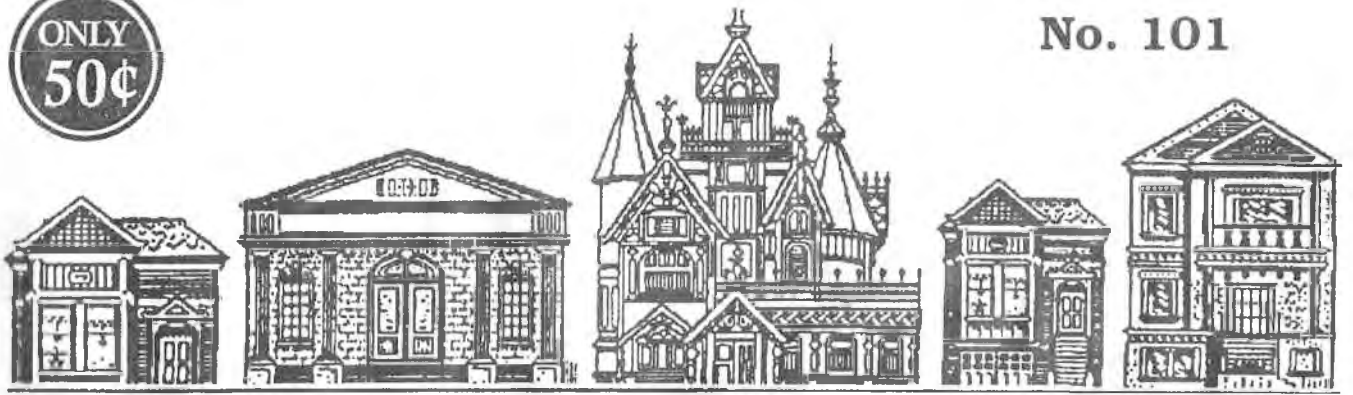


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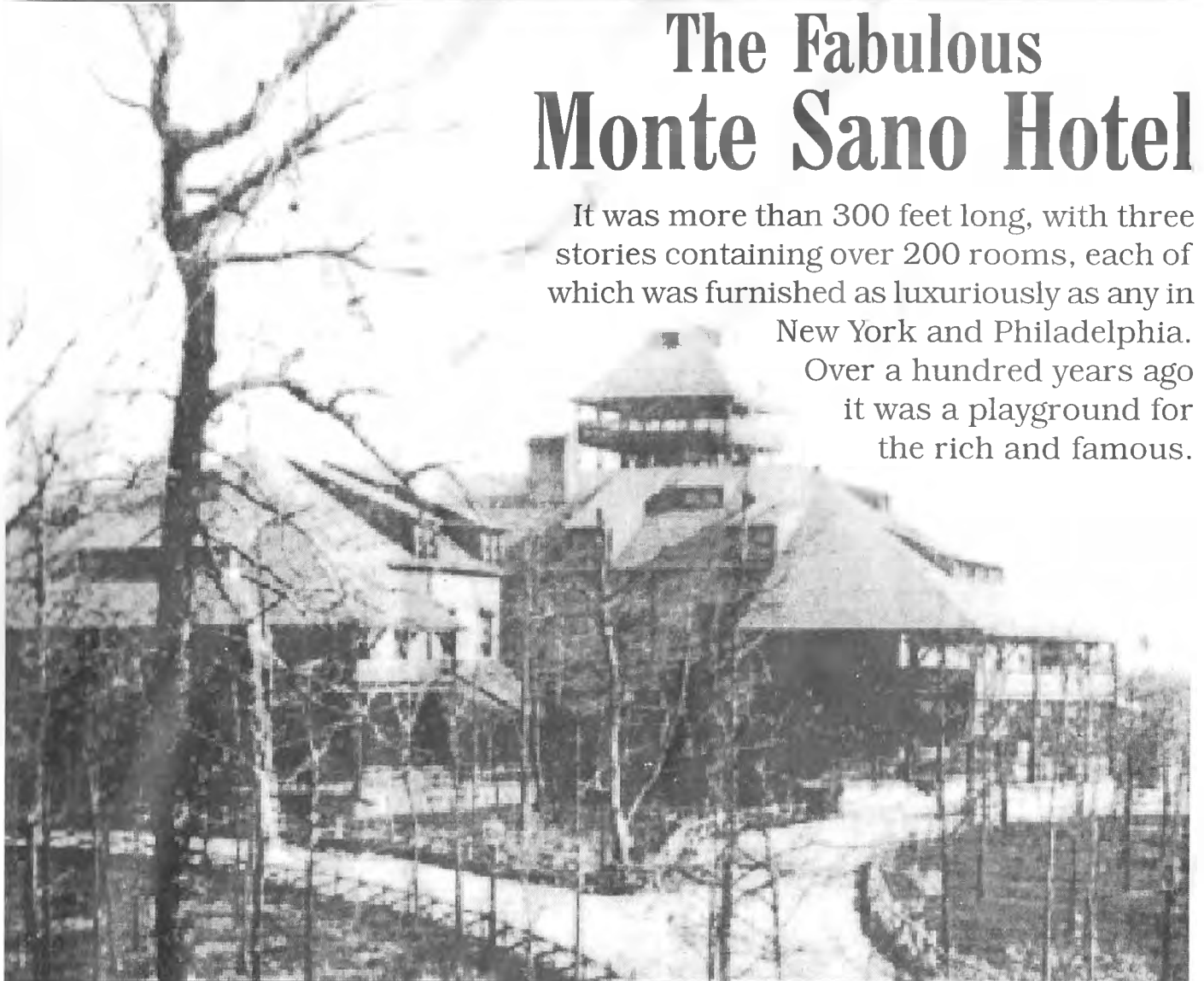
# Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

## The Fabulous Monte Sano Hotel

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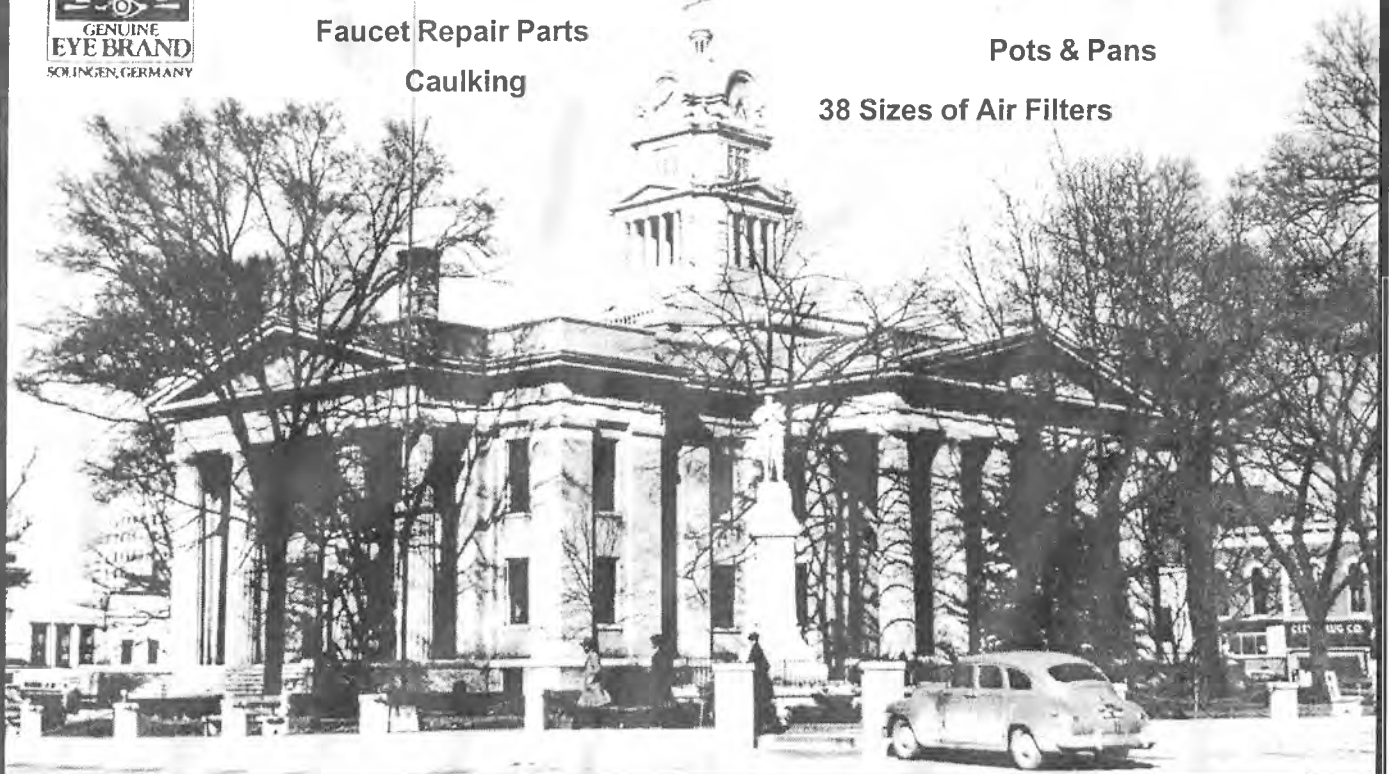
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# Old Timer's Sale



# The Fabulous Monte Sano Hotel

by Jack Harwell

On summer days during the waning years of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, some of the wealthiest and most influential people in the nation could be seen getting off incoming trains at the Memphis & Charleston depot in Huntsville. These travelers had names like Vanderbilt, Astor, and Gould, and were highly placed in their respective fields in both the public and private sector. But they were not coming to Huntsville on business; rather, they were only passing through on their way to one of the country's foremost upper-crust playgrounds – the Monte Sano Hotel.

It was an imposing place, stretching more than 300 feet along the mountain's western rim. Its three stories contained over 200 rooms, each of which was furnished as luxuriously as the finest hostelryes of New York and Philadelphia. Perched only 100 yards from the bluff, it would have been visible from Huntsville, three miles away and a thousand feet below. Pedestrians on the city's

streets could look up and see it, though it was beyond the means of most of them. At times they could hear a train whistle as the Monte Sano Railway shuttled visitors up and down the mountain.

The attraction of the hotel, and the reason for its construction, was the presence of a number of mineral springs on the mountain. In the days before now-benign diseases were brought under control by antibiotics, the healing effects of mineral waters were seen as the means to a long healthy life. The springs on Monte Sano had long been known for their restorative powers. Dr. Thomas Fearn may have been the first to use water from the springs for the treatment of disease, and is believed to have given the mountain its name – Monte Sano, the mountain of health.

By 1833, Dr. Fearn had established a health colony on the mountain. Around this colony was organized the town of Viduta, which had an inn, a female seminary and a number of fine homes. But the mountain top's remoteness kept the area from developing any further. The seminary closed after only three years, and what little activity was left around Viduta was swept away by the Civil War. Little happened on the mountain during the Reconstruction years.



## Old Huntsville

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The area's revival began in 1873 when Michael O'Shaughnessy came to town. O'Shaughnessy was one of a number of outsiders who came in the postwar years, to exploit the South's untapped industrial potential. A true entrepreneur rather than a carpetbagger, he had opened a cottonseed oil plant in Nashville soon after the war ended, and within a few years was so successful that he decided to expand into Huntsville. Michael was soon joined in north Alabama by his brother James and several investors from Nebraska. In order to pursue their goal of building up industry in Huntsville in an organized manner, they formed the North Alabama Improvement Company in 1886.

The Improvement Company also saw potential in the mountain to the east of the city. James had bought a home there, along with 362 acres of land, in 1885. Monte Sano, it was decided, would be the perfect place for a hotel, but not just any hotel. The Monte Sano Hotel would be as grand and as lavish as the finest inns in the great cities of the northeast. It would be just the sort of place that would cater to the well-heeled people who would surely be coming to the area now that Huntsville was becoming a major industrial center.

The project began with the purchase of 3,000 acres on the

western slopes, as well as the old turnpike that had been built up the side of the mountain in the 1850s. On February 16, 1886, a building site was selected adjacent to the old town of Viduta, one hundred yards from the edge of the mountain top. Within a week, sixteen teams of mule skinnners had been hired to begin carting building supplies up to the construction site. Some thought was given to erecting a saw mill to facilitate the work on the hotel, but this plan was ultimately abandoned because of the costs involved. Lumber was freighted in from Chattanooga and Montgomery, although James O'Shaughnessy saw to it that local companies got the first bid on building materials.

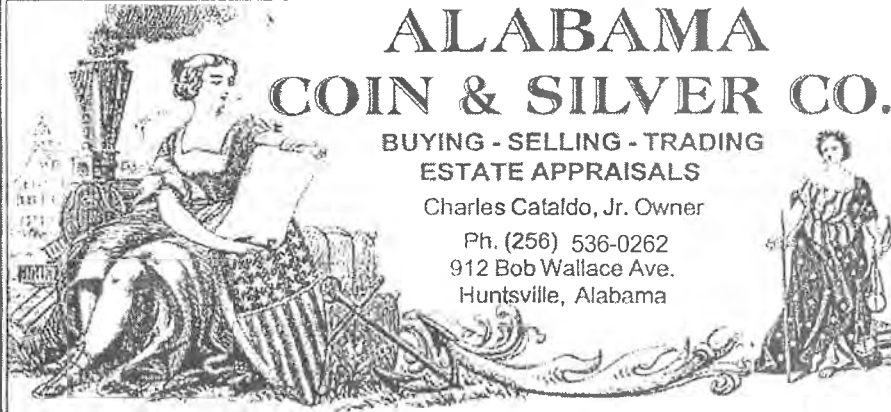
The North Alabama Improvement Company was determined that the Monte Sano Hotel would be the equal of the finest such establishments anywhere in the country. John Rea, the architect, had designed a structure in the popular Queen Anne style that was stately without being gaudy. When completed, the three-story structure would be 308 feet long and 200 feet wide. A wraparound porch would enclose the ground floor on three sides. Rising above the third floor would be a double-decked, bell-roofed observatory. Water would be piped up the mountain's side from Big Spring; drinking water would be piped

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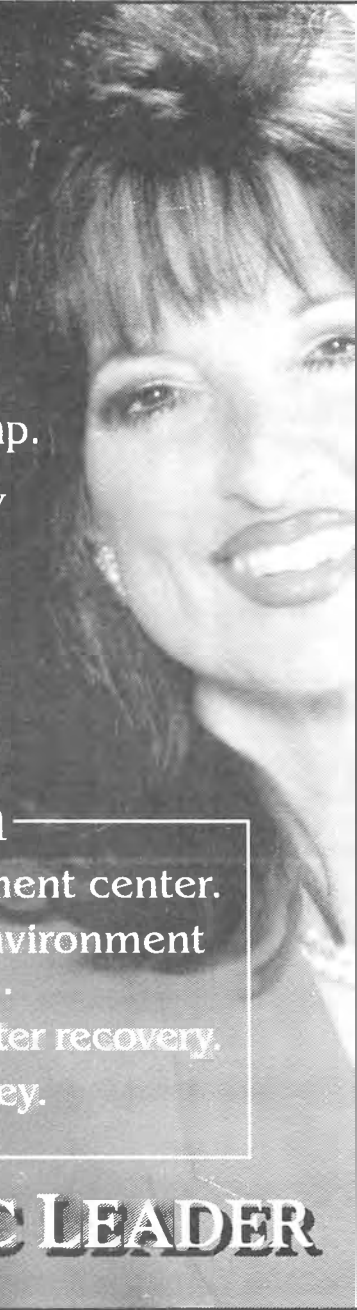
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the boardwalk which overlooked the bluff. Bowling, croquet, and tennis were offered for those who were interested in games. There were also more than twenty miles of hiking and bridle trails which led to such attractions as the natural well, then called the "bottomless well." The trails also led to the numerous springs which were the reason for the hotel's construction. The hotel manager conducted guided tours to the springs daily.

By the time the hotel's first season ended in August, over a thousand guests had registered and the hotel showed a profit. The North Alabama Improvement Company was delighted and began plans for the second phase of the mountain's development – a rail line linking the resort with the city. The members of the improvement company realized that the railroad was the logical next step if the hotel was to be successful. The four-hour carriage ride from the train station was an ordeal which was sure to dampen the enthusiasm of those who came to experience Monte Sano's luxurious accommodations. More people would be encouraged to come to the hotel if they could get there in the comfort of a railroad coach.

Unfortunately, the success of the hotel did not translate into smooth sailing for the railroad. Ground was broken for the road on July 6, 1888, and no sooner had construction begun when it was halted by a strike, probably the first such action in Huntsville history. Management responded by bringing in 500 workers from Birmingham, effectively ending the strike after one week.

More bad luck dogged the railroad. Newspaper stories reported rather unwisely that the line would be completed by the middle

of August. From the depot, it would run eastward up Clinton Street (now Clinton Avenue) and reach the foot of the mountain near Maple Hill Cemetery. The tracks had not yet reached Calhoun Street (now the site of East Clinton Elementary School) by August 4, by which time the railroad's Baldwin locomotive and three coaches had arrived.

By early September three miles of track had been laid – one third of the way to the hotel – and workmen and supplies were being carried to the construction site via rail in a boxcar. On September 6, a work crew boarded the car after a lunch break and began the trip up the mountain. One of the men, a 26-year-old black worker from Eutaw named Frank Barker, was riding on the brake wheel on top of the car. In the days before pneumatic brakes, brakemen would ride on top of the cars and set the brakes by turning large wheels by hand – a dangerous and exhausting job. As the train approached Lincoln Street, it passed beneath an overhead telephone line that had been placed by a private individual at less-than-regulation height. The wire caught Barker by the neck and toppled him to the ground. Before he could move to safety, he was run over by the boxcar's wheels. The other workers quickly ran to his aid, but it was

too late. Barker died before he could receive medical attention.

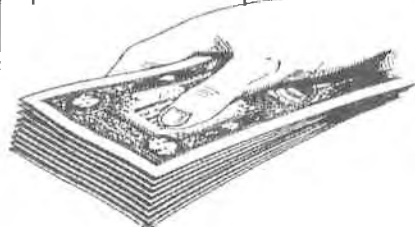
The tragic death of Frank Barker was the worst incident associated with the railroad's construction, but it was by no means the only misfortune that affected the enterprise. It was becoming clear that the railroad would generate no revenue in 1888, and its creditors were becoming nervous. Some even went to court to try to get liens placed against the line. As the litigation went on, the railroad continued its glacial pace up the side of Monte Sano. The last eight and one-half tortuous miles

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would require ten months to complete; the steel rails finally arrived on the mountain top on August 7, 1889. There, a station named Laura's View was constructed to receive passengers going to and from the hotel.

Even after it began operation, the railroad was not an immediate success. It did reduce travel time to the hotel from four hours to thirty minutes, but the trip was not without its hazards. From the depot, the train traveled through the center of town on existing trolley tracks, and shopkeepers were not thrilled with the idea of a huge, smoking, clanking steam train coming down the street. A dummy trolley car shell had to be fitted over the locomotive to keep from frightening the horses, and the train was known thereafter as the "dummy" line.

Not long after it began, the train experienced its first operational accident. In those days locomotives were fitted with sand pipes, which were operated from the cab and dumped sand in front of the driving wheels for added traction when needed. But if the sand became moist, which frequently happened, it would not flow through the pipes. Apparently the sand pipes on the Monte Sano locomotive clogged as it

came down the mountain one day; the engineer was unable to reduce his speed and the train jumped the tracks. Fortunately, there were no injuries and the train was quickly put back into service. The nervous railroad manager took out a newspaper advertisement reassuring the public of the railroad's safety and reminding them that more injuries had come from mishaps involving horse-drawn wagons on the turnpike than on the train.

In spite of all the difficulties with its construction, the railroad was successful in increasing the number of visitors to the hotel and the 1890 season was a good one. The hotel, now managed by Harvey S. Denison, began publishing its own newspaper, the

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Monte Sano *Breeze*. The *Breeze* contained informative articles about the mountain, testimonial letters extolling the hotel's delights, and a good number of advertisements. Also, in 1890, James O'Shaughnessy built a new home on the mountain top about a mile east of the hotel. The house was enormous – perhaps 200 feet long – and was built in the same Queen Anne style the hotel sported. Out back of the house was a lily pond and a gazebo. A footpath, known as "Flirtation Path," circled the pond. The pond was very popular with hotel visitors.

The first visitors to the hotel had carried home tales of its comforts and attractions, and the place now enjoyed a national reputation, attracting tourists from all over the country. They rarely left disappointed, and some of their words of praise were printed in the *Breeze*. One such letter, written by the editor of the *New York Sun*, described a typical reaction to the hotel's finery: "The hotel is elegantly furnished, kept in first-class style, and in all the appointments is a model of convenience, comfort, and luxury ... Neither money nor pains is spared in securing the best service, and in having [the hotel] kept in a style nowhere excelled in the United States."

The early 1890s were the Monte Sano Hotel's best years. Wealthy people continued to come to the hotel for the comforts it provided, touring the mountain's various attractions and strolling the path around O'Shaughnessy's lily pond. But the horizon which had seemed so bright in 1887 began to cloud just six years later. In June, 1893, it was announced that the Monte Sano Railroad would not operate that season. The stated reason was the ex-

pected drop in attendance at the hotel due to the Columbian Exposition in Chicago that year. In fact, the railroad was in serious financial trouble. Its construction and operation had overextended the North Alabama Improvement Company's assets, and various court actions had restricted the line's ability to operate. The hotel was also beginning to operate at a loss.

It was becoming obvious that the hotel and railroad would rise and fall together. Trains began to run again in 1894, but it would be for the last time. Mounting debts forced the closing of both the rail line and the hotel in 1895. The courts ordered the Monte Sano Railroad sold in 1896, and the rails which had been so labo-



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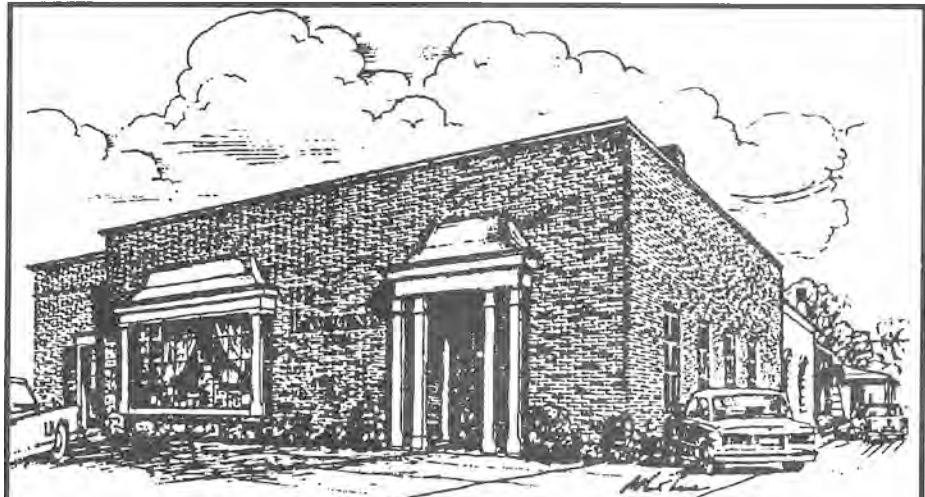
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riously laid just eight years earlier were lifted the following year for scrap.

But the Monte Sano Hotel was not finished yet. It reopened under new management in 1897, and for a while it appeared the hotel would weather its financial difficulties. The Spanish-American War provided a brief boost for the mountain top retreat. Military balls held there were quite popular with the thousands of troops stationed at Huntsville for the war. A mountain resident, Sydney Mayhew, deeded property for a nondenominational church for hotel guests. Management felt confident enough in the future to have electric lights installed on the grounds.

It was no use. Within two years the hotel had fallen victim to a poor economy and a change in popular tastes. Medical science was beginning to find cures for yellow fever and other feared diseases, and people were no longer so willing to make long journeys by train and horse-drawn carriage to high-priced resorts so they could soak in mineral springs for their health. The hotel closed for good after the 1900 season.

By 1901, hogs and cattle were grazing on the grounds so lovingly planned by Major Scrimshaw, where elegantly dressed ladies and bowler-hatted gentlemen had once strolled. The hotel stood empty and forlorn. It appeared its time had passed.

During the next few years, plans were put forth by different parties for reopening Monte Sano's resort hotel. In August 1904, the Huntsville Mercury announced an effort by some local residents to build an electric railway up the mountain. Plans for the rail line simmered for four years, until late 1908, when the newspaper announced an auction to raise funds for the line, at the same time encouraging readers to buy their tickets for the railroad

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right away. In April 1909, word came that the line would be completed by July. Edward L. Pulley, general manager of the Huntsville Railway, Power and Light Company, which was charged with building the railway, then said that efforts were underway to convert the hotel into a tuberculosis sanitarium, which would circulate \$400,000 annually into the city's economy. But just as it appeared that the hotel might actually be reopened, the building and 27 acres of land were sold.

For a short while the old hotel bore the distinction of being one of the largest private residences in America when Lena Garth bought the hotel to use as a summer home for her ailing and elderly father, Horace. But Horace Garth died in 1911, and the structure was vacated once more.

In 1916, yet another attempt was made to reopen the hotel. Jemison Real Estate of Birmingham announced plans to convert the resort to an exclusive country club, with a golf course and tennis courts. The club's activities would also include bowling, billiards, fishing, horseback riding, and fox hunting. It was further suggested that the hotel might also be used as a convention center.

Opening was set for January 1, 1917, but when the date arrived, repairs were still being made on plumbing and electrical wiring. From then until May, newspaper advertisements declared that the facility would be opening soon.

The country club did finally open, on a limited basis, on June 24, 1917. Facilities for the outdoor activities were still incomplete, but the club's manager, Harvey Hughes, promised music and dancing every afternoon and evening. But by this time, America was involved in the Great War, and light lunches and dancing at a made-over resort from the gilded age did not fit the national mood. Jemison was forced to sell the property back to the Garths. Thereafter, the hotel was opened once a year for a public ball; the rest of the time it sat empty.

The mountain around the abandoned hotel was changing, however. In 1926 a group of developers bought 200 acres on the top of the mountain with the idea of building a recreational community of summer homes. Those plans were soon done in by the onset of the Great Depression. Monte Sano Boulevard opened on Independence Day, 1927, and for the first time it was possible to

drive up the mountain in an automobile. Attentive motorists on the mountain might catch a glimpse of the abandoned hotel through the windows of their Packards and Chevrolets.

In the summer of 1935, construction began on Monte Sano State Park. Much of this work was performed by the young men of the Civilian Conservation Corps. In addition to building the cabins and other structures in the park, the CCCs made a number of improvements to the mountain's roads; these included the paving of Monte Sano Boulevard and the old road to Cold Spring, from whence drinking water had once been piped to Monte Sano Hotel. This latter road was renamed Fearn Street, in honor of the doctor who had been the first to realize the healthful benefits of mountain living.

By now the hotel had been empty for over 20 years. Through wars and depression, good times and bad, this old relic of a simpler time waited for a reawakening which would never come. The long carpeted hallways and lavishly furnished rooms remained silent.

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Huntsville *Times* placed a local interest story below the front page headlines: *Monte Sano Hotel Sold; Buildings to Come Down*. The hotel, as well as the remaining furnishings within, had been sold to the Mazer Lumber and Supply Company of Birmingham. The hotel would be dismantled and the furnishings sold. The razing of the building, the story said, would begin immediately.

There is no way of knowing the identity of the last person to walk the hotel's hallways on its last day. Whoever it was would have found the structure in a remarkable state of repair for all the neglect it had suffered. The newspaper ar-

ticle noted that "practically all lumber in the buildings is in remarkably good condition and the interior of the hotel, with the exception of cracked plastering, shows little effects of the passage of years." The interior of the building would have been recognizable to the Astors, the Vanderbilts, and all the other captains of industry who had once walked its halls. If our unknown last visitor had a sense of history, he might have paused for a moment and listened for the sounds of music and of laughter of young men and women who had once passed that way.

Having ascertained that no vagrants had taken shelter in the old building, the person, most likely an employee of the lumber company, left the building, and the process of demolition began. Little by little the grand old structure was reduced until all that was left was one three-story chimney. Somehow, thankfully, this chimney survived.

Gradually, all the structures associated with the hotel fell victim to the passage of time. The O'Shaughnessy house was torn down in the 1920s, disappearing so completely that its exact location was unknown until discovered in the mid-1990s. The lily pond and remnants of "Flirtation Walk" survive, as do traces of the gazebo's foundation. After the railroad tracks were salvaged, the cross ties were left in stacks, which eventually vanished. The Monte Sano Union Chapel was

demolished in 1968. The site of the long-disappeared Laura's View station is now private property on Shelby Avenue.

But the Monte Sano Hotel is not gone from us completely. The staircase and some of the doors and lanterns were purchased by Aron Fleming, whose home on Whitesburg Pike had been damaged by fire about the time the hotel was being salvaged. These items were incorporated into the Fleming house and are there still. It is likely that many of the hotel's fixtures were sold to builders by the Birmingham company and found their way into new homes all over Alabama where they may survive to this day.

Today, the old chimney, the railroad embankments, and some old grainy photographs are the only tangible evidence we have that the Monte Sano Hotel ever existed. Only in our imaginations can we stroll the artfully manicured grounds or ride the rails up the mountain. The hotel, like the era it symbolized, is gone forever, its loss made even more poignant by the brevity of its existence. The unknown scribe for the Monte Sano *Breeze* was more prophetic than poetic when he wrote in 1890, "Many as there are here now, more come every day and it seems now as if those who tarry much longer might find it too late to gain entrance to what those who are now here deem an earthly paradise."




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# Alabama Birdman

by Gab Wicks

It was the first flight in Alabama, and possibly the world's first monoplane, but, because of two North Carolina bicycle repairmen, it was beaten by a margin of only a few years.

That is not, however, all of the story. That flight would affect the early history of aviation, and influence the formation of one of the largest aviation companies in the world.

William Lafayette Quick was born near Shiloh, Tennessee in 1859 and later moved his family to a small community outside present day New Market which became known as "Quick's Mill." He set up a grist mill, blacksmith's forge, saw mill, and machine shop in the late 1800s and began to dream of flying.

Quick first began talking of what he called "aerial navigation" before the turn of the century. Although he had never heard of anyone trying to fly before, he came up with the idea of building a "flying machine."

Quick had no formal education, but he had all the resources he would possibly need. He could build a wooden body in his saw mill, derive a method of propulsion with his machine shop, and make all the necessary rigging and gear in his forge. His primary resource, though, was the models he found in the woods that surrounded his home.

Quick's granddaughter, Lorraine Wicks, recalls: "My grandfather would go into the woods back of the Quick home

and watch the buzzards sail around and around, dip down and up with ease and never flap their wings."

Quick designed his craft after the buzzards, bats, insects, and other flying creatures that surrounded him. He chose his power plant, cut and laminated the lumber for the frame, took three bicycle tires for landing gear, and set about on an eight-year design and construction plan, with assembly well underway in 1908. After assembly, the final step was the selection of a propeller. This consisted of several high speed engine tests to find the right combination. When the choice was made Quick asked his son William Massey to fly the plane because he was the smallest of the ten children.

The flight lasted for only a few seconds. William achieved an altitude of a few feet, and then ran out of pasture. He tried to turn the plane, but succeeded in clipping the ground with a wing. The wing was damaged, the propeller broken, and the landing gear torn off. Quick took the plane back to his shop where it stayed for almost 60 years.

This, however, was just the beginning of the Quick family's career with aviation. In the years to follow, eight of the Quick children became pilots. Some were barn stormers, others were pioneers of the crop dusting industry, and others fell victim to the numerous dangers of primitive aviation.

W. L. Quick influenced many friends and relatives to fly, including his brother-in-law, Terah Maroney. Maroney moved West about the time that Will Quick was finishing his monoplane, and enrolled in the flying school of Glen Curtis, later founder of the air-



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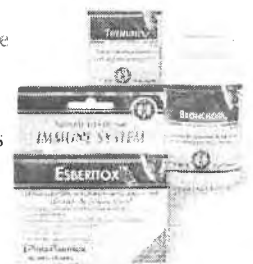
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craft company that bears his name.

Maroney purchased a flying machine, and became a barn stormer.

Later, he became the first man to fly in the state of Montana. On July 4, 1914, Maroney gave a flying exhibition in Seattle, Washington. Many of his audience were impressed enough to ask for a ride - including a certain lumber company owner named Bill Boeing. When Boeing stepped from the plane he vowed to spend the rest of his life as an aviator. The rest is history.

Meanwhile, Will Quick, innovator that he was, modified his original monoplane design, and patented an "improved flying machine" in 1913 that had such modern features as folding wings, retractable landing gear, and a three-prop propulsion system. However, it never left his blueprints; he died in 1927, leaving his historical flight simply a local legend.

However, in 1970, the Experimental Aircraft Club discovered the old monoplane as it hung in the rafters of Will Quick's old shop. After obtaining the consent of the family, the plane was restored to its original condition using almost all original parts. It is now on public display at the Huntsville Space and Rocket Museum.

Will Quick has received some recognition for the history he created. The Smithsonian Institute has his original model and patent, and the Alabama Aviation Hall of Fame in Birmingham has a plaque commemorating his induction - right beneath the Wright Brothers'. Even with this notoriety, the Will Quick story remains one of the most impressive and well kept secrets of Huntsville's colorful past.

## News For Women from 1898

- The latest fad among the pretty girls is to talk woman suffrage.

- Lilly Langtry, the actress, claims to be only forty years old.

- Mrs. Cleveland, wife of the President, dresses her hair in the style known as the "Diana Knot."

- A late theory of catching cold is that when one enters a cold room after being heated the bacteria in the room flock to the warm body and enter it through open pores of the skin.

- The Empress of Austria has a pathetic delusion. She fancies that her unhappy son, the Crown Prince Randolph, is still a baby. A big doll has been given her, which she fondles and keeps constantly by her.

- Little Kitty Blank, aged four, painted her doll's cheeks with

brick-dust and water and blackened both eyebrows with ink. An aunt in the family, who rouged her cheeks and penciled her eyebrows, believing that Kitty was attempting a caricature, beat her cruelly. The people of Stillwater, Michigan, warned the cruel aunt to leave town.



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# Huntsville Coffee Talk

by Aunt Eunice

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



Wow - Christmas has come and gone - didn't it seem just days ago that we were counting the shopping days til Christmas? It seems like just a short time since the Y2K and we were all afraid to go to sleep, thinking we'd never wake up! Well, I guess the **Third Millennium** is now really upon us!

2000 was a great year. Lots of happiness, joy and sadness at the same time. Thanks to everyone who came by to see me over the holidays. It was a great family time, my family came home from Florida and we had a wonderful time catching up.

The **Picture of the Month** was my sweet **TV pal, Lee Marshall**. **Mrs. Lavon McAllister** guessed the name and won a free breakfast, then we had several correct calls after that from other readers. It's a lot of fun. Mrs. McAllister came by to eat her country breakfast and brought her friends **Mildred Lincoln** and **Peggy Langley** with her and they

all had a fun time.

Seniors! Please don't forget the next **Crime Prevention Class** that starts February 15 at the Senior Center. It's a great class. I've heard great things about it and we all need to go and make sure we can protect ourselves.

We hear that the old **YMCA** that **Buck Watson** and his company are renovating is just about complete - it sure looks nice from the outside. It's great that people still care about the old buildings and work to keep them in good shape.

There are so many telephone scams going on out there - a lot of them concentrating on the older folks. Please remember to **NEVER** give out your **credit card information** over the phone unless you know for sure it's legitimate. There are many people out there who make their living off of unsuspecting, and trusting, people.

Thanks to all of you for your prayers and concern about my

son-in-law **Wayne Elkins** who had five heart bypasses. He's doing real fine and will soon be back to work - your prayers and good wishes make it all worthwhile.

When we were having all that bad weather, our good friend **Tillie Laird** slipped on some ice and broke her arm. Hurry and get well, now, OK? I know **Byron** is getting tired of doing all that cooking and cleaning house!

My good pal "**Vicky Smith**" got to go home from the hospital after several weeks of being ill. We love you.

It's always good to see my friend **Joe Reid**, especially when he brings in his beautiful "**better half**."

Thanks to **Joe Whisante**, our Sheriff, for coming by to see me and bringing me a great picture for my wall. It's a great addition, and he's such a sweetheart.

**Cathy Carney** (who helps her hubby **Tom** with **Old Hunts-**

## Photo of The Month

The first person to correctly identify the picture of this young soldier boy wins a free breakfast at Eunice's Country Kitchen. So stop on by and tell Aunt Eunice who you think it is!

Hint: Successful businessman



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Sandra Steele, President

ville Magazine) had a new cookbook come out right before Christmas and I hear they are almost sold out! It's called, **Old Huntsville Book of Recipes and Timeless Tips**. **Shaver's Bookstore** still has a few, as does **Books a Million**. I love those old-fashioned superstitions and tips in there.

Thanks also to **Loretta** our Mayor and **Glen Watson**. They came out to see me during the holidays. You are doing a great job and I'm really proud of you both.

We have had so many deaths since Christmas. Our sympathy goes out to the families. We love you all so much. **Bill Easterling** will be missed by so many who read his column and identified with what he said. Also, **Mr. Little** (Judge Little's daddy), **Mrs. Oma Mullins**, **Gaylord Boyd**, **Sue Diener**, **Mrs. Sanders** (Emmett's mother), **Woodrow Maples**, **Mrs. Lily Hornbuckle**, **Vernon Black** and many others. We love you and our prayers are with you.

We saw **Bud Cramer** over Christmas. He sure is looking good and works so hard for us. We're all very proud of the work he does in representing us.

Congratulations go to **Floyd Hardin**. The official dedication of the **Optimist Park** and the gym was named in Floyd's honor. He is such a good guy.

I know **Sandra Rhodes** is very happy to get rid of that neck brace after three months. She was in a car accident and we are very grateful that she is doing well.

I understand that **Mr. Frank (Bubba) Riddick's** retirement party was so much fun. So many people were there and lots of great things (mostly true) were said about him. I'm sorry I wasn't able to attend, I just wasn't feeling good. You will be missed - good luck to you.

**Mr. Billy Harbin** also was honored on Sunday afternoon. I was still not able to go that day. But there were many wonderful things remembered and said about Billy, he sure was good for our community. He has done so many good things for us and will surely be missed - good luck to you!

**Loyd and Marci Tomlinson** and their children from **Outback Restaurant** were in to see me during the holidays. What a great family, I love you all very much.

**Kristy Rhodes**, our good friend who moved to Nashville, came back and stayed a week so that **Dr. Thorstad** could fix up her eyes (same operation I had) and now she doesn't have to wear glasses. She looked so pretty, I love you Kristy.

This old rainy bad weather isn't good for me but the sun will soon shine again, I just know it. I wish for you all a great and wonderful year 2001. Remember to come see me because I love you all and I sure do love those hugs!

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# Hot, Hearty Country Snacks

## Spicy Potato Chips

2 sweet potatoes, peeled and sliced 1/8" thick

2 Idaho potatoes, peeled and sliced 1/8" thick

Peanut oil for frying

3 T. Cajun or taco seasoning

1/2 c. blue cheese, crumbled

Tabasco sauce

Soak your sliced potatoes in cold water in the fridge for 4 hours. Preheat your oven to 250 degrees. Heat the peanut oil in a deep fryer to 350 degrees, drain the potatoes and pat dry with paper towels. Fry potatoes in small batches til nicely browned. Bring the oil back to 350 before frying next batch. Drain chips on paper towels and sprinkle with the Cajun seasoning. As you finish each batch, layer then in a single layer on a baking sheet in the oven to keep warm.

When all of the chips are done, crumble the blue cheese over all

and heat in oven for 5 minutes and cheese is soft. Serve with Tabasco on the side - these are very addictive!

## Hot Olive Cheese Puffs

1 c. grated Cheddar cheese, sharp

3 T. butter, softened

1/2 c. all-purpose flour

1/4 t. salt

1/2 t. paprika

24 pimiento-stuffed olives

Preheat your oven to 400 degrees. Make the dough by blending the cheese with the butter, then stirring in the flour, salt and paprika. Mix well and wrap one teaspoon of the dough around each olive, covering completely. Bake til lightly browned, 13 minutes or so. These can be made in advance of your party and frozen, then baked day of event. Be sure and cover tightly with plastic wrap before freezing.

## Popovers

5 T. butter

4 eggs

1 c. flour

1 c. milk

Preheat your oven to 425 degrees, divide the butter among 10 cups in a popover pan or large muffin pan and melt it in the oven. In a blender, beat the eggs on medium speed til foamy, add flour and milk, blend for one more minute. Pour the batter into muffin cups, filling 3/4 full.

Bake for 10 minutes, reduce your oven temps to 350 degrees and bake for 10 more minutes. Don't open oven door while these are cooking, serve immediately.

## Bacon Cheese Ball

1 lb. low-fat cream cheese

1/2 lb. lean bacon, cooked crisp and crumbled

4 scallions, diced fine

1 green tomato, medium size, finely chopped

1 c. walnuts, finely chopped

In a small bowl mix the first 4 ingredients. Roll in the walnuts til completely covered, form into ball, chill for at least an hour before serving with water crackers.

## Garlic Hummus

1 16-oz. can chickpeas (garbanzo's), drained and rinsed

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1/4 c. lemon juice or juice of 2 lemons  
 4 cloves garlic, minced  
 3 T. tahini  
 3 T. water  
 Salt and freshly ground black pepper

In a food processor, process the chickpeas, lemon juice, garlic and tahini. Add water a tablespoon at a time, til you get to a creamy consistency. Serve with wedges of pita bread, lightly toasted.

### Grandma's Lace Cookies

2 sticks butter, melted  
 3 c. brown sugar, packed  
 1 egg  
 2 t. vanilla or almond extract  
 4 c. regular oats  
 1/2 c. pecans, chopped fine  
 Dash salt

In a bowl use an electric mixer to mix the butter and brown sugar. Add the egg and dash salt, mix well. Add the extract, mix again. Add the oats and pecans, mix well. Place small blobs (I use a melon baller) on your greased and tin-foil-lined cookie sheet, these cookies will spread out. Bake at 350 degrees for 8 minutes and just browned. Cool completely before removing from pan, these can be stored in Ziploc bags or frozen. They will be very thin, hence the name.

### Coconut Blender Pie

1/3 c. honey  
 4 eggs  
 1 c. milk  
 1/2 t salt  
 1/2 c. butter, softened  
 1/2 c. all-purpose flour  
 1 c. shredded coconut  
 1 t. vanilla extract  
 1 9-inch piecrust, unbaked

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees. In a blender add the honey, eggs, milk, salt, butter, flour, coconut and vanilla and blend for 2 minutes. Pour mixture into your piecrust and bake for 30-40 minutes, and a knife inserted in your pie comes out clean.

### Cream Cheese Pie

3 8-oz. packages cream cheese, softened  
 3/4 c. sugar  
 3 eggs  
 1 1/2 t. vanilla extract  
 1 9-inch graham cracker piecrust

Preheat your oven to 450 degrees, blend together the cream cheese, sugar, eggs and vanilla. Press the mixture into the piecrust. Bake for 10 minutes, reduce heat to 350 degrees and bake for 35 more minutes and the pie is firm.

### Cup Custard

1 can (12 oz.) Evaporated

milk  
 4 eggs  
 1/2 c. sugar  
 1 t. vanilla extract  
 1/2 t. salt  
 1/4 t. ground nutmeg

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees, great 8 custard cups (6 oz. each). Pour the milk into a 2-cup measuring cup, then finish filling it with water. Pour into a bowl and add 1 more cup water to make 3 cups liquid.

Beat eggs, sugar, vanilla, salt and nutmeg into the liquid, fill the custard cups 2/3 full. Line a 9x13" pan with brown paper. Put the cups onto the pan and fill the pan halfway up with hot water. Sprinkle more nutmeg on top of each cup, bake for 40 minutes and a knife inserted comes out clean. Serve at room temps.



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# Dilworth Lumber

## A Part of Huntsville's History

by Penn Dilworth

It's not quite shrouded in the mists of time, but no one has been able to determine the actual date the Dilworth family entered into the lumber business in Huntsville. Somewhere between 1885 and 1890, J. D. Dilworth was a building contractor using his own lumber yard as a source of supply. That business, called J. D. Dilworth and Son, was no great success, but several families were able to sustain through troubled financial times at the end of Reconstruction.

An 1898 invoice from J. D. Dilworth and Son to D. D. Shelby priced 2x4x12's at \$1.20 - for 10! Two-by-fours sixteen feet long were 15 cents each and a "small

coal shed" cost \$14.95 for the lumber! Today, sales tax for this purchase would be more than that total bill.

The "son" of the business, W. P. Dilworth, must have felt hampered under the close proprietorship of his father, and purchased the Huntsville Lumber Company (renamed Huntsville Manufacturing and Land Company). This business was located at Church Street and the Southern Rail Crossing, the present site of Dilworth Lumber Company. Upon the death of J. D. Dilworth the two businesses were combined.

Soon after the purchase of the Church Street business, the coal trading division was discontinued. A 1916 newspaper article noted that "...too many kinds of broth spoil the cook so he (W. P. Dilworth) decided to devote his entire time and attention to the manufacturing for and supplying of the retail trade in everything that goes into the building of homes."

This news report went on to detail, "the number of horse teams

(increasing from one in 1907 to three in 1916), proximity to the rail line that enabled them to handle carload lots of lumber and supplies with ease and dispatch," and further noting that a supply of new asphalt shingles was available since the "... recent city ordinance provides against the use of wooden shingles in the city of Huntsville. Mr. Dilworth states that while the dealer makes money selling the composition roofing, both the city and the builder are better off for having passed that ordinance."

1916 was the year a new lumber planing mill was installed. The business carried a stock of "... rough and dressed lumber in a full and complete line, sash, doors, mill work lime, cement, paints, oils, brick, builders' hardware, shingles and composition roofing." 75 years later, only brick and oils had been discontinued.

This was also the year that L. A. Sublett built a house in Brownsboro. His 2x4x16's were up to 18 cents each. The bill for this two story house was \$890.15 for lum-





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ber, brick windows (at \$1.85 each), doors \$2.25 each, door locks for fifty cents and all other materials. Dilworth, Sr. wrote at the bottom of the bill, "...Will guarantee you all to be satisfactory in every way."

The Huntsville Daily Times reported in 1925 that the firm had adopted the name of Dilworth Lumber Company in 1923. News traveled slow at that time.

The change reflected the new partnership of W. P. Dilworth, Sr., his son William Dilworth and daughter, Miss Virginia Dilworth. The Church Street location held eight warehouses in 1925. (It later had nine.) The delivery of materials still used the three horse teams, but now had begun deliveries by truck. The newspaper claimed "a considerable volume of trade east on the railroad line towards Chattanooga and north towards Nashville, but the larger part of its volume comes from Huntsville and Madison County."

Economic problems were prevalent everywhere in the thirties. W. P. Dilworth would often speak of the high volume of barter in those days. It was also common to extend credit on the basis of personality, as it was sure that an honest man would pay his debts as soon as possible. After the funeral of W. P. Dilworth Jr., Mr. Theodore Wilson related that

The amount of time you spend grieving over a man should never exceed the amount of time you actually spent with him.

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money had been loaned for his home when "...the banks wouldn't talk to a Black man. All we had was our word, and that's how our house was built." Times were hard and people pulled together."

Prosperity began to return with the military buildup of World War II. Supplies were diverted to military uses, but with the expansion of Huntsville Arsenal the business grew. Founding of the Army's missile program headquarters at Redstone Arsenal and the influx of new residents made Huntsville into a 'boom town.' James F. Smith began a thirty-year career as salesman in 1948, and W. P. Dilworth, III returned home from military service in 1955 to work in the family firm.

Beginning in 1951 taxes were added to your bill at the end of each month. Mrs. C. E. (Mollie) Hutchens' statement of that same year showed that a 2x4x16 foot pine was selling for a little over a dollar each. Windows were up to \$9 each!

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New building materials suppliers opened to sell to the suburbs springing up in between cotton fields. Wilson Lumber and Huntsville Roofing opened their doors with the boom. In the 1960s, the boom continued. Dilworth Lumber built a new warehouse and office and the old house which had served for so long was torn down. "Tubber" Thiemonge became a valuable member of the firm and remained until the 1980s.

W.P. Dilworth, Sr. died in 1964. He had been a very active citizen in many organizations in Huntsville. Dilworth Lumber remained, under the ownership of W. P. Dilworth, Jr. and his sister, Mrs. Virginia D. Henry.

This era saw some of the "old" names in lumber disappear. Van Valkenburgh, Gunn, Geron, Bartee - all left in the sixties and seventies. New chain lumber yards opened up in Huntsville and brought the mass merchan-

dise concept with them. Slowly, Dilworth changed from commodity lines to products of higher quality. They now concentrated on the very best lines of lumber, pine and a large selection of hardwoods. Decorator hardware and paint brands were added. This opened whole new areas of sales and customers. Penn Dilworth entered the business in 1977.

When Walter Dilworth moved back to Huntsville in 1987 to join the firm, his presence expanded the industrial and contractor sales. During the following year W. P. Dilworth, Jr. passed away. He was very proud of his good health and worked a full day on the day he died. He was fascinated by the I-65 construction, and had always hoped that he would live to see its completion.

In 1998, after over a hundred years in business, Dilworth Lumber Co. closed its doors.



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# Quaker Oats and Octagon Soap



by Helen Miller

Back in the 1920s the makers of Quaker Oats and Octagon soap should have known about Mama. They would have put her on the payrolls. She proclaimed that each day must begin with a bowl of hot oatmeal and end with a scrubdown in Octagon soap. Those important household staples seldom got very low on her pantry shelf even during the Depression. She said hot oatmeal kept the body warm and that produced energy and energy was absolutely essential for intellectual aspirations. She didn't have any sympathy for mothers whose children began the morning with a half-filled stomach of cold corn flakes. This was a nonnegotiable issue and there was just no other way to raise children.

It was my job to cut out and save the coupons from Octagon soap wrappers. "Woe be" unto any family member that unwrapped a fresh bar of Octagon soap and failed to save the coupon! Once or twice a year the Traveling Emporium came around loaded with all kinds of attractive household items that could be traded for the coupons. For a hundred, you could get a colorful set of mantel vases, a pretty bowl for the table or some gadget for the kitchen. Besides bathing, scouring the floors, scrubbing my dog, and washing the clothes with it, Mama even shampooed her hair in Octagon soap. After letting it be known, half the ladies in town tried it too and the mystery of Mama's healthy shining tresses was no

longer a secret.

One summer I was inflicted with boils and Mama made poultices combining Octagon soap with sugar to draw the poison out. Dr. Gailard heartily agreed with her formula and assured us there was nothing in the drug store with as much potency.

I didn't mind washing my hands with it but really despised having to take a bath in it and much preferred the delightful fragrance of Cashmere Bouquet like Granma used at Penny Royal and said so but my wishes carried very little weight with Mama. She declared that it took a good scrubbing with Octagon soap to remove all the dirt, the crayon marks on my hands and arms, and suppress my perpetual "doggie odor."

## Blackberries in Kirsch

- 1 ½ lb. firm blackberries
- 2 cups red currants
- 1 cup superfine sugar
- Red currant leaves
- 2 cups kirsch

Layer the fruit and sugar in three 1-pint jars, leaving ½ inch headroom. Decorate with red currant leaves pushed between the fruit and the glass, if you wish. Pour kirsch over the fruit to cover completely. Tightly seal and leave in a cool, dark place for at least 6 weeks.

## Recipe For Polk Salat

1 good-sized garbage bag of young poke salat leaves (no stems)

1/2 cup bacon drippings (or more to taste)

water

1 chopped onion

4-5 eggs



Cook your greens in boiling water til done. Drain water and put back on stove. Cook some more on low, then remove greens from pot. Add chopped onion to small amount of water in pan, add greens. Cook till onions are alone. Squeeze out the water with your hands, tenderly. Heat up some bacon drippings in pail.

When hot, put greens and chopped onion in pan with grease. Add salt and pepper to taste, serve with pepper sauce.

## February

- 3 - Horace Greeley
- 6 - Babe Ruth
- 12 - Abraham Lincoln
- 15 - Susan Anthony
- 15 - Galileo
- 22 - George Washington
- 26 - Victor Hugo



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# George Wallace and Politics

*Excerpted from "Just Get On With It," by Billy Gene King*

The Alabama State Capitol is located on a hill east of downtown Montgomery where goats used to graze. The hill is still referred to as "Goat Hill." I wonder if it kept its name because of the goats, or because of the human occupants?

George Corley Wallace was elected Governor of Alabama in the early 1960s on a platform of segregation today, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever. He was known as the "Fightin Little Judge" when he first ran, because he was a Circuit Judge from Barbour County and a former Golden Glove boxing champion. He was one of the most powerful Governors in the history of Alabama.

I was never an ally of George Wallace, even though I served eight years in the Legislature while he was Governor. My Mother, whose maiden name was Wallace, was the Governor's second cousin, which made Wallace and I distant relatives, but that is about as close as we got during my legislative years. I liked him personally, but politically we were enemies.

I had been elected to the Alabama House of Representatives in 1970, and I didn't know much about State Government, nor the issues. I ran against a system of rules that allowed the Governor, who was a part of the Executive Branch of Government, to organize and control the House of Representatives, which is a part of the Legislative Branch. I must have hammered that theme thousands

of times during the campaign, so often, in fact, that I became identified as a political reformer who would "rock the boat." A theme which apparently gained momentum during the campaign. An "outsider" and a "reformer" combined, turned out to be a successful combination.

Immediately after the primary election, Wallace called our delegation to Montgomery to let us know, among other things, who was in charge. Our delegation consisted of six legislators, four in the House, and two in the Senate.

I got lost trying to get to the Capitol for the meeting. So my first encounter with the Governor started on a negative note, because I was the last member of my delegation to arrive and fifteen minutes late at that.

The Governor's Executive Secretary invited us into the Governor's office acknowledging, while looking directly at me, that the "late member" had finally ar-

rived.

Wallace had already been Governor for two terms, and his first wife Lurleen, one term, so by the time I met with him, I knew all about his policies and philosophy. But this was my first personal encounter, and I was intimidated.

He sat in a huge leather chair, that dwarfed him, at the head of a massive mahogany table with

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eight large chairs, four on each side of the table. He shook hands with each of us, as we lined up at his chair, and invited us to sit down. I found a seat at the end of the table to his left side slumping slightly into it to avoid any attention. I listened for the major part of an hour, while he did the talking, with the support of most of our delegation.

One of his concerns was a black dentist from Huntsville, who was running against him in the November General Election. He made a point of letting us know, that since we represented that area, that we needed to help him because, as he put it, "Nigra's will vote only for a Nigra, but white folks, especially in a liberal city like Huntsville, would sometimes vote for a Nigra."

I was offended with his use of the term "Nigra," and when he began talking about how he was going to organize the Legislature, I became annoyed. He said he hadn't made a decision yet, as to whom he wanted to be the Speaker of the House. At that moment, I knew that I had to take issue with him, or start my political career as a hypocrite, since the theme of my campaign had focused on the separation of powers doctrine.

I sucked in my breath, and with all the courage I could muster, I raised my hand, and got his attention.

He kept his eye glasses on the table, because he used them to see at distances, and he picked them up and held them to his nose as he cut his eyes to me and said, "What is it." I cleared my throat, feeling the weight of silence in the room and the eyes of all my colleagues glued to me, and said, "Governor, with all due respect to you, I don't think you should be organizing the Legislature. I believe we are a separate branch of government, and in order to maintain that separation of powers, the Legislature should organize itself without any involvement from the Governor's Office."

You could have heard the proverbial "pin drop." He left me hanging there for what seemed to be minutes, then still peering at me through those glasses perched on the end of his nose, he asked me to move up next to him, claiming he could not hear very good. I moved up to the seat to his immediate left. He pulled my chair over against his, as I sat down. He then, still peering through the glasses, said "Now what was it that you said Mr. ...? I said, "King, Bill King."

"Well Mr. King," he said, "I

have a hearing problem, and you were speaking a little low, could you repeat what you said?" I could feel my face flush as I pulled myself together, and repeated it verbatim. Again he studied my face, knowing I was uncomfortable, suddenly he chuckled and said, "You know when I was first elected to the Legislature, I ran as an independent thinker too."

He insisted that I continue to sit there with my chair directly against his for the rest of the meeting.

I was relieved when he moved on to other legislative matters, although he would continue to spar



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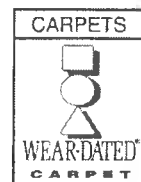
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with me by asking my opinion about every issue discussed that day.

He kept a cigar in his mouth the entire meeting, chewing on the end of it. As he accumulated pieces of the cigar in his mouth, he would spit them into a brass cuspidor on the floor which caused him to spit across my knees, since it was located on the opposite side of my chair.

The meeting ended about two hours later, and I was anxious to get out of there. As I started to leave, he caught me by the arm and asked me to stay for a minute.

This time he was warm and pleasant, and said my Mother had written to him and asked him to look after me.

He again reiterated that he was an independent thinker as a freshman legislator, and that he wanted to work with me in the upcoming session.

That was as close as we ever got politically, during my eight years in the House and Senate. I felt insulted by his condescending manner toward me. First, he embarrassed me in the presence of my colleagues. Then, in their absence, he tried to use my Mother's letter to manipulate me through implied obligation. It was easy to see why he dominated the Alabama political scene for so many decades.

*Bill King's book, "Just Get On With It" can be purchased at most local bookstores.*

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## Don't forget the Birds this Winter

by Cathey Carney

This is the time of year that the birds really appreciate a little extra food. During the cold winter months they can't find as much to eat and need your help.

It's very easy to do and not much expense. Use a shallow, large round dish and put about 4 cups of bird seed on it. They eat from the ground and seem content with that - however if you want to spend a little money and buy a hanging bird feeder, the smaller birds like that.

Use your leftover bread, crackers, popcorn, etc. Birds like all of that - I even throw out raisins and nuts from time to time. For those of you who like to go even further, you can buy suet in pet stores. That is especially good for them as it gives birds an extra layer of fat to fight off the cold winter months.



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# Farmer Killed While Getting Water from a Well

Robert Johnson and Fred Stevens were charged with murder, tried before Judge Stewart

*From 1902 Huntsville newspaper*

News of the killing of John Byrd, a farmer, by Robert Johnson and Fred Stevens, reached the city from the Monrovia precinct Monday morning. The two men came to the city after the killing and surrendered to Sheriff Rodgers, who had no warrant for them at the time. The sheriff told them to appear for preliminary trial before Judge Stewart in the early afternoon, which they did.

It seems that Byrd has for sometime past been getting water from a well on Johnson's place and last Saturday afternoon when Byrd's boy went for the water, Johnson told him that he could get no more supply as the well was getting low and it was liable at any time to go dry. The boy returned home and told his father what Johnson had said. Byrd then got a bucket and a double-barrel shotgun and said that he would go and get the water anyhow as he must have it. He was accompanied by his wife, son, father and two or three others.

Johnson and his brother-in-law, Stevens, saw the party coming and armed themselves. When Byrd came within hailing distance they told him he must not come to the well. Byrd came on anyway and leveled his gun at the two men who were standing in the door of Johnson's home. Johnson opened fire with a pistol, none of the bullets taking effect. Stevens then fired the shotgun and Byrd

fell immediately dead, his chest riddled with shot. Some of the shot struck Mrs. Byrd in the arm and badly wounded her. Byrd was shot twice.

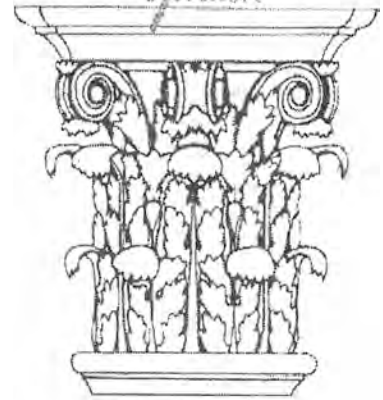
Warrants for arrest of Johnson and Stevens were sworn out by the dead man's father and a preliminary trial was held before Squire David Phillips, who held the men for further investigation.

Their regular preliminary hearing was held by Probate Judge Stewart Monday afternoon and Judge Stewart bound the defendants over to await the action of the grand jury. Their bonds were fixed a \$1,000 and were made easily.

All of the parties to the tragedy are well known in the Monrovia neighborhood. They have many relatives in that locality and were all known as peaceable citizens.

Some folks grow old not by living, but by losing interest in living.

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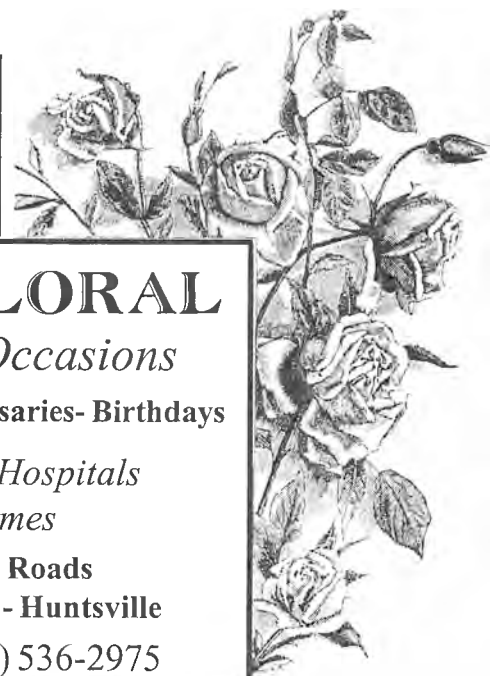
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## Green Around The Gills

by Byron Laird

"Let's you and me go to Aunt Annie's house," said Mom, taking my hand and starting out. It was about one-half mile by pig trail between the two rural houses. In 1931 a deep depression gripped the nation, and cars were few and far between, so one did not jump into the Ford and quickly motor to the next house.

Down through the hollow and up the hill on the right sat Auntie's house with a porch on the front, facing the rising sun. The house sat on blocks to elevate it above the ground, so that three or four steps were ascended to reach the porch.

A couple of cousins near my age lived there also, and I was always eager to go. At halfway point Mom realized she had left her snuff on the mantle piece, and there simply was no way for a country lady properly to socialize without a little "Rooster" or "Dental" or "Square" snuff.

"Son, run back to the house and get my sweet snuff, and I'll go on," directed Mom. Watching our parents dip snuff, we kids had learned how to place the snuff in the lower lip, and, by using cocoa mixed with sugar, we had learned the fine art of expectorating. We still had a way to go to get good

enough to choose a target several feet away, and hit it eight out of ten times as some of them could.

At kindergarten age, I knew the one Mom favored, and the idea of "sweet" appealed to me. Pulling up a chair, I grasped the "sweet snuff" in my right hand, and hit the trail again. "Sweet snuff. Wonder what that's like," I mused. "Think I'll take a dip." I poured some in the lid, pulled my lower lip out as I had seen adults do and as I had practiced with the cocoa, and took a generous serving of it as I walked toward the house.

That hill never had been so steep before, and the June day was getting hotter by the minute. Sweat was pouring off of me by the cup-full when I reached the house. Sick as a dog, I called to Mom on the porch, and lay down on the steps.

"What's wrong with you, son?" She inquired, with anxiety written on her sweet face.

"Why, that boy's got a dip of that snuff, Clara!" Ventured Aunt Annie, "see how green he is around the gills?"

Taking me inside, Mom removed the remnant of the snuff from my lower lip, washed my mouth out with water, put a wet cloth to my forehead and throat, and held me on her lap while I listened to a lengthy lecture on boys dipping snuff. Enough, already. If I lived, which I doubted, I'd never taste that stuff again. I vowed. I lived. I haven't.

Ordinarily, a good spanking should have been the order of the day. But I had just had one, thank you. "Sweet snuff" had proved to be bitter, and had lain a whipping on me. And I had done it right, too. I followed Mom's technique that I had studied for nearly five years. Without meaning to, she had taught me well on the "how," and

she evidently got a whipping, too, for she soon learned how to socialize without it.

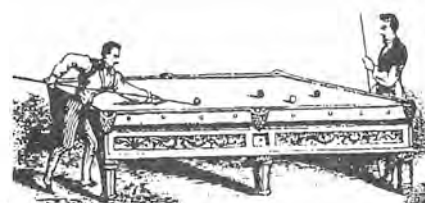
I'll always remember what Mama did for me. She loved her snuff. But she loved me more. When she saw me trying to dip snuff as I had seen her do, she decided to give it up and set a better example for me. And she did. It's a good idea. Each generation learns from the generation before it - good or bad.

*Mr. Laird is the author of two books, "Sand In My Shoes" and "Don't Boil Eggs In A Microwave," both of which may be purchased in local bookstores.*

A prominent physician says that in fifty years kissing will be obsolete,  
but in fifty years,  
who cares?



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# Let There Be A Hotel

*from 1811 newspaper*

The chances are largely favorable to the building of the municipal hotel here in Huntsville. Last night the city council passed a resolution authorizing the issuance of an ordinance calling for a vote of the people on the question of issuing \$100,000 worth of bonds to build it.

Some took the position that such a bond issue would be unconstitutional but those in position to know say there can be no obstruction of this kind. The building itself will primarily be the security for the bonds and the good faith of the city would be back of this.

At the conclusion of Dr. Humphrey's speech before the city council last night, the representative body of businessmen and taxpayers stood up to a man for the proposition, there not being a single man to rise against it.

We believe 90 per cent of the voters and taxpayers favor the proposition. We are for it and shall bend our best efforts to have the proposition carry. The success of the plan will lift our town out of the rut and will insure the success of this as a great commercial and industrial center.

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*from 1879 newspaper*

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*from 1942 newspaper*

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who have passed an examination to be given on Saturday June 27, 1942, at Sheffield High School, Sheffield, Alabama. All applicants for the examination must be citizens of the United States, must have completed the eighth grade, and must be physically capable of performing the work of the positions. Female applicants must have reached their 18th birthday and not have reached their 40th birthday as of the examination date. Male applicants must have reached their 18th birthday and not have reached their 50th birthday as of the examination date. Deferment from military service will not be requested for males selected for these positions. Persons interested should address a postal card (not a letter) post-marked not later than midnight, June 19, 1942, to Personnel Office, Tennessee Valley Authority Wilson Dam, Alabama. The postal card should contain only your full name, complete address, and name of the test, "Chemical Plant Operator-Trainee.

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# The Lady Painted on Spider Webs

by Butch Crabtree

In 1900, Madison County Probate Judge Stewart lived on a farm southwest of Huntsville, south of where the Merrimack mill was being built. Since only a few farms occupied the area, there were no schools in the region. Farmers wishing to school their children had either to send them away to boarding schools, or hire a private teacher to instruct them at home. Judge Stewart hired a young teacher named Annie Bradshaw to come to his home each day and teach his children as well as children from surrounding farms.

The City of Huntsville, anticipating the building of the new mill, had extended the streetcar line to Spring Street just north of the mill site. Miss Bradshaw rode the streetcar to Spring Street each morning and was picked up by one of the Stewart boys in a buggy to cover the additional distance to the farm. The school had fourteen pupils, and operated for about seven months, which was probably considered a term.

When the Joseph J. Bradley school opened in 1919, Mrs. J. B. Clopton was among the early teachers. Mrs. Clopton was the former Miss Annie Bradshaw of Judge Stewart's home school.

Though a fine teacher, Mrs. Clopton became best known for a unique hobby she conceived as a child. Mrs. Clopton's hobby was painting. What made her hobby unique was the fact that she disdained canvas or wood or other conventional materials and painted instead on cobwebs. The incredibly beautiful works brought Mrs. Clopton international fame.

The paintings varied widely in size as well as subject. There were portraits of family members, landscapes, and nature studies. Some of the paintings were small enough to be enclosed in a watch case.

The work of Mrs. J. B. Clopton was shown at the New York World's Fair and the Pacific National Exhibition in Vancouver, B.C., Canada. Two of her paintings are on display at the Smithsonian Institute.

Good judgement usually  
comes from experience,  
but unfortunately,  
experience usually comes  
from bad judgement.

# SOAP, The Way It Used To Be

by Ron Eyestone

Holidays are over now and it's time to clean up the mess. One way you might do it is the same way our forebearers right here in Madison County did years ago before there was such a thing as "store bought soap."

To make lye soap you first have to figure out how to get lye. You can buy commercial lye in the store now, but that sort of defeats the idea of not buying the soap in the first place. The best source of lye for this "purist soap" takes advantage of those wood ashes from the fireplace that you never know what to do with anyway. Hickory works best. Collect your hickory ashes and put them in an ash hopper. Pour water slowly, and as the water passes through the ashes and drips into a barrel it is bonafide lye water.

Put 1 1/2 quarts of lye water in a kettle along with 4 1/2 to 5 pounds of grease. Bacon drippings, lard, suet renderings any other grease will work.

Add grease to the lye water and boil, stirring constantly until thick like gravy or jelly. (About 30 minutes.) Pour into shallow pan and let harden. Cut the hardened soap into cakes and clean those holiday pots and pans.

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# Love like you've Never been Hurt

We convince ourselves that life will be better after we get married, have a baby, then another. Then we are frustrated that the kids aren't old enough and we'll be more content when they are. After that we're frustrated that we have teenagers to deal with. We will certainly be happy when they are out of that stage. We tell ourselves that our life will be complete when our spouse gets his or her act together, when we get a nicer car, are able to go on a nice vacation, when we retire. The truth is, there's no better time to be happy than right now. If not now, when?

Your life will always be filled with challenges. It's best to admit this to yourself and decide to be happy anyway. One of my favorite quotes comes from Alfred D.

Souza. He said, "For a long time it had seemed to me that life was about to begin - real life. But there was always some obstacle in the way, something to be gotten through first, some unfinished business, time still to be served, a debt to be paid. Then life would begin. At last it dawned on me that these obstacles WERE my life."

This perspective has helped me to see that there is no way to happiness. Happiness is the way. So, treasure every moment that you have. And treasure it more because you shared it with someone special, special enough to spend your time ... And remember that time waits for no one. ...

So stop waiting until you finish school, until you get that raise, until you lose ten pounds, until you have kids, until you retire, until your kids leave the house, until you start work, until you get married, until you get divorced, until you get that new car or home, until your car or home is finally paid off, until Spring, until Fall, until the first or the fifteenth, until your song comes on, until you've had a drink, until you've

quit smoking, until you've sobered up, until you die, until you are born again, to decide there is no better time than right now to be happy ... Happiness is a journey, not a destination.

In other words, Work like you don't need money,

Love like you've never been hurt,

And dance like no one is watching.



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# Interesting Predictions from the Past

- "Within ten to twenty years' time we could have a robot that will completely eliminate all routine operations around the house and remove the drudgery from human life." - mechanical engineering professor M.W. Thring, 1964.

- In 1931, the National Education Association predicted that, thanks to educational advances, "crime will be virtually abolished" in 20 years.

- "There is a physical difference between the White and Black races which I believe will forever forbid the two races living together on terms of social and political equality."- Abraham Lincoln, speech, 1858.

- "There is as much chance of repealing the 18th amendment prohibition of alcohol as there is for a hummingbird to fly to the Planet Mars with the Washington Monument tied to its tail."- Senator Morris Sheppard, Texas, author of the 18th Amendment.

- "A child born in the year 2000 has good prospects of not dying at all - ever... The immortals are necessary, but how can they be chosen from among mortals? That will be the big question of 1984."- nuclear physicist Jacques Bregier, Impossible Possibilities, 1968.

- "Brain work will cause [the 'new woman'] to become bald, while increasing masculinity and contempt for beauty will induce the growth of hair on the face. In the future, therefore, woman will be bald and will wear long mustaches and patriarchal beards."-

Berlin University professor Hans Friedenthal, 1914.

- "In the year 2000, we will live in prefabricated houses light enough for two men to assemble... cook in our television sets and relax in chairs that emit a private sound- light - color spectacular."- New York Times, 1968.

- "Making paper copies of anything is a primitive use of machines and violates their very spirit."- Futurist and author Alvin Toffler.

- "By the year 2000, [Russian biochemist, Vladimir Englehardt] says, we will have pep pills which have no after effects and which banish fatigue entirely; cancer will be no more serious than a nose cold; and defective organs will be replaced by spare parts as routinely as is now the case with other machines" - Joseph Wood Krutch, "What the Year 2000 Won't Be Like," Saturday Review, January 20, 1968.

In the beginning God  
created the earth and  
rested. Then He created  
Man and rested. Then He  
created Woman and  
neither He nor Man has  
rested since.

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## A Strange Case

A man living in England hid in a 21-foot-wide hole under his living room floor, covered only by a carpet and a sofa. He was wanted for an assault charge, so he hid under the floor from 1974 until 1982. While under the floor he lost 98 pounds and had grown a long, scraggly beard and nails.

He said, when he was discovered in 1982, that he was thinking of what his wife and four children were going through. "It was terrible lying there and listening to them talking and playing but unable to let them know I was there and doing OK."

He was finally discovered when one of his neighbors reported a vile stench coming from the lower vents of the house.

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# Dillard's Cafe

by Jim Harris

When I was growing up in Lincoln Village in the late 1930s and early 1940s, I knew of only two "ready to eat" foods that were worth buying - Frosty Malts from Contra Ice Creme Shop and hot dogs from Dillard's Cafe.

I don't remember eating in a restaurant until I entered the U.S. Air Force. I thought you had to get all dressed up to eat in a restaurant.

Condra's was located on the west side of Meridian Street across from Lincoln School. They actually had two items I liked. One was an ice cream cone where the ice cream was frozen in the shape of a cone. It wasn't dipped. The cone shaped paper cup it was frozen in was peeled off and the ice cream placed in a cone. It cost a nickel, and for another nickel you could get another one placed on top of the first, inverted. It was a piece of art, a true ice cream cone.

The best item, though, was their Frosty Malt. It was nothing more than the thickest and best chocolate malt you ever slurped,

poured into a large, edible cone. It was good enough to make you smack your best friend. It cost a dime as I remember, but I'd give you two dollars for one right now.

A few years ago I decided that I was going to recreate the Frosty Malt. I stopped at a Dairy Queen and ordered a thick, chocolate malt and three large cones without the ice cream. The girl behind the counter looked at me as if I were crazy. Okay, so she read me like a book. Many people would agree, but I still wanted my malt and three empty cones. I explained to her that I was going to pour the malt into the cones. Evidently, she couldn't sell empty cones without approval from upper management, so she called the manager and told him what I wanted. He looked confused, but told her to sell me the cones at 10 cents each, probably just to get me out of the place.

I took my stuff and left and had a ball. However, the malt was not as thick as the real thing and before I could finish a cone, it started dripping from the bottom. In other words, melted malt missed my mouth and made a mess. Haven't tried that again because I just can't get up the courage to explain why I want three empty cones.

Dillard's Cafe was located just west of Meridian Street in the southwest corner of the intersection of Oakwood Avenue and Meridian. He served the best chili dogs you could get, as far as I knew at the time. (Since I lived in Lincoln Village and Mullin's Restaurant was on the Dallas Village side of the tract I never

went that far down on Andrew Jackson Way. I simply was not aware of Mullin's at the time).

I never heard of hot dogs referred to by any name but hot dog. You ordered a hot dog and you got a hot dog. Hot dogs had chili on them. It was the law. Not a weenie in a bun covered with any and everything in the kitchen. The first time I ever ordered a hot dog after I left home was in California, and the thing had cole slaw in it. I felt like I had been violated. It looked like slop we fed our hogs. I never ordered another hot dog until I got back to Huntsville.

Dillard's dogs were a dime each and I always waited until I had a quarter before I went for hot dogs because my favorite meal was two dogs and a Coke. That's another thing, Cokes were best when they came in the 6.5 ounce bottle. Can't tell me they didn't change the formula when they went to the larger bottles.

Talked to a friend (Tom Rosenblum of Rosenblum Realty

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fame) recently about Dillard's Cafe, and he told me this story about a mutual acquaintance, Curtis Ramey, a village kid, who is now a judge in Texas. According to the story, Dillard's was full of customers one day when Curtis walked in. Sitting down, he ordered a glass of buttermilk, drank it down, and called for another glass. He immediately drank the second glass and called for a third. His actions were now attracting the attention of other customers who watched amazed as he ordered and drank buttermilk until he had downed a gallon. He then walked outside and threw up, content in the knowledge that he had provided another week's worth of gossip for the whole neighborhood.

If this is published and Curtis reads this, and he will, because I know his mother and I'll give her a copy, let it be understood that Tommy said that he was a witness. So Curtis, if you want to get even, send me something I can use against him.

After I moved back to Huntsville in 1965, someone told me that Mullin's Restaurant had the best chili dogs anywhere. The first time I ordered one and saw the chili, I knew that I had one foot in heaven. I don't remember how many I ate, but two just turns me on.

The next time I saw a friend who worked there, I asked about

the chili dogs and mentioned Dillard's Cafe. Well, I struck a nerve. That friend set me straight about where the chili recipe came from. According to the friend, it wasn't original with Dillard's. And that is all I'll say about that.

The fact is, Mullin's Restaurant has the best chili in the world. I'm sure it has other good food but I wouldn't know personally because the only thing I ever order are chili dogs, usually two, sometimes three, and a Coke. As long as Mullin's serves its chili dogs, it will remain a top notch restaurant, but if it ever stops, it will become just another cafe.



## Ginger Dip

- 1 c. mayonnaise
- 4 T. soy sauce
- 1 t. ground ginger
- 2 t. grated onion
- 1 t. cider vinegar
- 2 T. milk

Combine the mayonnaise, soy sauce, ginger, onion and vinegar. Add milk if the sauce is too thick. Cover and chill 2 hours at least. This dip is especially good with a platter of carrot strips, sugar snap peas, sliced mushrooms, steamed shrimp and zucchini strips.

I'm really easy to get along with once people learn to worship me.

Sam Keith

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# Five Points

## A Historic Beginning



by Gwen Ray Walker

In September, 1999, the Huntsville Preservation Commission unanimously voted to recommend that the City Council establish the Five Points Historic District. On October 28, 1999, the City Council cast its final vote and the Five Points Historic District was born. This was the culmination of months and months of work by residents of the district, city officials and others. At that same time, the Five Points Historic District Association was organized and is now busy at work in several areas to help preserve and protect this unique neighborhood and to formulate and implement great plans for its future.

Five Points has been for so long such an integral part of the fabric of Huntsville it is hard to talk about the city, its history or its people without talking about Five Points. This area was the first annexed by the City of Huntsville and thus became its first "suburb." The names of the streets are a roll call of the early movers and shakers of the young city; Pratt, Wellman, Wells, and Ward. Names of those who have resided in this neighborhood; Pierce, Russel, Grey, Ray, Sparkman, Walker, Locke, and Goodson are all names of people who have made Huntsville what it is. Businesses that have located and flourished in the still bustling commercial district ... Zesto, Star Market, Brownie Drug Store, Propst Drugs, Lanza Grocery Store, The Pub, Jean's Dress Shop and Service Cleaners,

to name a few, are icons, some still thriving and all remembered by those who have called Huntsville home.

A pivotal point in the history of the city occurred in the late 1800s. Up to the time of the Civil War in 1861 the economy of the area was driven by agriculture, mainly the growing and marketing of cotton. After the end of the war, industrialists and investor began pouring into the South looking for sites to build mills and plants and a labor force to put into them. Here they found an impoverished and war ravaged people leaving the farms looking for work and desperately needing jobs. These two forces came together and changed the fare of Huntsville forever.

A group of men called The Northwestern Syndicate, came to Huntsville from South Dakota. This group included W.I. Wellman, W.S. Wells, James A. Ward and

T.W. Pratt. They joined partnership with Col. J. F. O'Shaughnessy and three men from Huntsville, Milton Humes, J.R. Stevens and C.H. Halsey. They incorporated and called themselves the Northwest Land Association,

The January 6, 1892 Huntsville Weekly Democrat wrote: "The entire capitalization, it is understood, is \$6,000,000 and is very pleasant news to our citizens." Pleasant news, indeed. This was a huge amount of money, even by today's standards. In addition to starting many of Huntsville's largest mills, this group of venture capitalists, as they would be called today, also began to plan a neighborhood known as the East Huntsville Addition. This neighborhood was never owned by or a part of a mill property, but was one of the development projects done by this group. Platted in on February 13, 1888, the land that was to become

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Five Points was deeded by the North Alabama Improvement Company to the Northwest Land Association in 1892. Officers of the Association included W.S. Wells, President and W.I. Wellman, Secretary. Mr. Wellman was also the President of the Farmer's and Merchant's Bank located downtown. Patricia H. Ryan, in her book Northern Dollars for Huntsville Spindles, notes, "Not only did these men seek economic opportunities in Huntsville, but Wells, Wellman and Pratt made this their permanent residence. And it was this troika, notably Pratt, who primarily set Huntsville's course for the next fifty years."

In 1900, the announcement was made that the property known as East Huntsville, now Five Points, was to be placed on sale. It was described in various newspaper publications as "the prettiest residential section in Huntsville" and the "flower" of the residential areas. The Huntsville Mercury concluded one article stating, "Certainly the most fastidious prospector will be pleased with the property soon to be offered the public in east Huntsville, and those with sufficient forethought to make the first selections will deserve the congratulations of their friends and a discriminating public."

From the February 17, 1892 newspaper, The Weekly Mercury, we read "Sections of the great boilers of the Dallas Mills have arrived and are now in readiness to be put in. The boilers and engines to furnish power for this great industry will be the greatest power in the State of Alabama if not the entire south. In fact, when we think of the great power necessary to turn the many wheels that will fill a five story building three hundred fifty feet long and one hundred fifty feet wide, we become bewildered."

As we think about it today, from those people, in that time, building a mill, building a neighborhood, building a city, that in 75 years, enough power could be generated to send a mighty Saturn rocket from Huntsville, Alabama to the moon, and be watched back on Earth, via television, by those who sent it, bewilders still.



## Needs Help With Wedding

My fiancée and I are planning to get married in March, at the Carter Mansion in Huntsville, Alabama. I remember reading a story in "Old Huntsville" years ago concerning Sally Carter, and would love it if any of your readers can call me with any information or trivia they may know concerning the mansion and Sally Carter. It would add a lot to our wedding day! So you readers out there, if you have any interesting tidbits, please call me!

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# Know Your Rights

## Bankruptcy: The last option

If you have been sued by a creditor and cannot afford to pay, you might think you have to file for Bankruptcy. There are also lawyers who screen court records and send letters to people who have recently been sued. In fact, some people learn of the lawsuit first from lawyers soliciting business, rather than from the court.

Sometimes a bankruptcy sounds good, but it may not be a good choice especially for persons of limited means. One reason is that you can only file bankruptcy a limited number of times. You want to use it when it might benefit you the most. Other legal options should also be considered.

Although bankruptcy is one option to deal with financial problems, it is generally considered the option of last resort. It has a long-term negative impact on your credit worthiness. It stays on your credit report for 10 years and can hinder your ability to get credit, a job, insurance, or even a place to live. Also, a Chapter 7 Bankruptcy cannot be repeated for six years, and it is impossible to see six years into your future and predict future financial problems. Six years ago, you probably didn't anticipate the lawsuit that is now plaguing you. There are also some limits on how often you can file a Chapter 13 Bankruptcy.

Instead of rushing into a bankruptcy, you should see a lawyer about the lawsuit. You may have

defenses or counterclaims that you are not aware of. These might avert a judgment against you or might make the judgment smaller and more manageable.

Also, in Alabama, consumers generally have the right to claim a certain amount of property as exempt from action to collect a debt or a judgment. For the majority of debts, the same exemptions to keep property you have in bankruptcy are the same, whether you file bankruptcy or not. If your assets are less than the exemption limit, the creditor cannot collect the judgment. A lawyer can often help you claim your exemption rights without filing bankruptcy. Then, if you do need to bankrupt later you can.

Bankruptcy can be a beneficial remedy, but it should not be rushed into simply because you have been sued. Only consider bankruptcy after you have talked with a lawyer and rejected other options available.

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## Heard On The Streets In The Year 1911

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- Divorce sale - Items cheap.

One Everett piano, bed stands, chairs, gas stove, air tight heater, one double set of harness, one saddle, one refrigerator, one kitchen safe and a few other house articles, also one lot cedar posts and kindling. Can be seen at my home on West Clinton Street.

- Tomorrow- the Real Live Buster Brown and his dog Tiger - will be at our store giving his famous shows of fun and frolic for the children - free. We want every child in Huntsville to see him. Don't forget the time, tomorrow (Tuesday) all day. The Cash Store - Ezell Bros. & Terry Co. (saves you money).

- William Moore is being held here for charges of forgery and bigamy. He tried to commit suicide in his cell by eating the heads of a large number of matches. Women companions had returned from apparently from a hotel on a mission to his mother to get help. The jailor discovered his plight and administered medicine. Before eating the matches he had written a letter to his mother,



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# Reason For Divorce

from 1892 newspaper

Bundy had been married two weeks when he left his wife. Bundy was a little man, and his wife weighed two hundred and forty pounds.

After ten days of marriage Bund was surprised, upon awakening in the morning, to find his better half sitting up in the bed crying as if her heart would break. Astonished, he asked the cause of her sorrow.

"Last night I dreamed I was single, and as I walked down a street I came to a store where a sign on the front advertised "Husbands For Sale."

Thinking it very unusual I entered, and ranged along the wall on either side were men with prices affixed to them, some for \$1,000, some for \$500, and so on down to \$150. As I had not that amount, I could not purchase one."

Thinking to console her, Bundy asked, "And did you see a man like me there?"

"Oh, yes," she replied drawing away from him. "Lot's like you-they were all tied up in bunches, like asparagus and sold for ten cents a bunch."

Bundy got up without another word, and that day went to see his lawyer to see if he had grounds for a divorce.

I'm never offended by dumb blonde jokes because I'm not dumb, and I'm really not blonde.  
Dolly Parton

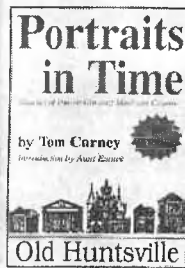
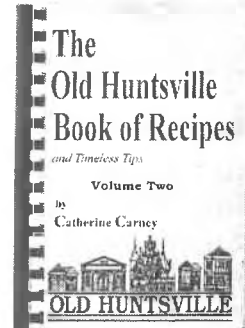
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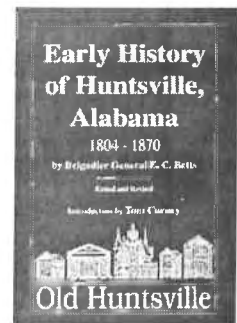


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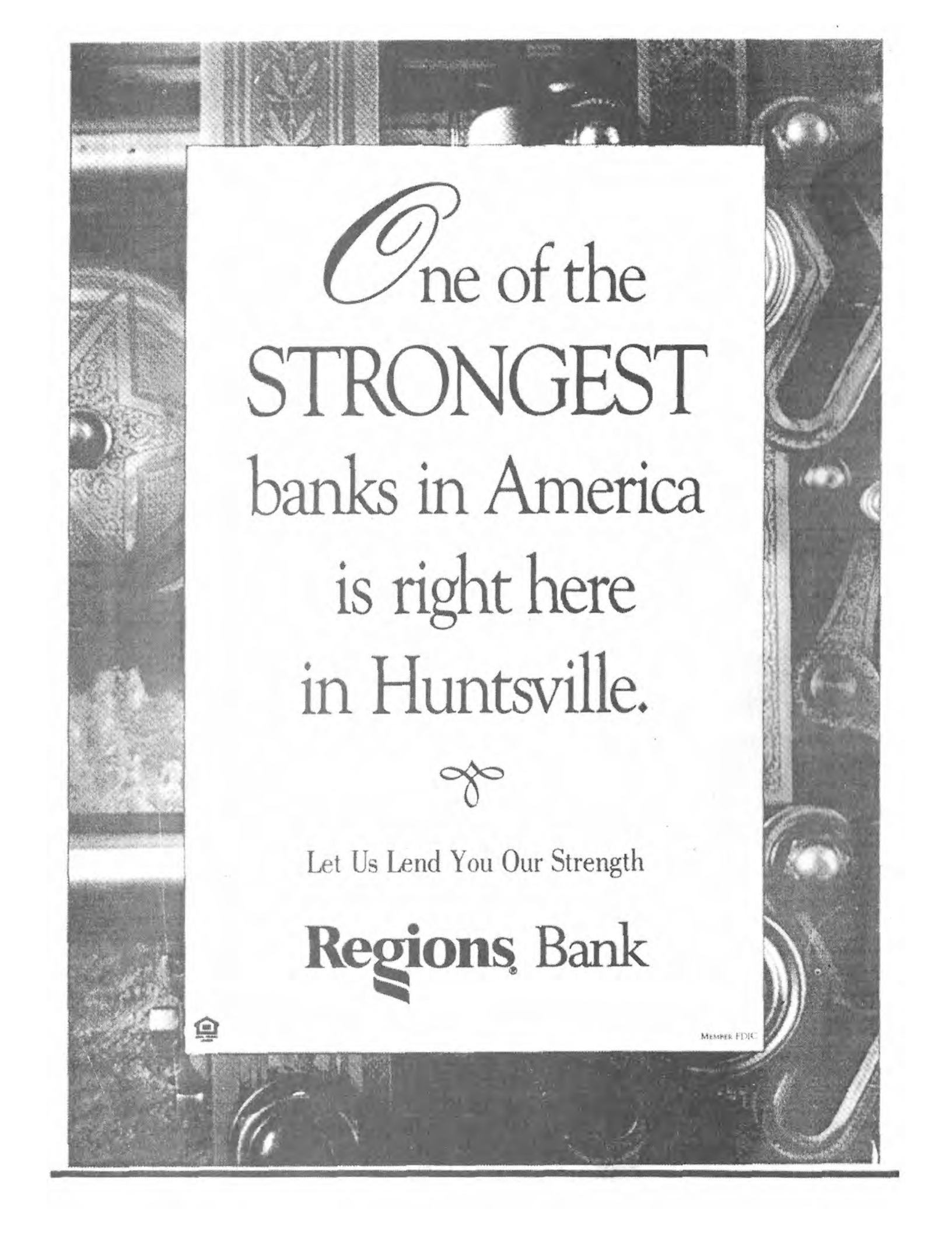
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