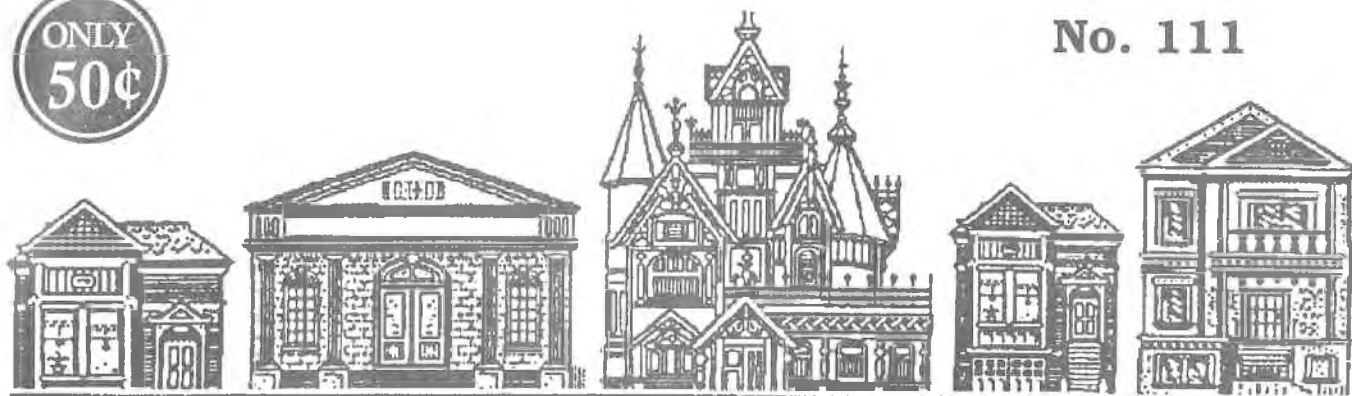


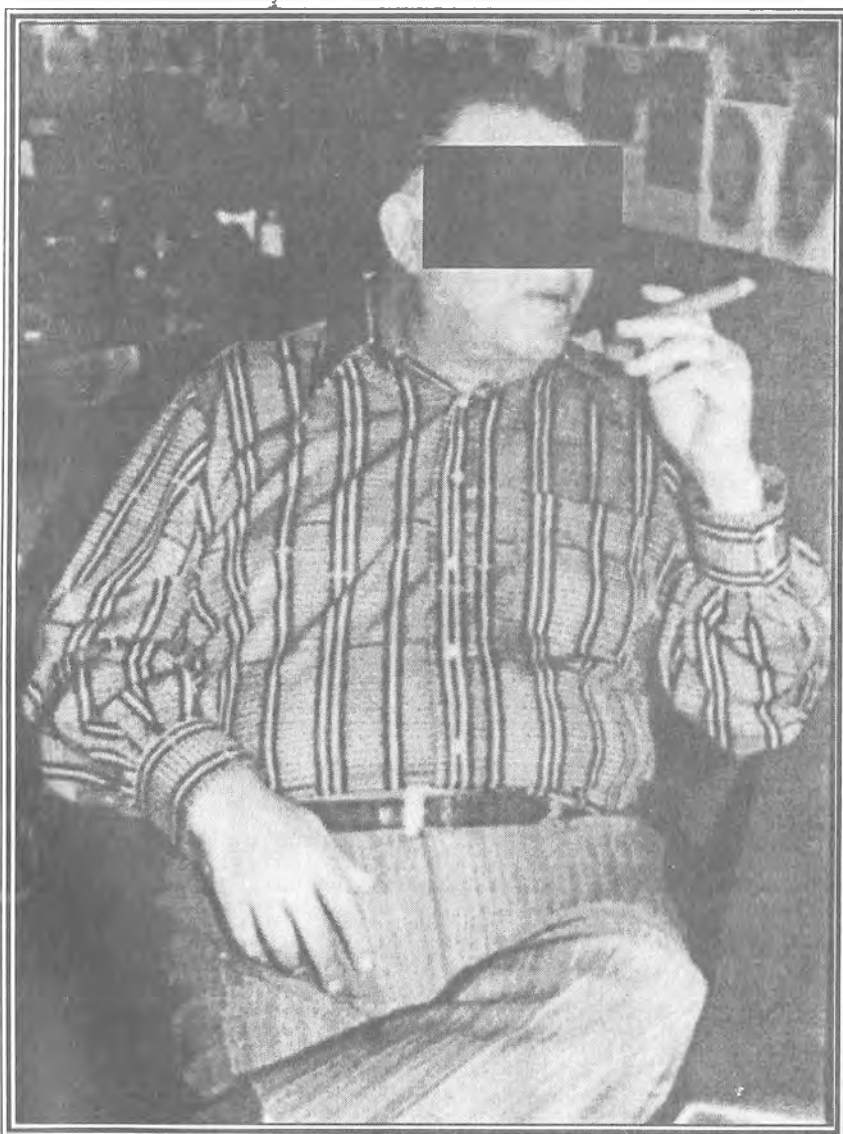
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MAFIA WITNESS

He was connected to one of the most notorious gangland murders in Boston's history. When he turned informer on the Mafia he was placed in the Witness Protection Program at an undisclosed location.

That undisclosed location was Huntsville, Alabama.

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It was a con job, but Huntsville believed him.

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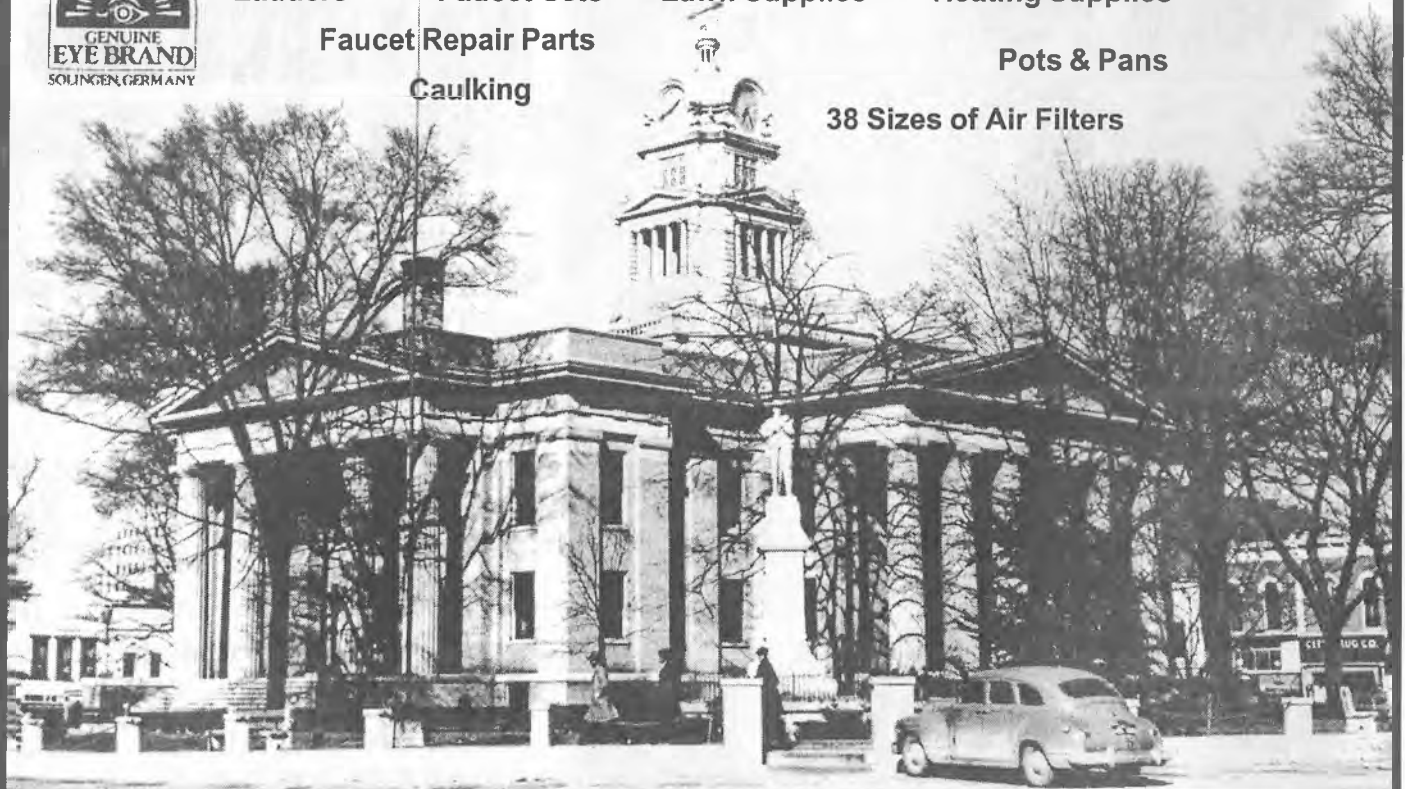
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Mafia Witness



Ever since the early 1960s, after the failed Bay of Pigs fiasco in Cuba, Huntsville has been a haven for people seeking a new identity and a new life. The CIA, the FBI and the Federal Marshal's Service all used Huntsville as a place to relocate subjects who might possess sensitive information or whose lives might be in danger if their whereabouts were known.

The vast majority of these people were thankful for the opportunity to start a new life. At one time a high ranking defector from the Chinese military owned a successful restaurant in Huntsville. A prominent member of South Viet Nam's ruling family was smuggled out of the country hours before it fell to communist control and was brought here where he enrolled in college. After completing his degree he moved to Washington, DC where he became a successful businessman.

Other people, members of organized crime, were relocated here under the Federal Witness

Protection Program. Most of these people had become federal informants against their former associates and were given new identities in exchange for their testimony.

One of these people was Peter Aver, also known as Peter Abate, Peter Abbott and Peter Blassi.

He was born in 1944, a product of Boston's notorious South Side where the Mafia ruled with an iron fist. Loan sharking, organized gambling, bribery and murder were accepted as the price of doing business. Aver's stepfather, Angelo Blassi, was reported to be a notorious enforcer for the Boston Mafia, serving under the New England crime boss, Raymond Patriarca. He was also alleged to have served as a "collection point" for the money used to bribe and pay off elected officials.

Blassi owned a number of restaurants which were thought to be fronts for the mob. Aver seemed to follow in his stepfather's footsteps when he too opened restaurants in Boston, Randolph and Lynfield, Mass. These restaurants were also widely suspected of being fronts for the mob's loan sharking and drug business. Aver appeared to be a successful entrepreneur but much of his business was conducted in secrecy. While gambling, fencing stolen goods and drugs were the mainstay for most of his associates,



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Aver apparently developed a reputation as an "arsonist for hire." At one point he charged a close associate of a national politician \$5000 to torch a business in order to collect insurance.

Aver's underworld activities were becoming a focus of Boston's organized crime unit, who were beginning to close in. Like most mobsters, he probably thought his lawyers could take care of his troubles, but events of June 1978 changed everything.

Blackfriar's Pub was a well known mob hangout operated by Mafia associate Vincent Solomonte. According to one source, Solomonte owed the mob over two hundred thousand dollars over a failed drug deal and the Mafia leadership was furious when he refused to pay.

Late one evening, when the bar was getting ready to close, three gunmen walked in. Solomonte and four others were led to the basement where they were murdered in a hail of gunfire in what was to become known as the Blackfriar's Massacre. Among the people murdered was Jack Kelly, a well known former television news reporter. His death created a furor in the community.

Aver's connection to the massacre has never been made clear by the authorities. According to Aver and law enforcement authorities, he was present and witnessed the murders. He said he

knew the gunmen as well as the victims.

All the witnesses, however, according to many sources, had been slain, leading one to question his role in the murders.

Whatever his role, it became a moot question when he agreed to turn informer against the mob in exchange for immunity for his criminal activities.

After being debriefed by the organized crime units and told he would have to be a witness in future trials, Aver was turned over to the Federal Witness Protection Program. He was given a new name, Peter Abate (rhymes with rabbit), as well as a new background in case anyone asked. In addition, he was provided with money to start his life anew in an undisclosed location under the supervision of the U.S. Marshal's Service.

The Witness Protection Program was designed to protect people whose lives might be in danger for testifying against individuals whom the government was prosecuting. Usually they were given immunity for their prior crimes. If a witness ran afoul of the law while they were waiting to testify, the government would often go to great lengths to clear the matter up. The last thing government prosecutors wanted was for their star witness, who was swearing to tell the truth, to be charged with another crime.

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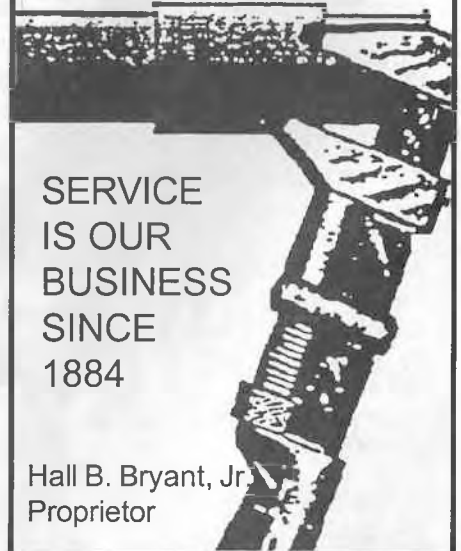


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Some people, like Peter Abate, knew how to take advantage of this.

Glen Brooks, a Deputy Marshal in Huntsville at the time, was a well known and highly respected lawman. He had earlier served on the Huntsville police force and had acquired a reputation as a tight-lipped investigator who would never reveal his sources. For people who knew him, his word was his bond, leading many people to say, "If you're a friend of Glen, that's good enough for me."

Ron Eyestone, a longtime friend of Brooks, recalled seeing him downtown one day with a well dressed stranger. When he stopped to say hello to Brooks the stranger stuck out his hand, introducing himself. "Hi," he said, "My name is Peter Abate and if you are a friend of Glen, then you are a friend of mine."

Eyestone was pleasantly impressed with Abate's outgoing personality, but he noticed that Brooks seemed uncomfortable. After a minute or two Brooks abruptly ended the conversation, mumbling something about being late for an appointment before taking Abate by the shoulder and leading him away.

Several weeks later Eyestone received a call from Abate inviting him to a party. At first he was hesitant, he had really planned on staying around the house that

weekend, but Abate went on to explain that Brooks was helping throw the party. Finally Eyestone decided, "Why not? After all, Abate was a friend of Brooks."

When Eyestone and his wife Barb arrived at the home, a spacious well-kept house in Southeast Huntsville, he was met at the door by an enthusiastic Abate who immediately placed a cold glass of beer in his hand and invited them to join the party taking place out back at the swimming pool. Sounding somewhat apologetic, Abate explained that Brooks was called out of town on business, but the party was still on.

Eyestone recognized several people he knew as well as a surprising number of people who were good friends of Brooks. Included in the mixture was a number of people who were well connected in Huntsville's business community.

Abate was the perfect host as he went from couple to couple making small talk. Although no one there knew anything about Abate they were taken by his charm and courteous manner. At first he appeared reluctant to talk about himself, he said he didn't want to brag, but several of the more winsome lasses finally managed to get him to open up.

He was from Boston, he said, and had recently retired as an FBI

agent where he had worked undercover for years infiltrating organized crime. When his wealthy step father died the previous year, leaving him fourteen million dollars, he decided to retire, pick a place on the map and start a new life. Now, he said, he was waiting for the will to be settled and exploring different business ventures to invest in. He vaguely alluded to the fact that the Mafia had placed a contract on him, which was one reason he was keeping a low profile.

Barb Eyestone remembered Abate as "not really all that good-looking. He was short and stocky with non-descript brown hair, but he had the best personality that made everyone want to be around

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him. I believed everything he said."

All in all, it was a pleasant party and everyone left impressed with the gracious host. The following week, Eyestone ran across Brooks and thanked him for the invitation, mentioning it was a shame that he had to miss his own party.

"What party?" asked Brooks with a puzzled look on his face. After Eyestone explained, Brooks began to ask questions about "his party." He was particularly interested in who had attended, why the people thought he had anything to do with the party and how and when they were invited.

It was obvious Brooks was concerned. After pumping Eyestone for all the information he could, Brooks left with the curious warning that "Abate wasn't really a friend of his, and that his friends shouldn't have anything to do with Abate."

Eyestone was left standing on the corner wondering "what the hell was going on, but I knew Brooks well enough not to ask questions."

It later became apparent that Abate had compiled a list of Brooks' friends by asking around town. He had correctly assumed that as a "friend" of a U.S. Deputy Marshal his story would be accepted by Huntsville's social elite, as well as the business community.

Brooks was caught between the devil and the deep blue sea. He was not about to confirm Abate's claims nor was he in a position to give out any information. Almost anything he said about Abate would have led to more questions, something the Marshal's service highly discouraged.

All Brooks could say was "I really don't know him that well" or "he's not what you would call a

friend of mine."

In the next several months Abate became the toast of Huntsville as people began vying for his friendship and his supposed riches. Every banker in town had visions of placing his fourteen million dollars in their bank. He knew that in a small town like Huntsville you only had to tell a few people and they would spread the story.

Abate appeared to be everything he claimed. He entertained at the Fogcutter so often people thought he had a reserved table there constantly. He often showed up at parties, unannounced and uninvited, but no one cared. Ev-

eryone had heard about Peter Abate. He was seen having breakfast with the Mayor, Joe Davis, and was on a first name basis with the chief of police. Adding to his charm were the elegant ladies who always seemed to be around him.

No one knew exactly what he did for a living although visitors to his home told of him receiving envelopes in the mail stuffed with money.

As Abate's social life grew, so did his opportunity for more investments. After learning that a couple in Decatur were interested in going into the motel business, Abate talked them into giving him ten thousand dollars. Abate was



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supposed to research the market and help them secure a small business loan. They never saw the money again

One person approached Abate with the idea of borrowing money for a nightclub. The person ended up giving Abate twenty thousand dollars to "explore the idea." The money disappeared. Before long, literally dozens of people had put money into different ventures with him. Amazingly, Abate was able to placate everyone who had questions about their "investments," and in some cases actually talk them out of more money.

While Abate was cutting an ever-widening swath through Huntsville's social circles, he had his eyes on bigger game. He had gotten to be friendly with many of the bankers in town and most were familiar with his "story." He explained to the bankers that he had discovered several investment opportunities and needed a small loan to tide him over until his stepfather's estate was settled. When the bankers asked to see a copy of the will, Abate readily agreed, promising to drop it by the bank in the next couple of days.

While producing a bogus will might be difficult for many people, for Abate it was easy. He simply

went to a prominent local attorney and after introducing himself as Angelo Blassi, said he wanted to draw up a will and leave the bulk of his money to Peter Abate, his beloved stepson. The attorney took the information supplied, drew up the will and never thought anything about it.

Several days later Abate returned to the bank with the will. As an added inducement, he gave the name of a bank in Boston as a reference.

The bankers were delirious with joy. They could already smell Abate's supposed fortune sitting in their vault. After checking the will to be sure it "appeared" authentic, the banker called the bank in Boston who verified that "yes, a man by the name of Angelo Blassi was once a customer but he had recently died." They were sorry but they could not supply any information about the account because it was tied up in probate. Off the record, they furnished information that Blassi's bank records showed huge sums of money being transferred in and out of his accounts on a regular basis before he died.

There was a bit of truth to Abate's story. His stepfather had died, but left no will, which was why it was taking so long to pro-

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9. Historical Markers of Madison County, Ala., with photographs & maps, by The Huntsville/Madison County Historical Society, \$18.95.

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bate his estate. There had been a lot of money in his account but it was assumed to be Mafia money and had been withdrawn within hours of Blassi's death.

Next, the bankers called Glen Brooks, who they thought was a friend of Abate's. Brooks, regardless of his personal feelings, was forced to answer with the only statement he was allowed to give, "I can neither confirm it nor deny it."

Within weeks of creating the will Abate had borrowed almost five hundred thousand dollars from local banks. Another forty five thousand came from local finance companies and unknown thousands from private investors.

There was no doubt that Abate knew his days in Huntsville were numbered. Already he was making noises to the Marshal's Service about wanting to be relocated and given another name.

One banker, who was not impressed with Abate's story, was determined to find out more. He was possibly influenced by the fact that his recently ex-fiancé was now seeing Abate.

After making the standard phone calls, and getting the same answers, he asked the Boston banker about Blassi's stepson, Peter Abate. The banker thought for a moment and said, "Oh, you must mean Peter Aver. That's the only stepson he had."

A few more phone calls brought out the fact that Aver/Abate was in the witness protection program at an "undisclosed

location."

Strangely, when the banker tried to tell people it was dismissed with, "That was probably when he was working undercover."

At the same time the Mafia, anxious to keep Abate from testifying, was hot on his trail. Several sources claimed that Abate had been in contact with members of Boston's organized crime, possibly trying to collect money owed from old business deals, which could explain the envelopes stuffed with money that he received in the mail.

While the mafia had reportedly traced Abate to North Alabama, they still did not know his exact location. Their problem seemed to be solved however when a New England vending



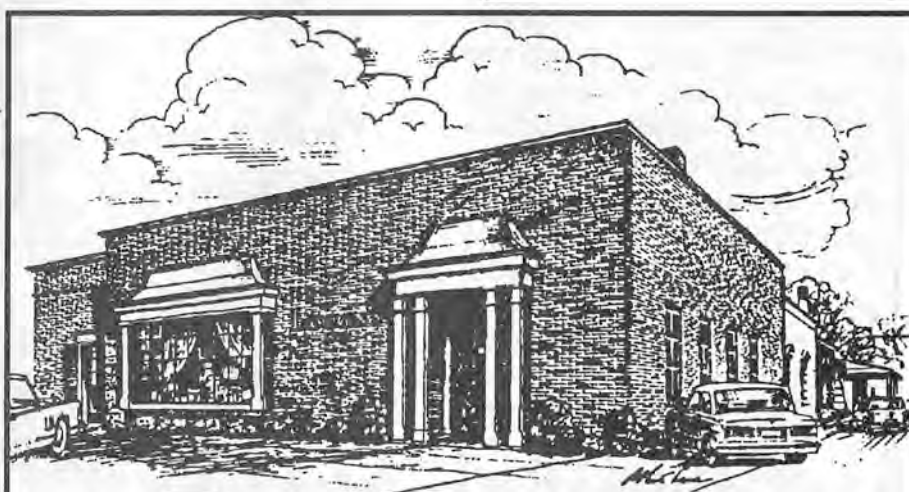
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machine company filed a lawsuit in Federal court. The suit alleged that the company's rights had been violated because Abate had fled owing them five thousand dollars and the government was refusing to divulge his whereabouts. They asked the court to order the U.S. Marshal's Service to reveal where Abate was so they could collect the money.

Many people wondered at the time why a small company would go to such great lengths to collect such a small amount.

With so many people beginning to raise questions, Abate decided it was time to leave, but even then, his stories would prove controversial. He told several people who had invested large sums of money with him that he was going to Atlanta for a few days to help his mother move. The story he told two young ladies who worked for local attorneys was much different. He said he was moving to Atlanta to take advantage of several business opportunities and offered them great paying jobs if they would relocate with him.

"When we got to the Atlanta airport," they later explained, "one

minute he was there and the next moment he was gone. Just like that. We never saw him again."

Many people believe the government helped Abate flee Huntsville rather than see their star witness tarnished by lawsuits and criminal charges.

After Abate moved to Atlanta, the Witness Protection Program created a new identity for him, this time using the alias "Peter Abbott." He apparently appeared in Boston at several trials for Mafia figures before again disappearing. Repeated requests for information about him were ignored by the government.

The following summer he was briefly arrested in Jacksonville, Florida, still using the name

Abbott, where he had applied for a restaurant license. During a routine fingerprint check it was discovered he was a fugitive from justice with two warrants outstanding for his arrest. When Huntsville authorities were notified, it was decided the warrants were not sufficient for extradition. He was released after spending only a few hours in jail.

Several sources say he next moved to the Miami area, this time using the name "Abbitt," where he stayed for several years before relocating to Seattle, Washington. He has not been heard from since. The Marshal's Service claims he is no longer under their control.

Eventually most of the law-

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suits and "problems" he left behind in Huntsville were solved. Many people, some of Huntsville's most respected businessmen, simply wrote the debts off to a bad experience. An out of town attorney, who many people assumed was representing the government, settled some of the other cases by paying the claimants a percentage of their losses. Some of the banks, when warned of possible adverse publicity, decided to forget the whole matter.

Glen Brooks resigned from the United States Marshal's Service shortly afterwards and has since refused to talk about his dealings with the Witness Protection Program.

Many of his friends say he quit in disgust because of the way the government regulations had protected Peter Abate.

News from the Year 1909

Messrs. Spragins and Walker, attorneys, have filed in the circuit court for their client James Wright, a suit for \$15,000 damages again the Merrimack Manufacturing Co. Wright claims that while employed in the carpenter shop of the mill his left hand was cut off by a saw.

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News From The Year 1904

- Delsie Long, a young man from Marshall County, was arrested in the Whitesburg precinct yesterday and brought here to jail on a warrant charging bastardy.

- A warrant for the young man's arrest was sworn out in Justice Grimmert's court by Miss Daisy Bowers, a young girl of the Whitesburg community, who claims that the man promised to marry her sometime ago. Long is not 21, she claims, and his parents have refused to give their consent for him to marry her.

- For Sale - two .5 acre tracts of land situated on West Clinton Street. This property will be sold at a bargain. See Boyd and Wellman.

- For Sale - The Petty Cottage, situated on East Randolph Street. This must be sold and will be sold soon.

- Lost - on the street between Walker Street and Huntsville

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- For sale - the Jim Pollard cottage situated on Madison Street. This is a charming piece of property and will go fast.

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- Lost - a bunch of keys, between the Lowenthal and Ward residence on Franklin street. Finder please return to Mrs. H. J. Lowenthal.

- The post office and store of W. M. Thweat was entered by thieves last night. A revolver and \$20 in stamps were taken from the post office.

Owing to the fact that every yard of lace embroidery and insertion the stock was stolen and nothing else molested, there is a strong belief in the mind of some people here that one of the gang of robbers was a woman.

- Stevenson - The Bank of Stevenson closed it's doors today, Charles Alston, the cashier, having disappeared and it is alleged leaving his accounts short. The amount is not known. He was conceded to be the best known and most popular young man in Jackson county, being related to some of the best families of this section, as well. He was also superintendent of the Methodist Sunday school.

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Huntsville Wasn't Ready For Him

The late 1950s was a golden era for the music industry. Stars such as Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash and Jerry Lee Lewis toured the country performing and selling records. The Madison County Coliseum, once located on University Drive, became a popular destination for many of the stars. It was close to Nashville and had the largest seating capacity in North Alabama.

At the time most musicians carried their own instruments from place to place. An exception was the piano, which because of it's size, made it more practical to rent one and hire a local musician to accompany the rest of the band.

In 1958 a small, relatively unknown band was scheduled to perform at the coliseum and requested the promoter furnish a piano and a musician. Unfortunately, on the afternoon of the show the piano player was confined to bed with a severe case of the flu. The promoter was frantic and began calling around for a replacement.

After spending hours on the telephone with little success, the promoter was given the name of Richard Wayne Penniman, a Black student at Oakwood College who was studying for the ministry. The promoter was skeptical but agreed to give the young man a chance.

Penniman was from Macon, Georgia where he had dropped out of school at the age of thirteen to join a traveling medicine show. Over the next decade he played with several bands and had even recorded a series of records but after a frightening experience on

an airplane, decided to devote his life to the ministry. In preparation, he had enrolled in Oakwood College.

When Penniman showed up for an audition that day, the promoter took one look at the young man and couldn't decide whether to laugh or cry.

The piano player was dressed in a silken jacket covered with bright sequins, had his hair heavily pomaded and wore heavy rouge and eye liner. On top of that, he was obviously very openly gay, a fact he seemed to almost flaunt.

The promoter quickly dismissed the musician, adding that Huntsville was not ready for him. Penniman probably didn't care; he was busy going to school full time and had only agreed to play as a favor to a friend.

After finishing his studies, Penniman toured as a gospel performer for three years but met with little success. In the early 1960s he returned to the music he loved - Rock and Roll - and quickly became a national phenomenon. This time Huntsville, as well as the rest of the country, was ready for the young performer who would become known as "Little Richard."

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A Great Ball Of Fire Terrifies Citizens

Bright Meteor Seen Over All Of The Tennessee Valley

February, 1895. A vivid ball of fire, three times as large as the sun and equally as brilliant, shot through the heavens last night, at 11:05 o'clock.

The brilliant ball turned the city as bright as noonday and made many declare that its passage was attended by a rumbling noise and a slight shock, as of an earthquake.

Everyone who was awake at that hour saw the swift-moving meteor. It was of marvelous brilliance and passed close to the earth seeming to almost touch the housetops.

It was seen by every policemen on duty in the city and, in a few minutes after its flight, they were making sensational reports of it to the police station.

At the office it was seen by every one in the building. There was a vivid flash as of a powerful stroke of lightning. The whole earth was brilliantly lighted and the heavens were ablaze with splendor.

The meteor came out of the northwest and travelled toward the southeast. It shed a swath of light that extended in every direction as far as the eye could see and for several seconds the city was lighted as brightly as at the hour of noon.

The first impression was that it was a vivid flash of lightning, but a glance into the heavens dispelled that idea. The light was caused by a huge ball that seemed to have stolen the blinding light of the sun. The ball had disappeared before anyone could get an idea of its size or nature.

In three minutes after the passing of the great light the telephone began to ring and inquiries commenced to pour in from all over the city, who had seen the ball of fire. All gave the same account of it, saying that it looked like the sun out on a midnight tear.

It was at first thought to be a local brilliant, but this was disproved before five minutes had passed. At the train dispatcher's office, three minutes after the meteor passed, the telegraph operators all along the line of the East Tennessee and Georgia Pacific began to send in reports of the night light.

The same sight was witnessed in Decatur, the meteor passing over that place, going in a southeasterly direction, at 12:05, making the town as light as day.

The night watchmen claimed the ball of fire was so near the earth that it melted the snow on

the roofs of store buildings; that the water poured off the roof of the post office block in streams into the alley.

Jack Creecy, the night operator at the depot, it is said, was so terrified that he hastily extinguished the lights, seized his revolver, and jumping into the middle of the room, made ready to defend himself against what he supposed must be a gang of robbers with ball and shot before he realized his mistake.

You can easily judge the character of others by how they treat those who can do nothing for them or to them.
Malcolm Forbes

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Train Escapes In Hail Of Shot As Federalists Occupy Huntsville

from 1862 newspaper

It will be remembered that the Federal troops under the command of Gen. Mitchel entered and occupied Huntsville on the morning of the 11th of April, last, and captured the train from Memphis containing many sick and wounded soldiers from the battlefield of Shilo.

Unknown until now is the bravery of the two men who saved an army by their daring deeds.

The freight train destined for Stevenson under Engineer John Glenn and Preston Yeatmen loaded with molasses and etc., of incalculable value, had started on its destination unconscious of the danger that surrounded them, when about one mile from the Huntsville depot the conductor and engineer discovered ahead a

group of ten or a dozen men in the garb of citizens, apparently awaiting their approach, who proved to be Yankee soldiers in disguise.

On the approach of the engine they drew their revolvers, and firing was heard but not the order to "halt." The conductor still thinking the group was citizens checked the train to ascertain the cause of the firing. In a moment more they discovered, some distance in-front, Federal artillery in direct range to intercept the passage of the train. Realizing in a moment the extent of their danger of capture they opened the valves of the engine and sped on with lightning speed.

In an instance the boom of cannon was heard, the ball or shell striking an embankment about ten feet from the engine, scattering the dust in every direction.

Calvary men in front and rear demanded them to stop. But southern mettle was aroused. Those Southern boys, Pres Yeatman and John Glenn ran the gauntlet in triumph, and brought the train safely to Larkinsville,

After arriving there they met eighteen hundred Confederate soldiers enroute to Corinth via Huntsville. Part of the brigade going down the evening before who would have certainly been captured at Huntsville without a moments warning or preparation.

Suppose Yeatmen and Glenn had surrendered the train on the demand of the Yankees? Everybody can at once see the result. The telegraph wires at Huntsville had been cut and there was no possible way of warning the troops in Larkinsville.

The Yankee operator was in the office at Huntsville, and true to his instinct as it turned out, he would have sacrificed the brave men, who were pressing forward to join the army at Corinth but for the bravery of Yeatman and Glenn.



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Huntsville Coffee Talk

by Aunt Eunice

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



Well, winter is almost over and now it's time for all the beauty of nature to pop up. Boy, don't we have a beautiful city to live in. I love Huntsville so much, especially in the Spring.

This is going to be a really big year for politics. There are so many good people running I wish I could just vote for everyone. It's going to be hard to decide among so many great people. Who ever you support, **please VOTE!**

Our picture last month was of our good friend **Mike Gillespie**. **Laura Kendrick**, who works for the Chamber of Commerce, guessed it. It's so much fun to see people trying to guess every month.

Our sympathy goes out to my dear friends, the **Phil Anderson** family, in the loss of his mother. I love you, **Phil** and **Phylis**, so much.

Sam and **Carol Warsham** stopped by on their anniversary to have breakfast with me. They got married on Feb. 13, 1959 and

are still in love and having a great time.

We hear that **Bill Kling** is definitely running again for his City Council seat. Politics is a hard habit to break but he will do good!

Charlie and **Jean Streat**, of Muscle Shoals, along with **Walker** and **Faye Brown**, of Tusculumbia, came over for breakfast recently. They are dear friends of **Senator Heflin** and **Mrs. Elizabeth**. They say the Senator is really enjoying life now that he is retired. Maybe he's going to write another book.

Our good friend **Carolyn Gibson** is running for State Auditor. She is now the Assistant State Auditor. We know she will do a super job.

Politics is so much fun. You can tell it's the season when they all start getting out to meet the people. I've had so many people in here pouring coffee, I might have to order some more coffee pots. In just one day, we had **Billy Bell**, **Mr. Dorning**, **Mickey Brantley**, **Mac McCutcheon** and

Mark Craig all here visiting with us. I love every minute of it.

Claudia Heaton of Austin Texas was in town to celebrate her mom's (**Lee Ora Jackson**) 84th birthday and they all came by to visit with me. Claudia is such a sweet person. She never comes to town without stopping to see me.

Patsy McGough celebrated her 56th birthday with her husband, **Jerry**, and **Johnny** and **Sandra Hagood**. We heard they had a ball!

What about **Electric Avenue!** That could really be what downtown has always needed. They are going to have some great restaurants. Mmmm - wonder about an "Aunt Eunice Country Biscuit" franchise?

Aimee and **Mike Byrd** also celebrated their birthday here with a big breakfast with all the trimmings.

Photo of The Month

The first person to correctly identify the picture of this young boy, shown below, wins a free breakfast at Eunice's Country Kitchen.

Hint: One of Huntsville's finest hard working businessmen. Always involved in the community.



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We hear that **Judy Carney** has a new book out - "When I Come Home." Stop by **Shaver's Book Store** and pick up a copy sometime.

Our sympathy to the **Thigpen Family** on Keith's death. We all loved **Keith** and will miss him.

Geneva Merrel and **Sharon Fisher** are newcomers to the restaurant but have already made friends here. I sure enjoyed your visit with me.

Want to protect yourself from crime? The Senior Center is offering a free 10-week course that will give you all kinds of information for seniors - call the center to get more info!

If anyone ever doubts in fate, they should talk with **Stan Kullman** and **Sharon Fisher**. They were childhood sweethearts in New York but drifted apart after finishing school. They both married and had children but years later were single again when they ran into one another. Huntsville is their home now and it looks to me like a case of true love.

Billy Bell is turning into a great politician. If anyone wants to beat him pouring coffee they're going to have to get up before daylight.

Well, another part of downtown is gone. I hear the **Downtown Chevron** is closing up and is slated to become a parking lot. It was one of the last places in town that pumped gas and checked the oil for you.

Gerald Gentry was in town from Boston recently working on a book about **George Wallace**. His last book was about **Lyndon Johnson**. Looking forward to reading it!

One of the big questions around town is who's going to run against **Dick Hiatt** for his City Council position. There's been lot's of talk but nothing definite yet. This should be a race to

watch.

The mayor's race should be interesting. I hear several other ladies are thinking about running, but **Loretta** is going to be hard to beat.

What about all the controversy about naming streets. I like the idea of naming streets for prominent people but shouldn't they be people from Huntsville?

Where's my buddy **Fred Simpson** been lately? His son, **Derek**, is doing such a great job with the business I thought he would have more time to visit now.

Sorry to hear about **Sam Keith's** knee trouble. The doctors say he should be fine in 5 or 6 weeks but he has to be careful about dancing.

We hear our good friend **Cliff Hill** is doing a great job as an attorney. He is the nicest man and always makes me feel good when he stops by for breakfast.

That's all for now but remember I love all of you.

Don't Gentry

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Italian Family Favorites

Bread Dipping-Oil Recipe

- ½ t. oregano
- ½ t. crushed red pepper
- 2 t. garlic powder
- 6 T. Romano cheese, grated
- Olive oil
- Balsamic Vinegar

In a 3-cup mixing bowl put about 1 cup olive oil, and ½ cup of the vinegar (less to suit taste). Add the spices and mix well, then add the cheese. Let blend on counter top for about an hour prior to serving.

Mushroom Fettuccine

- 1 lb. fettuccine
 - 4 T. butter
 - 1 ½ c. fresh or heavy cream
 - 1 shallot, chopped
 - ½ lb. mushrooms, sliced
 - Freshly grated Parmesan cheese
 - Salt, pepper and pinch nutmeg
- Cook the mushrooms and

shallot in 2 tablespoons of butter til all liquid has evaporated, season with salt and pepper. Stir in the cream, add pinch of nutmeg. Bring mixture to a boil, turn off heat and set aside. Cook your fettuccine al dente in boiling water, drain. Stir in the sauce mixture, bring to a boil and stir in the remaining butter. Sprinkle grated Parmesan over the top and serve.

Italian Meatloaf Parmesan

- 1 lb. lean ground beef
- ½ c. prepared spaghetti sauce, divided
- ½ c. dry bread crumbs
- ½ c. grated Parmesan cheese, divided
- ¼ c. onion, finely chopped
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 t. Italian seasoning

Using your hands mix together beef, half the spaghetti sauce, bread crumb, half the cheese, onion, egg and Italian seasoning in a medium mixing bowl.

Shape into loaf and place in a greased 12 x 8 x 2-inch baking dish. Top with remaining spaghetti sauce and cheese. Bake for an hour and 10 minutes to desired doneness. During baking, use baster to remove excess grease from pan. Serve with a good crusty bread.

Pasta with Artichokes and Olives

- 4 oz. pancetta (lightly smoked bacon), diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 15-oz. cans of diced tomatoes with oil, garlic and onions, undrained
- 1 14-oz. c. artichoke hearts, drained and quartered
- ½ c. dry white wine
- 1 2-oz. can sliced ripe olives, drained
- 2 T. chopped fresh rosemary, (use sprigs for garnish)
- ¼ t. crushed red pepper
- ¼ c. chopped fresh Italian parsley
- 1 lb. linguine pasta

In a large skillet over medium heat cook the pancetta til browned, about 6 minutes. Add the garlic and cook for a minute. Add the undrained tomatoes, artichoke hearts, wine, olives, rosemary and red pepper. Simmer over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally for 10 minutes or so.

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Stir in parsley.

Meanwhile in a large pot of boiling salted water, cook the pasta. Drain well and toss with the sauce. Season to taste with salt and pepper, garnish with rosemary sprigs.

Mediterranean Pork

- 1 T. olive oil
- 8 pork chops
- 15 oz. tomato sauce
- 1 tomato, chopped
- 1 t. Italian seasoning
- 14 oz. artichoke hearts
- 2 t. green olives, chopped
- ½ t. sugar

In a large skillet, heat the olive oil over medium-high heat. Brown boneless pork chops on both sides. Stir in tomato sauce, chopped tomato, Italian seasoning, quartered artichoke hearts, chopped green olives and sugar. Simmer over low heat, uncovered for 10 minutes or til cooked through.

Sausage Ratatouille

- 1 lb. Italian sausage, crumbled
- ½ t. fennel seed
- ¼ c. olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 eggplant, peeled and diced
- 2 zucchini, sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 tomato, chopped

½ t. dried oregano

½ t. salt

½ t. ground black pepper

Heat the oil and brown your sausage with the fennel seed til done and crispy/crumbly. Drain and set aside. Heat more olive oil and saute onion til translucent. Add the zucchini and garlic, reduce heat. Add sausage, tomato, oregano, salt and pepper. Cover and simmer for about 8 minutes, serve hot.

Ricotta Filled Cake

- 1 box yellow cake mix
- 2 15-oz. containers ricotta cheese
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 4 egg whites, beaten
- ½ c. sugar
- ½ t. vanilla

Mix your cake according to box directions, pour batter into a greased 13 x 9-inch baking dish. Combine the cheese, eggs, egg whites, sugar and vanilla and mix well. Pour mixture over cake batter and bake for about an hour at 300 degrees.

Tiramisu

- 3 egg yolks
- 2 T. confectioners sugar
- 1 T. Marsala
- 8 oz. mascarpone cheese
- ½ c. strongly brewed coffee or espresso, cold
- 12 ladyfingers, quartered

3 oz. semisweet chocolate, grated

In a medium bowl, beat the egg yolks and sugar with electric mixer til thick. Add Marsala and Mascarpone; beat til mixture is smooth and thick. Evenly divide half the ladyfinger pieces equally in 6 dessert or stemmed glasses. Layer half of the coffee, mascarpone mixture and chocolate over the ladyfinger pieces. Repeat layers with remaining ladyfingers, coffee, mascarpone and chocolate. Cover and chill before serving.

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— Too Many Items to List —

News From New Market

by Waylon Smithey

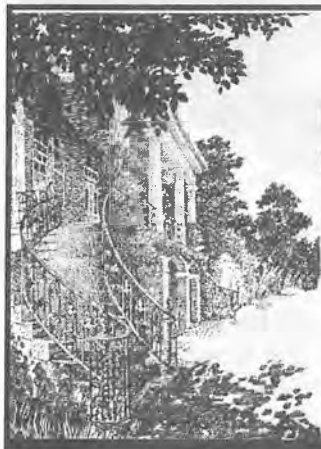
(Editor's Note: In the late 1800s, New Market was a bustling town second only to Huntsville in size in Madison County. Mrs. S.H. Hambrick, whose family had connections with early New Market, in 1968 found a bundle of 17 issues of the New Market Enterprise from 1888 and 1889 in the attic of her home near Manchester, Tenn. Following is the fifth of a series of articles based on the contents of those eight-page weekly tabloid newspapers.)

Volume 1, No. 10, August 25, 1888.

This article under the heading "A truthful Snake Story" was the lead story on page 1:

"Last Thursday morning a gentleman from Greenville, Ala., who is spending a few days in our town and who is very fond of fishing, went down to the town mill to procure some bait. Minnows being difficult to obtain with a hook, he laid down the rod and the line and started in quest of the cricket, which is a popular and favorite

bait with many skilful anglers. An old door which had fallen into "innocuous desuetude" lay near the mill and was the first object he met that was likely to afford a home or rendezvous for the cricket. He raised the door and the horrible and repulsive presence of more than two hundred snakes was revealed to him lying under it. Here was a golden opportunity to almost exterminate his snakeship in this section. Quick as a flash he procured a club and begun the work of slaughter. He slew them right and left until almost exhausted, but with one more effort the last feeble blow was struck and two hundred or more of man's most deadly and sneaking enemies lay in a heap in his presence. On raising the door a peculiar signal was given and hundreds of young snakes rushed into the open mouths of the old ones, distending their bodies to such a degree as to make escape next to impossible; thus they were easily slain. A post mortem examination by abdominal incision in the case of several old ones, revealed the presence of scores of young ones from four to six inches in length.



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The gentleman says he counted up to two hundred and from fatigue and lack of time stopped further gratification of his curiosity. Several residents of this place, gentlemen of undoubted veracity, who saw the heap of reptiles, will testify to the truth of this story."

The following two items also appeared on Page 1:

"Wanted - A Wife: We are requested to state that an old bachelor of this place, who gives the date of his birth the 10th day of June, 1833, proposes to marry any lady of the same age, who is willing. For further information, apply at or address the *Enterprise* office."

"A Stormy Night: Monday night was a stormy one in this section. A heavy gale blew all night, and did much damage to corn and sugar cane in the surrounding country, blowing it down and in many instances breaking the stalk. A great deal of fruit was also blown from the trees."

Country correspondence from Wells' Precinct: "Mr. James Bragg, of your town, was in our vicinity Sunday looking at some of our girls, we suppose."

Announcement was made that two young men from Bean's Creek, Tenn., were opening an undertaking establishment and general furniture and wagon re-

pair shop in New Market. "They have secured the shop in rear of Mr. Yarbrough's store for their place of business, and inform us that they propose to keep on hand coffins and caskets of all descriptions, and to be prepared to do all kinds of wood repairing."

Three boys were arrested for throwing rocks at a train coming through town, and were placed in jail in Huntsville.

The editor again promoted the area's natural resources, this time, valuable timber: "We were shown, a day or two ago, samples of shittim wood which were gotten out of the mountain by Mr. Wm. Howard. They were the finest specimens of this wood we have ever seen. The grain is very pretty and the wood of a rich yellow color. It makes the finest of veneering for furniture. Mr. Howard has forwarded specimens of it to the Cincinnati Exposition, to parties in New York and Indianapolis, and to the Winchester Manufacturing Co."

Local Briefs included: "Mr. Theo Hereford, while hunting Wednesday night, killed four coons and two skunks in one tree. He don't know how many more there were in the tree that escaped."

"Last Tuesday Mr. T.O. Gill sold a lot on Church street to Mr.

"C" Shell

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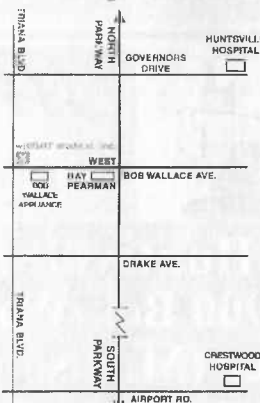


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T.D. Pike, for \$50, cash. The lot is directly opposite the residence of Mr. Pike. We understand he will build a shop on it."

A Letter to the Editor was received from Holly Grove, Ark.:

"I am receiving your interesting paper every week, and am much pleased with it. I am glad and proud to know that my old town can afford so valuable a paper. I like it very much.

"I was born in old Madison County, Ala., and lived near New Market seventeen years. I have lived in Arkansas six years- but never have found any country yet that will come up with the vicinity of New Market and the surrounding country.

"I wish the Enterprise a long life and great success. It is eagerly watched; for every week, and seems like getting a letter from an old friend. J. W. McCaleb."

Following is the next installment of the History of New Mar-

ket column:

"An amusing episode occurred in this town during an exciting contest for the State Senate, about 1833, between John Vining and Dr. Thomas Fearn. John Vining was making an earnest speech, standing on the head of an empty sugar hogshead. He was very earnest and observed - "Down, down to hell, and say I sent thee thither!" When the head of the hogshead gave way and down went Vining into the hogshead, completely out of sight for the time, amidst the shouts and astonishment of the people."

"Moses C. Ragsdale kept a grocery store in New Market in 1834. Richard Holding and Elkana Echols erected a two-story store house in 1834, and were prominent merchants. Echols built a two-story dwelling at the same time which he eventually sold to Wm. D. Hayter, who added to it an L. The same house is standing yet, and is now the dwelling of Dr.

Norris.

"John P. Pool was a gin maker and repairer, and furnished the country with cotton presses, screws made from large white oak trees.

"Rev. John Y. Ballard was a most excellent man, rather eccentric in his ways. He planted many acres in pear trees; some are still living and bearing fruit. He some years planted acres of squashes, goobers, melons and raspberries. He never had but one crop each year of one kind. He used to fell the largest trees (poplar) some said to hear them fall, others to dig out boats to float on Hester's creek, and thence by Flint river to the Tennessee.

"George Anderson was the schoolmaster, par excellence, and afterwards his brother Madison. The 16th section fund for schools was a large one and raised by the sale of the section to Richard Jeffries.

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Legislature, was deposited in the branches of the State banks, they are paying to the schools 12-1/2 per cent per annum, but from mismanagement the banks broke, and what has become of the money no one knows. It has gone where the woodbine twineth. I believe the State still has a small amount due the 16th section on which it pays a small per cent.

"It was rather singular banking then: First, three citizens, prin-

cipal and two endorsers, made a joint note for \$2,000, the amount allowed, each citizen had it discounted for ninety days, then if he paid up the interest he was allowed ninety days more, and so on until called for. This was all that was allowed, but each endorser was allowed the \$2,000 and frequently each became principal, so as to give the first principal actually \$6,000.

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"As the history of New Market is intrinsically connected and blended with the county and the State, these digressions are necessary for the full understanding of events."

I had some words with my wife, and she had a few paragraphs for me.

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I am personally familiar with many of the places and events mentioned in your book, and can honestly say you did an admirable job of writing about Alabama's heritage. I wasn't able to put your book down until I had read every page. **Superb writing!** - **John Patterson**, former Governor of Alabama

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Run Away

After all preliminary arrangements, unknown to this office, Miss Raglin and Fearn Douglass from the Bell Factory neighborhood, tucked themselves into a buggy and drove to town Sunday afternoon. They found Rev. G. W. Franklin, who "tied the knot" for them. Old man Raglin was doubtless at church when the slip was made. They were tired of single blessedness.

from 1879 newspaper

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Wild Melee At Huntsville Hotel As Local Man Defends Damsel's Honor

Huntsville, Al.
February 29, 1896

A conjugal row on the third floor of the Huntsville Hotel the other night resulted finally in a hot and exciting fight between the belligerent hubby and a gentleman who rushed gallantly to his wife's defense.

It was some time after midnight that the roomers on the floor were aroused from their slumbers by the noise of a violent scuffle and by the terrified, piercing screams of a woman. Everyone in hearing rushed upon the scene to learn what the matter was. In a little while, a white-

gowned crowd in picturesque disarray had gathered about the open door of the apartment of Mr. and Mrs. J.W. Bassett. Mr. Bassett was in his shirt-sleeves; the blade of a knife shone in his hand. He was standing above his wife, who in half undress, cowered screaming in a corner with the blood trickling down her face and throat and staining her garments with crimson smears.

Mr. Bassett was in a state of wild fury, and struck his wife repeatedly. His fists left marks on soft flesh; one of her eyes grew black beneath a blow and swelled almost to closing.

For some time the crowd stood in a stupor of amazement and made no effort to interfere. Mr. and Mrs. Robert Jones sleeping across the hall were awakened by all the racket. Mrs. Jones rushed out. She caught the bleeding woman in her arms. "You coward," her husband heard her say to Mr. Bassett, "if I were only a man, I would knock your head off." Such a remark from as amiable and usually unruffled little woman as Mrs. Jones brought Mr. Jones bouncing at double-quick into the hall. The heroism of the part he was about to play did not, it must be acknowledged, make itself evident in his make-up. "Give me room," he cried. The crowd drew back, and he rushed upon Mr. Bassett like a tiger.

Mr. Bassett is a large, powerful man, quite a deal heavier than his new antagonist. Mr. Jones grabbed him by the wrist and wrenched the knife from his hand. The weapon dropped to the floor and in falling cut through the outer fleshy portion of Mr. Jones' bare right foot to the bone. Some of the spectators, catching the heady contagion of the fight, started to help Mr. Jones out.

Mrs. Jones waved them back. "Leave them alone," she said with a splendid confidence in her husband's prowess, "Bobby will whip him sure." As it turned out, her prophecy was right.

Mr. Bassett fought madly for a time, then seeing the odds were too strong against him, grabbed up his coat and hat and hastily left the hotel. As he passed out, the score or more of women present looking like so many angels in their snowy draperies set up a loud hissing and clapping of hands.

His wife is still confined to her room from her injuries. She was, cut slightly about the bosom. Her face was badly bruised. She is a pretty, petite and stylish blonde who has made many friends during her stay at the hotel. The cause of the difficulty between herself and her husband was a petty private spat, which angered him. Mr. Bassett is the senior member of the Atlanta firm of Bassett Bros., local representatives of the Pittsburgh Reduction Company, the largest manufacturers of aluminum articles in the world.

Mr. Jones is employed at the Gurley sawmill. As a result of his fight he is lame from a badly swollen foot. The incision of the knife has healed poorly, and a dangerous complication is liable to arise from the wound.

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Man Still Looking For His Wife

from 1890 newspaper

George Mitchell came into the office of the Times yesterday and reported the disappearance of his wife, who was before he married her, Nancy Whitlock. Mitchell and his wife were living happily at Asheville, N.C. and Mitchell's half brother, George Edmonds, boarded at his house.

Last Thursday a week ago Mitchell returned from work late in the evening and found his house closed, and upon inquiry found that his five months old child had been taken to a neighbor's house with the request to take care of the child for an hour, when the mother would come for it.

Mitchell waited for his wife's return, but she never came back, and upon investigation it was found that Mitchell's half brother, George Edmonds, had eloped for parts unknown with Mrs. Mitchell.

Mitchell took his babe in his arms and walked through country roads to his friends in the Whitlock neighborhood, three miles from town where he left it, swearing that he would search the earth over until he found the base wretch who has brought this sorrow to his home, and if the law set his brother free after he had found him and turned him over to its custody, he would shoot him down in the courtroom then and there.

Later inquiries have led Mitchell to the belief that the errant couple may have been planning on relocating to the Huntsville area and all readers are asked to keep a sharp eye peeled. Our community cannot welcome or condone such dastardly deeds.

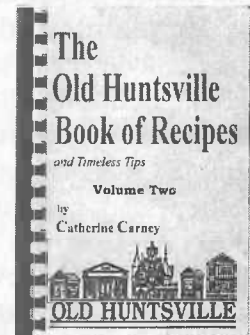
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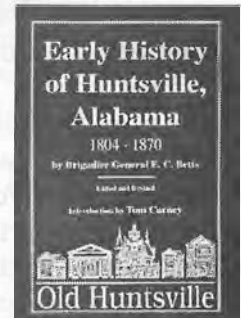


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A Letter

Charles O. Shepherd was a well known figure in 19th century Huntsville. He was an educator by profession and was a member of the faculty at the Green Academy. He volunteered for service in the Confederate Army in the fall of 1861, enlisting in a Madison County company called the North Alabama Cavaliers.

Shepherd remembered his military service in a 1909 letter to the son of an old comrade. In it he did some straight talking about an "unmitigated scoundrel" named Warren Reese:

Dear Willie:

Our company was organized in September, 1861, at Byrd's Spring, four and one half miles west of Huntsville. We remained in camp at Byrd's Spring until the 1st of November when we were ordered to join Forrest's command at Hopkinsville, Kentucky. We reached Hopkinsville about the middle of November and were enrolled in Forrest's command as Company 1.

At the fall of Fort Donelson,

most of the Company were captured and remained in prison until the summer of 1863. We were reunited once more in Huntsville and remained there until September '63, when we were ordered to report to Gen. Joe Johnston at Dalton, Georgia. He sent us to Gen. Wheeler at Tunnel Hill, Ga., with whom we remained until the close of the war, when we surrendered at Greensboro, North Carolina in April, 1865.

Gen. Wheeler had our escort company. The notorious Warren Reese of Montgomery, Alabama, I expect you have heard of. He appropriated my company, for Davis had resigned, and I was captain of a second escort, and used the two companies numbering about 200 men as an escort or body guard until January, 1865. Then out of the two escort companies (mine and Reese's) and the fragments of other commands decimated by death and sickness and without officers, Wheeler formed the 12th Alabama Cavalry Regiment, of which he made Reese Colonel and Pointer (one of his staff) Lieut. Colonel. It was a rascally piece of business and I protested against it and never did forgive Wheeler for it. I told him that

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Reese was a contemptible horse jockey and tinhorn gambler, and would desert before the war was over, which he did less than six weeks after his appointment. Poor Pointer, I liked him. He committed suicide in New York City about a month ago, driven to it by poverty. He had the same opinion of Reese I had, that he was an unmitigated scoundrel. We were enrolled in that regiment as Company 1, and your father and I surrendered with it at Greensboro, N.C. in April, 1865.

Give my love to Henry.

Yours truly,, C.O. Shepherd

If you eat the right things when you aren't hungry, then you won't eat the wrong things when you are hungry.

Cathey Carney

Sunday Liquor Law

The city Mayor, has issued strict orders to the Huntsville police bearing on the violation of the Sunday liquor law.

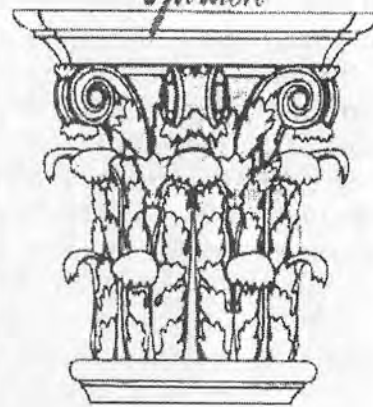
He told the police yesterday that hitherto they had been too lax in their efforts to keep the back doors and side entrances of the saloons in the city closed, and that hereafter they must watch keenly and let no case of a violation of this law escape their notice.

He also enjoined upon them the necessity of preserving the peace and dignity of the city by arresting every man found drunk on the streets on Sunday. He told them that they must make arrests even when the party was not disorderly, as drunkenness itself was a crime he would not pass over lightly.

from 1894 newspaper

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Leeman Ferry Road



by Jack Harwell

While the origins of most road names are obvious some, however, seem to defy any attempt at logical explanation. Leeman Ferry Road is a good example. Who is this Leeman? What ferry? The only body of water the road comes close to is the Big Spring Branch. And why does a street named for a river crossing lead instead to the city landfill? The precise answers to these questions have been obscured by the passage of time, but it's still possible to learn a little about such things, even at this stage.

There actually was at one time, a ferry on the Tennessee River called Leeman Ferry, operated by one William Leeman. (I should point out here that research for this story turned up at least four different spellings of the man's name. To avoid confusion we will stick with the one that appears on all the street signs.)

Rivers were the primary means of transportation in pioneer days, carrying goods to market and settlers to the lands west

of the Appalachians. But they also were barriers to overland movement. The technology of the day would not allow for the construction of bridges, so ferries were used.

Leeman's Ferry was one of seven ferries mentioned in the minutes of the first meeting of the Cotaco County Court in March of 1819. (Cotaco County was renamed Morgan County in 1821.) Within a year another three ferry operators had been granted licenses. One of the latter was operated by one Hopkins Lacy, brother of John Lacy, for whom Lacey's Spring is named. Mr. Leeman placed his ferry near Lacy's, about three miles downstream from Ditto Landing.

Leeman apparently got into ferrying in a big way. In his history of Madison County, *A Dream Come True*, James Record says that Leeman provided stock pens and cabins on both sides of the river for his customers. To provide access to his facility, he cut a

road from the Whitesburg road west to the site of the ferry. This could be called the first Leeman ferry road. It roughly paralleled the current Green Cove Road. Records further state that Leeman seems to have had all the business he could handle.

Exactly how long Leeman's ferry stayed in business is not certain. But with more than a dozen ferry operators essentially duplicating each other's services, it seems likely that competition would soon reduce their numbers. Nor is it known if the ferry survived Leeman himself, who died in mid-century and may be buried at the Leeman Cemetery near Somerville. The ferry is shown on Civil War maps as "Leman's" Ferry and also on a state map published in 1892. Leeman Ferry remained the place name for close to a century and appears on maps published as late as 1918.

At the beginning of this century there were still two ferries



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crossing the river between Madison and Morgan Counties, one at Whitesburg and one at Triana. With the coming of the automobile, however, the days of the river ferries were numbered. New and better roads were being built for motorists. Bridges were finally appearing, thanks to the availability of steel. The Keller Memorial Bridge was the first, opening in 1928 at Decatur, a town that grew up around, what else? - a river ferry. Soon bridges began appearing all up and down the Tennessee valley, including the Houston Bridge at Guntersville and the Comer Bridge at Scottsboro. When the Whitesburg Bridge opened in 1931, it killed not only the ferry at Whitesburg but the one at Triana as well, forever stunting that town's growth. The Leeman Ferry road now went nowhere.

Leeman Ferry Road reappeared in 1928, beginning at Huntsville Hospital and running south to the old ferry site. On city maps it was called "Leeman Ferry or Triana Road," apparently so there would be no doubt as to where the road led. As the city grew, the street layout changed and Leeman Ferry (or Triana) Road got shuffled. The section

nearest the hospital became Sivley Road, and remains so today. The northern terminus of the road moved to Clinton Avenue, near the Pollard Street intersection. Then in the mid-1950s, Memorial Parkway chopped the road in two. (Spelling was not standardized at that point: the

name was spelled "Lehmarf" on maps of the day.) By that time, of course, the road no longer went anywhere near Leeman Ferry (or Triana, either), since the southern part of the road was on land that the U.S. army took for Redstone Arsenal. Recently, the part that lies east of the Parkway was re-

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named as an extension of Monroe Street.

The site of the ferry is just west of the Civilian Recreation Area on Redstone Arsenal. There is a rock bluff there, still listed on topographical maps as "Lehman's Bluff." Somewhere near that bluff, Mr. Leeman built his ferry, complete with cabins, and left his name to history - though not, perhaps, in the way he intended.

Marriages are surely made in heaven. But so again, are thunder, tornados and lightning.

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Bob Hale's Place

by Walt Terry

A few years ago there was a place on a hill just southeast of where Huntsville Hospital is now. At that location, with the proper credentials, a rustic fellow in a black cowboy hat would sell you beer or a pint of "Kopper Kettle" on any day of the week.

The place, just off Governor's Drive, was reminiscent of an old fashioned country barnyard, shaded by huge oak trees. Chickens pecked and clucked, lop eared dogs lazed wherever they happened to collapse. Weathered tables and chairs and benches were scattered around. Often as not, there was a checker game in progress, and horseshoes clanged against metal stobs.

At somewhat inflated prices, you could buy a six pack or a pint for take-out, or for consumption on the premises if your behavior was within Bob's bounds of acceptance. Coarse language and fighting were out of those bounds.

Bob had to know who he was accommodating. Since I was not a "regular," I sometimes found he had forgotten my last visit. Then, he'd ask with narrowed eyes, "Now who are you?" In the early days of my occasion visits, I'd give a good part of my life's history. Later, I learned the door opened wide for me when I dropped the name of my great uncle T.T. Terry, who had made the slogan, "Great Is The Power Of Cash," a trademark for his store here in Huntsville.

And so it was that "cash-power" began to bring me a pint of whiskey to take home.

Some of Bob's less appreciative clients suspected his pints were a mite "watered down," since the labels were often loose. I considered this a part of his overhead. (And, anyhow, I was not about to strain my relationship with him.)

Eventually, I established a nodding friendship with him when ever our trips to the ABC Store coincided. (He might have thirty or forty pints of "Kopper Kettle," or the like, lined up on the counter for his inspection and purchase.)

Bob Hale probably came to know me better than a lot of people, and I had good reason to appreciate the hospitality he afforded in his homey barnyard.

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On the Southside of the courthouse Square in Huntsville, a tan gentlemen's wallet containing approximately twelve hundred dollars in currency. A ten dollar reward will be paid to the person who returns it intact. I can be reached through the offices of this newspaper.

Memories Of Yesterday

Cato Carter was born a slave in Limestone County. He later emigrated to Texas but moved back to North Alabama around 1920. These memoirs were recorded in 1927.

When my marster and the other mens on the place went off to the War, he called me and said, "Cato, you is always been a 'sponsible man, and I leave you to look after the womens and the place. If I don't come back, I want you to always stay by Mis' Adeline, he said, "Then I can go away peaceable."

We thought, for a long time, the sojers had the Federals whupped to pieces, but they was plenty bad times to go through. I carried a gun and guarded the place at nighttime. The paddyrollers was bad. I captured them and took them to the house more times than one. They wore black caps and put black rags over their faces, and was always skullduggerying around at night. We didn't use torches anymore when we went around at night, 'cause we were afeared. We put out all the fires around the house at nighttime.

The young mens in the grey uniforms used to pass so gay and singing in the big road. Their clothes was good, and they looked so fine, and we used to feed them the best we had on the place. Mis' Adeline would say, "Cato, they is our boys, and give them the best this place 'fords. " We took out

the hams and the wine, and we killed chickens for them. That was at first.

Then, the boys and mens in blue got to coming that way, and they was fine-looking mens, too, and Mis' Adeline would cry, and she would say, "Cato, they is just mens and boys, and we got to feed them." We had a pavilion built in the yard, like they had at picnics, and we fed the Federals on that. Three times, the Federals said to me, "We is going to take you with us." Mis' Adeline let into crying and say to the Yankee gentlemen, "Don't take Cato. Many of my niggers has run away to the North, and Cato is the only man I got by me now. If you take Cato, I just don't know what I will do. " I tell them that so long as I live I got to stay by Mis' Adeline, and that unless somebody forces me away, I ain't gwine to leave. I say, "I got no complaints to make. I want to stay by Old Mis' till one of us die." The Yankee mens say to Mis' Adeline, "Don't 'sturb yourself, Miss. We ain't gwine to take him nor harm nothing of yours."

The reason they was all right

by us was 'cause we prepared for them. But with some of the folks they was rough something terrible. They took off all their horses and their corn.

I have seen the trees bend low and shake all over and heard the roar and the popping of cannonballs. There was springs round and about, not too far from our place, and the sojers used to camp there at one of the springs and build a fire to cook a mule, 'cause they got down to starvation. And when some of the other gorillas [guerrillas] would see the fire, they would aim to the fire, and many is the time they spilled the dinner for the sojers. The Yankees did it, and our boys did it, too. There was killing going on so terrible, like people was dogs, and some of the old ones said it was near to the end of time, 'cause of folks being so wicked.

Mr. Ol came back, and all the others did, too, but he came back first. He was all wore out and ragged. He stood on the front porch and called all us to the front yard. He said, "Mens and womens, you are today as free as

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I am. You is free to do as you like, 'cause the damned Yankees done 'creed that you are. But they ain't a nigger on my place that was born here or ever lived here that can't stay here and work and eat to the end of his days, as long as this old place will raise peas and goobers. Go if you wants or stay if you wants."

Some of the them stayed and some went. And some that had run away to the North came back. They always called real humble-like at the back gate to Mis' Adeline, and she always fixed it up with Mr. Ol that they could have a place.

Near to the close of the War, I seen some of the folks leaving for Texas. They said if the Federals win the War, you have to live in Texas to keep the slaves. So plenty of them started driftin' their slaves to the West. They would pass with the womens riding in the wagons and the mens on foot.

When some of them came back, they said that it took three weeks to walk the way. Some of them took slaves to Texas, even after the Federals done 'creed a breaking-up.

Long as I lived, I minded what my white folks told me, but once. They was a nigger working in the fields, and he -kept jerking the mules, and Mr. Ol got mad, and he gimme a gun, and he told me to go out there and kill that man. I said, "Mr. Ol, please don't tell me to do that. I ain't never killed anybody, and I don't want to." He said, "Cato, you do what I tell you." And he meant it. I went out to the nigger and I said, "You has got to leave this minute, and I is, too, I cause I is s'pose to kill you, only I ain't, and Mr. Ol will kill me." He dropped the lines, and we ran and crawled through the fence, and ran away.

I hated to go, 'cause things was so bad. Flour sold for twenty-five

dollars a barrel, and pickled pork for fifteen dollars a barrel. You couldn't buy nothing 'lessn you had gold. I had plenty of Confederate money, only it don't buy nothing. But today, I am a old man, and my hands ain't stained with no blood, and I is always been glad that I didn't kill that man.

Mules run to a turrible price. A right puny pair of mules sold for five hundred dollars. But the Yankees give me a mule, and I farmed that year for a white man, and I had a job all the time to watch a herd of mules. That year, I was bound out by agreement with a white man, and I made three hundred and sixty dollars. The Bureau [Freedmen's Bureau] came by that year looking at the contracts with the niggers to see they don't get skunt out of their rightful wages from the white folks. Mis' Adeline and Mr. Ol didn't stay mad at me, and every Sunday they come by to see me

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and bring me little delicate things to eat.

The Carters said they were regretful a hundred times that they never learned me to read or write, and they said my dada had put up five hundred dollars for me to go to the New Allison School for colored people. I started in, and Miss Benson, a Yankee lady, was my teacher. I was twenty-nine years old and 'ust starting in the blue-back speller. I was there a little while, when one morning at ten o'clock my pore old mammy came by and called me out. She tells me that the niggers she was living with and working with done put her out of the place, 'cause she wasn't a good hand. I told her not to worry, that I was the family man now,, and she didn't never need to get three quarter hand wages anymore.

For years, I turned my hand to anything I could find to do, and I never had trouble finding work,

I left my mammy with some fine white folks, and she raised a whole family of they chillun for

them. Their name was Bryan, and they lived on a little bayou. Them younguns was crazy about her, and they used to send me word not to worry about my little black mammy, 'cause she would have the best of care, and when she died, they was 'tendin' to her buryin'.

I got a job splitting rails for two years, and from then on have farmed, mainly. I married a woman and lived with her forty-seven years, rain and shine. We had thirteen chillun, but only eight of them are living today.

After the big war, (WW1) I got worried about my little black mammy and I wanted to go back to see her and the old places. I went, and she was shriveled up to not much of anything. That was the last time I saw her. But, for forty-four years, I didn't forget to send her things I thought she would want. I saw Ol Marster. He had married after I went away, and raised a family of chillun. I saw Mis' Adeline, and she was a old woman. We went out and looked at the tombstones and the rock markers in the graveyard on the place, and some of them had nearly melted away. I looked good at lots of things, 'cause I knew I wouldn't be that way again. So many had gone on, since I had been there before.

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Welcome Back!

The 1934 Mill Strike

Armed Men Ruled The Streets As Union Leader Kidnapped

In mid July 1934, after months of mediation and agitation, nearly 4,000 Huntsville cotton mill workers went on strike, part of a nationwide strike that quickly ensnared the entire textile industry in America.

The walkout brought violence to the streets in the form of killings, kidnappings, assaults, shootings and bombings.

A cloud of fear hung over Huntsville like poisonous vapors seeping into the hearts of the populace. No man, woman, child; home or business was safe. Living here was dangerous.

Mill owners across the nation refused to negotiate, threatening to hire strikebreakers to quell any riotous activity by the strikers.

Then on July 17, the Fletcher mill opened at the regular hour, but closed within three hours. Noisy strikers were clamoring in the street outside the mill and it appeared that major violence would erupt at any second. Sensing the severity of the situation, the nonunion employees chose to leave their jobs rather than confront the unruly pickets.

Police and deputies armed with tear-gas, rifles and machine guns were called to the scene as the strikers grew more boisterous, but the crowd dispersed when the officers arrived.

Merrimac was the next mill to close as strikers, under the leadership of state union organizer Albert Cox, went through the building telling workers to leave. The mill emptied in minutes.

Lincoln and Dallas mills

closed when the night shifts came off duty.

John Dean, representing the United Textile Workers of America, urged strikers to maintain picket lines and prevent the mills from running.

Carloads of strikers, armed with shotguns pistols, knives, baseball bats and anything else that could serve as weapons, cruised the streets shouting and waving their weapons, intimidating anyone who might have had thoughts about going to work.

A meeting of the Dallas Mill workers was held at the old Methodist Church on Humes Avenue. Monroe Adcock, president of the Dallas local union, presided and urged that no destruction of mill property take place during the strike. He also asked that all union members refrain from using intoxicating liquors while the strike was in progress.

The following day reports of trouble sent police racing to the Admiral Braid Company. A crowd of a few hundred men had gathered outside the plant when it was reported that an attempt was going to be made to move a load of merchandise. The report was false and the crowd dispersed without incident.

On July 30, special deputies guarded the Tennessee River Bridge between Decatur and Huntsville as rumors indicated that a motorcade of more than 500 striking textile workers from Huntsville were en-route to Decatur in an effort to urge the textile workers there to join the

strike.

Earlier in the day, three union men were attacked on a street corner near the Goodyear fabric plant in Decatur. The aforementioned union local head, Monroe Adcock, was shot in the leg and Isaac Bullard and Bumice Rigsby were injured in an altercation with three unarmed men. Special

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guards were placed around the Goodyear plant.

Early Sunday morning, August 6, John Dean, leader of the strike in Alabama, was kidnapped from his room on the sixth floor of the Russel Erskine hotel by four men and taken at gunpoint to Fayetteville. During the ride he was beaten about the head with a pistol. His abductors, in a bizarre move, then registered him at the Pope Hotel there where he managed to, according to the porter, initiate a call to his friends in Huntsville. In less than an hour a dozen automobiles, filled with armed men, arrived in Fayetteville to rescue their leader.

Instead of returning to his hotel, Dean went into seclusion at the home of George Davis on F Street in Merrimac Village. Armed guards were placed around the house to prevent further kidnapping.

During the time of Dean's abduction 400 angry men, most of them carrying guns, gathered near the Russel Erskine Hotel. They had heard of the abduction and were seeking the men responsible. The mayor sent a large contingent of police to the hotel, preventing the mob from getting out of hand.

Strikers sat up roadblocks at each road leading into Huntsville. Automobiles going in and out of the city were stopped by strikers brandishing weapons who said they were looking for the kidnapped man, not knowing that he had returned and was in hiding.

The situation was becoming serious. Most of Huntsville's citizens were afraid to leave their homes. Gangs of armed men roamed the town looking for would-be strike breakers and terrifying everyone with whom they came into contact. Sometimes as many as eight carloads

of strikers would slowly caravan through downtown.

With strikers demanding that the city take action, Solicitor (district attorney) James Price announced that the Grand Jury would meet the following Monday and that a warrant had been issued in the kidnap case. Fearful that the crowd would take the law in its own hands, the sheriff refused to name the persons involved until the arrests had been made.

Monday morning found a large crowd assembled downtown awaiting the days events. In an

act of bravado, Dean drove in from Merrimac and casually breakfasted at the Central Cafe downtown while armed bodyguards patrolled the sidewalks out front.

Meanwhile, the Grand Jury returned an indictment against James Conner, a mill worker. When word spread that the owners of the cotton mills might have been responsible for Dean's kidnapping, the pent-up fury of the strikers exploded.

Rumors that downtown stores were going to be dynamited caused additional deputies to be



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called in, but the day passed without incident.

Threats against the indicted Mr. Conner caused guards to be placed at his home. They were called off that same afternoon when it was realized that Conners had left town for parts unknown.

Cars were not permitted on streets where union leaders lived, unless permission was first obtained from the strikers. Armed guard was maintained throughout the night and augmented the following morning by additional strikers.

The Thomas plant, forced to shut down when the strike began, reopened next day with a limited crew despite threats from the strikers.

Before the plant could begin operating at full capacity it was invaded by a gang of strikers from Merrimac Mills and Erwin Mills, despite protests by the foremen. The workers were quickly assembled and ordered to quit work and leave the building by the spokesman of the strikers.

William Fraser, manager of the Thomas Mill, later identified the leader as Henry Parmlee, the union leader at Merrimac. Fraser said the strikers ignored the "posted" signs displayed at the entrance to the mill.

On August 13, the kidnap charge against Conner was stricken from the docket of the

Grand Jury and a lesser charge of "Whitecapping" was entered. Whitecapping was defined as "an act to prevent and punish the formation or continuance of conspiracies and combinations for certain unlawful purposes."

Random acts of violence continued. Almost everyone suspected of being a friend of the Mill owners were accosted and intimidated.

On Sept. 3, three charges of dynamite damaged the grocery store of Mrs. R. Watkins on Pike Street in Merrimac Village. The explosion brought a crowd to the scene.

Shortly before daybreak, strikers were brought out of their beds by bugle calls and gunshots. Armed strikers rushed into the city from Lincoln Village after being told of trouble at the Fletcher mills. They returned home when everything was found quiet. A group of young women decided to ignore the picket line and return to work, but they were pushed to the ground by the angry strikers. Ignoring the girls' screams of protest, the strikers produced a pair of scissors and proceeded to roughly cut their hair.

A short while later, residents of Lincoln watched the strange sight of four bald-headed girls being paraded down Meridian Street.

City officials asked that a fed-

eral mediator be brought in. Something had to happen. Huntsville could not continue living under a cloud of terror.

Judge Petree, mediator, and his staff arrived in Huntsville and immediately went into a confer-

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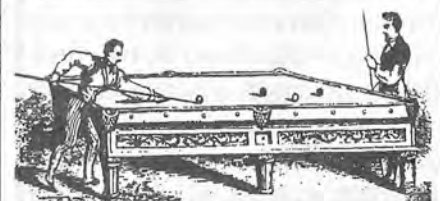
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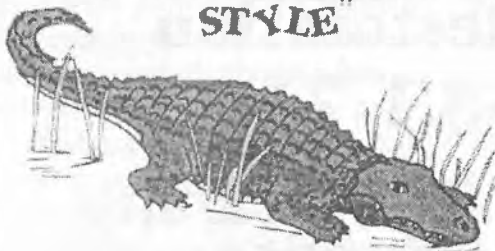
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ence with union leaders. After the meeting at the Davis house, where John Dean had established his headquarters, Petree then conferred with the officials of the Erwin mill, which had been trying to reach an agreement for several days.

On Sept. 22, before the mediator could work out a compromise, the great textile strike ended. National Union leaders had reached a settlement.

Thousands of Huntsville textile workers responded to the union lead and returned to work.

Peace had returned to Huntsville.

No charges were ever filed against anyone for the hundreds of acts of lawlessness committed during the strike. "It was," as one old-timer remembers, "as if Huntsville just wanted to forget."



Woman Shot Brother-In-Law

from 1894 newspaper

Charles Brownstead, while intoxicated, went to the house of his brother, William Brownstead, who was away from home, and broke in the front door at midnight and was met on the stairway by Mrs. William Brownstead, who shot him in the arm, inflicting a painful wound.

The errant brother-in-law was apparently angry at Mrs. Brownstead who had earlier unceremoniously dumped two gallons of his whiskey into the waters of Pin Hook Creek

Charles is in jail charged with burglary, and his plucky sister-in-law was acquitted by the mayor.

To Much Scrapping In Huntsville

Huntsville has shown up a big percent of immorality and evil doing the past two days, as was evidenced by the number of cases in the Mayor's court yesterday morning and what will be had this morning.

A scrap occurred at Hotel Monte Sano yesterday between two waiters, which resulted in one viciously using a razor on the other.

In the afternoon William Walker and his son became obstreperous and had to be locked up.

There is entirely too much of this scrapping being indulged in our city and our officers and Mayor Murphy should put a quietus upon such practices and disturbances.

from 1894 newspaper



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Times Were Hard

by Don Wynn



When I was growing up, my Dad was constantly telling me and my brothers stories about how hard it was when he was a kid. They plowed their fields with mules, carried water from the well and had a coal stove to cook with and to heat the house. It was cold in the winter time and hot in the summer. Air conditioning meant opening the windows and doors. It must have been hard but I grew tired of hearing about it.

Now, I am telling my kids stories about my childhood. Mama didn't drive us everywhere we wanted to go. We walked a lot and rode bicycles when we had them. We only had one TV and it was a

small black & white. For the first few years that we had a TV, we could only get one station which meant that we never argued about what we were going to watch. We were outside all day, every day. We did get to go to a movie every week or two to see Roy Rodgers or Gene Autry. They even showed cartoons before the movies in those days.

At the end of my speech about "hard times," I always tell my kids that we had to walk about 2 miles back and forth to school and it was up hill both ways.

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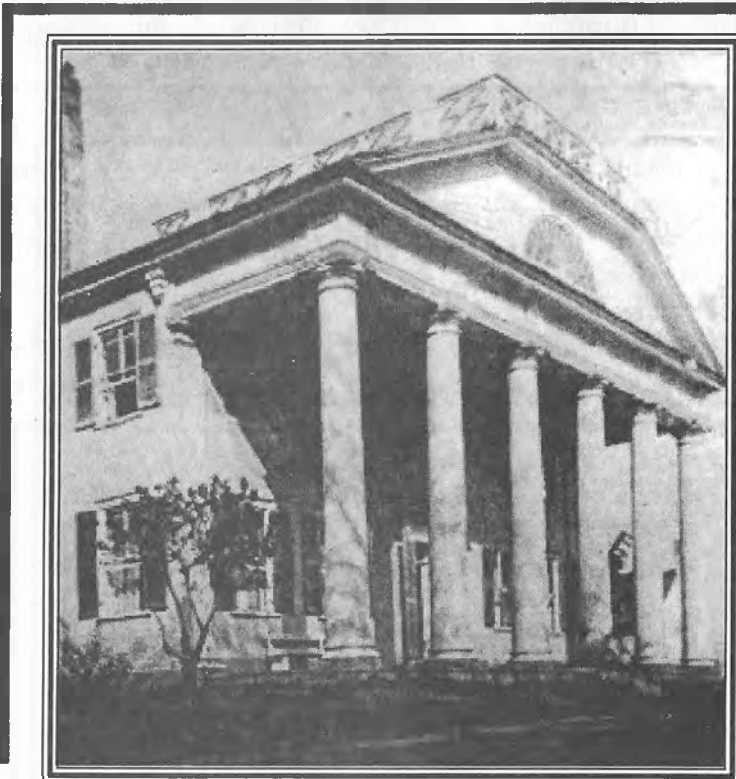
- Have a large group and want buttered corn on the cob? Get you a large pot of hot water and several sticks of butter. Let the butter melt, then dip in the cobs with forks and pull out slowly. The butter will stay on the cobs.

- To keep a cauliflower bright white, add a little milk during the cooking.

- When you are pounding meat to tenderize it, pound flour into the meat to prevent the juices from escaping.

- To get a light and delicate crust on coated, fried chicken: add about 3/4 teaspoon baking powder to the batter and use club soda as the dipping liquid.

- Peaches ripen quickly if you put them in a box covered with newspaper.



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