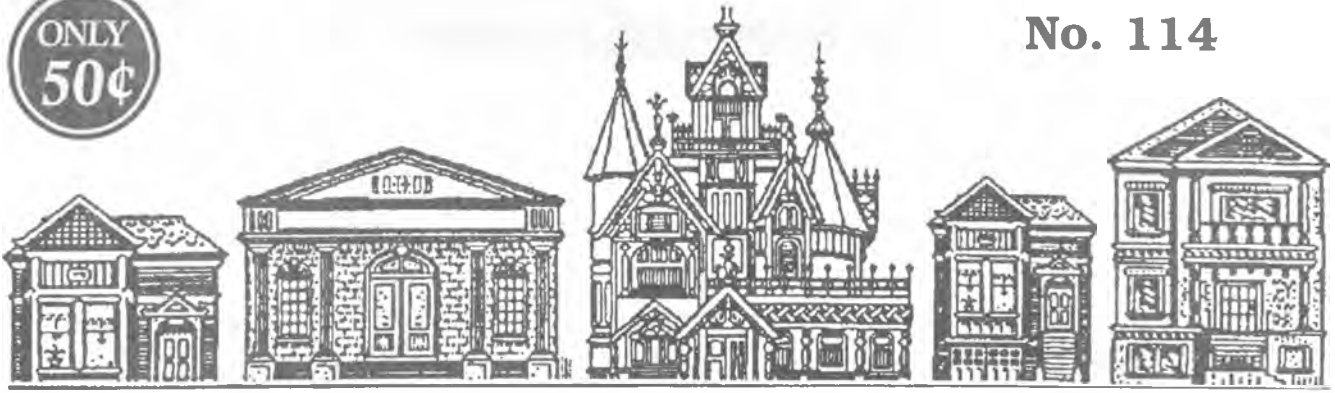


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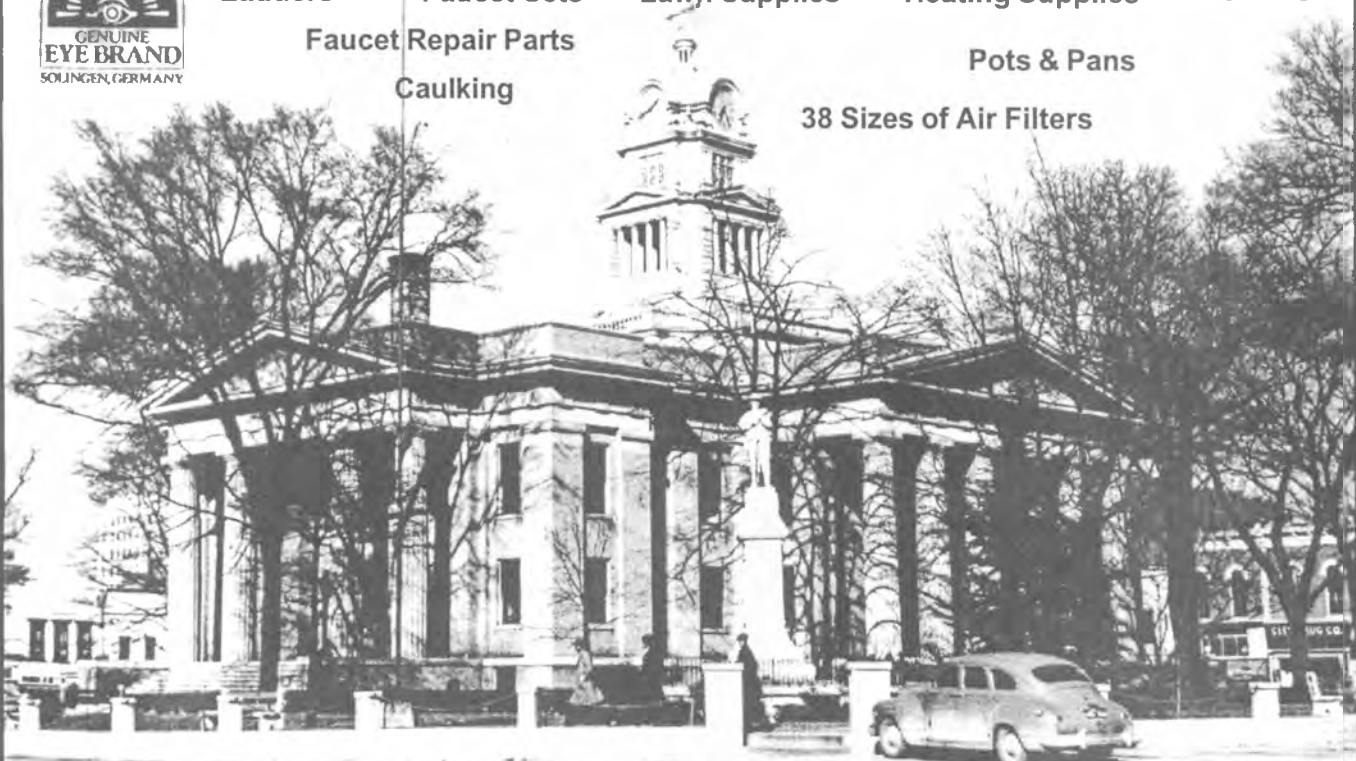
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# Not Politically Correct

As memories of the Civil War faded and time began to take its toll on the ranks of the aging Confederate veterans; the state and the people of Alabama spared no expense in venerating the men who were the living symbols of the Lost Cause. Parades were held, reunions organized and a special tax was enacted to pay pensions to these veterans and their widows.

Strange as it may sound, this tax has never been repealed and the citizens of Alabama still pay a 1 mil ad valorem Confederate Pension tax. In one recent year the state collected over 30 million dollars from this tax but still could not pay the medical bills for Alberta Martin, the last living Confederate widow.

Alberta's husband, William Jasper Martin, was born in 1845 in North Georgia. His family were typical pioneer farmers, with the only source of cash coming from the yellow gold that Martin's father occasionally found while prospecting the mountain streams.

Emigration was moving westward and it wasn't long before the

Martins heard tales of the rich land in Alabama that could be had for next to nothing. In 1855, after selling their land and everything else that could not fit into the wagon, they loaded their personal belongings and began the trek to Alabama.

The family settled on a small piece of land in Covington County, where they immediately began clearing the land in preparation for the next year's cotton crop. The Martins were an average Southern farm family before the Civil War. They owned no slaves, depended on the land for their livelihood and generally kept to themselves.

William Martin was sixteen when the war began in 1861. While many young men rushed to enlist, others stayed home and worked the fields hoping the war would pass. Such was Martin's case. For the next three years he watched as more and more of the young men in the community disappeared to become cannon fodder on far-away battlefields. Finally it was Martin's turn. On May 26, 1864, Martin was sworn in as a private in the 4th Alabama Regiment, Co. K of the Confederate States of America. The 4th Alabama had already earned its laurels on the battlefields of Manassas, the Wilderness, and numerous other places. It was the most respected regi-



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ment in Robert E. Lee's fabled Army of Northern Virginia. Although his pension papers have him as enlisted, his wartime records list him as a conscript. Most likely he was "conscripted" by a roving band of "recruiters" who persuaded him to enlist.

By this time the Confederacy was suffering from a lack of manpower and any able-bodied man not in uniform risked being labeled a traitor and being shot or hanged.

He was immediately sent to Camp Watts, near Auburn, for basic training. Matthew Galoway, another new soldier at the camp, described it in a letter home as "...constant soldiering activities with much shouting and whistle blowing. The tents are in a field of mud, made worse by men marching to and fro."

Martin's training was cut short within days of arriving at Camp Watts when they were ordered to board train cars for Richmond. Yankee troops were threatening Lee's army at a place called Petersburg and every man capable of carrying a gun was needed at the front. So great was the haste that most of the men had not even been issued uniforms or weapons before they were ordered to board the train. After days of hard travel they were greeted by frenzied military activity upon their arrival in the Confederate capital. Immediately af-

ter leaving the train they were formed into columns, issued rifles and marched to the front, many still wearing the same clothes they had left home in.

Twenty-four hours after arriving in Richmond they were engaged in one of the bloodiest battles of the war. The next two weeks were scenes of constant marching and fighting for Martin's unit. "We were so hungry," remembered Martin years later, "that we would pick up potatoes out of the field and eat them raw while marching."

Its ranks thinned during weeks of constant battle, Company K was ordered back to Richmond for regrouping and on June 25th, Pvt. Martin was finally issued a uniform.

Years later, in one of the few instances when he talked of the war, Martin recalled the screams of the wounded men as musket balls and cannon fire cut a swath through the gray ranks, and of the horror of the great explosion that detonated within the midst of his brothers in arms. He didn't talk much about his experiences during the rest of the war, except to say that when the fighting was over, "I laid my gun down and started walking home."

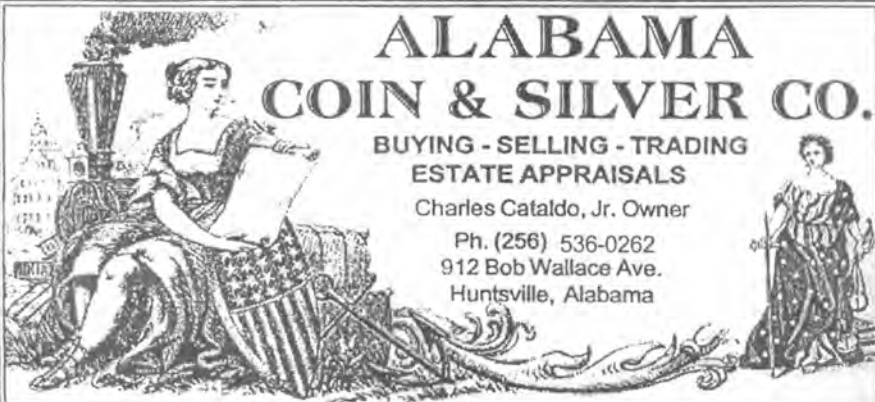
He returned home to a land devastated by war. Rich fields lay neglected and overgrown and many, once elegant, homes had only chimneys still standing.

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Martin's father had died in the war, his younger brother was killed in the fighting at Richmond and many of his neighbors were still unaccounted for. Sadly, the ex soldiers returned to the cotton fields. Many of them, after facing the horrors of war, found the solitude of working in the fields strangely comforting.

The next half-century passed rapidly for Martin. He had married and raised a family of five children, only to see his wife fall ill and die. Time had also taken its toll upon his friends and now there were few people left who could remember the days when Martin wore the Confederate gray. The few left were old and infirm, many still suffering from wounds endured on long forgotten battlefields.

In 1895, the State of Alabama passed a 1 mil ad valorem tax to provide pensions and care for veterans and their widows. In order to qualify for the pension, the recipients had to prove they served honorably in the service of the Confederacy and that their material worth was less than \$400.00.

The amount of the pensions were small, averaging between twenty-five and fifty dollars a month, but they were a godsend to the aging veterans who in many cases had no other support.

"I didn't know much about

the Civil War," recalled his widow, Alberta Martin, "but I knew he was drawing a \$150 pension from it every three months. That was a lot of money!" Alberta Martin grew silent as she remembered her early years and meeting the man she still calls, "Mr. Martin."

Her family, like tens of thousands of others, was wed to the soil and cotton crops that never seemed able to produce quite enough to pay the bills. At the age of 10, Alberta's life was suddenly shattered when her mother died of cancer. "Father would work in the fields all day and come home, take care of the house and do the cooking. You could look at his face and tell he was worn out all the time." Alberta assumed the role of surrogate mother to the other children and by the time she was twelve she was doing the household chores as well as the cooking and washing.

The area's economy, always dependent on cotton, was completely devastated by the boll weevil in 1915. Dirt farmers, with no other skills, were suddenly out of work with no way to support their families. Many families began the exodus to northern cities, while others remained behind, hoping the cotton crops would be better in the following years.

"I lied about my age," said Mrs. Martin, "and got a job in a cotton mill. You had to be sixteen,

but no one really checked. I was working six and a half days a week, 10 hours a day, for \$9.50 a week. It seemed like all the money in the world." Although she was spending all of her time working in the mills and taking care of the house, she still attracted the attention of the town's young men.

"We didn't do much courting back then. We would meet at people's houses, have taffy pulls or corn shuckings and when it got time to go home, sometimes the boys would walk with us. One of the men that walked her home was Harold Farrow, a debonair young man about town. He was a taxi driver. A few months later he had swept Alberta off her feet and

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asked for her hand in marriage. Her father, though having reservations about the match, reluctantly gave his permission. "You ever do her wrong," the father warned Farrow, "and I'll come get her!"

Her father's premonitions proved correct when it was discovered that Farrow was using his taxi business to bootleg whiskey. "My father didn't have no use for whiskey or for people that fooled with it," recalled Alberta. "He showed up at the house one day and said, "Get your stuff together; I'm carrying you home." Within weeks she was granted a divorce, only to discover that she was also pregnant.

"My half brother was growing a cotton crop and I moved in with him, helped take care of my father and did the housework. With a baby to take care of there wasn't much else for me to do."

She began noticing an elderly gentleman who daily passed the house on his way to a nearby store, where he would sit and play checkers all day. In the afternoon he would again pass on his way home.

Curious, Alberta began to inquire about the gentleman who seemed to spend all of his time playing checkers. "His name is William Jasper Martin," a neighbor told her. "He's in his 80s and he was a soldier in the Civil War."

"He was a good-looking man," Alberta recalls. "He had golden hair and a mustache, weighed about 150 pounds and was a gentleman. He'd walk by and we got to talking over the fence. We didn't do no sparking, we just stood and talked. One day he just up and asked if I would marry him. Of course I said yes. You know what they say: It's better to be an old man's darling than a young man's slave. Course I told

him he'd have to ask my father."

The fact that Martin was sixty some years older than her and forty some years older than her father didn't seem to matter at the time. Martin immediately went to her father and, as was the custom in those days, asked for his daughter's hand in marriage.

"Everybody knew Mr. Martin was in the War, but that didn't mean anything to me," recalls Alberta. "Onliest thing I was thinking about was what my father was going to say when Mr. Martin asked him about marrying me."

Reluctantly, her father gave his blessing saying, "She's been married before so I reckon she knows

what she's doing."

"We went to the courthouse in Andalusia and got married by a judge. People stared, but we didn't pay them no mind." A soft serene smile played on Alberta's face as she recalled the marriage in 1927. "I always called him Mr. Martin. From the day we met to the day he died, he was always Mr. Martin to me."

"Mr. Martin, he had a bedstead and I had one so we rented a house and set up housekeeping. We didn't have any other furniture so we used wooden boxes until we could get some."

Shortly after the marriage, Martin's daughter moved in with them. Oddly, Alberta was not in-



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timidated by the fact that her new stepdaughter was forty years older than she.

If the neighbors were surprised by the strange union, they were even more surprised some months later when they learned that young Alberta and old Martin were expecting a child. "Mr. Martin, he liked to have spoilt that child to death after it was born. I remember Mr. Martin walking to town, all dressed up, with his little boy at his side holding his hand. He was prouder of that boy than anything that ever happened to him in his life."

By 1932 there were few men left alive who could lay claim to being a Confederate veteran. Martin had always shunned veterans' reunions, even refusing to talk about the war much, except in an occasional reflective mood. But he reluctantly agreed to attend the one in Montgomery. Everyone knew it would possibly be the last one.

The reunion lasted three days. It was a somber affair, attended by a mere handful of survivors clad in old Confederate gray uniforms.

A reporter wrote: "... the veterans seemed lost in thought, as if remembering their fallen comrades and wondering how long it

would be before they joined them."

Upon Martin's return home from the reunion he would sit on the porch for hours and stare into space. On July 8, 1932, feeling tired, he simply laid down on the bed and died.

"Mr. Martin was good to me," said Alberta in a soft voice as she remembered the day she buried her husband. "He was good to the children and I missed him terribly after he was gone."

After Martin's death, his widow Alberta continued to draw a pension until she remarried. That union lasted fifty years until 1982, when she was again widowed.

Like so many elderly widows who had lost their sole source of support, Mrs. Martin's financial situation grew almost desperate. She was vaguely aware of the fact that the Confederate pension bill had a provision in it to allow widows who had remarried to draw the pension if their second husband died also. At the time, this provision was almost a necessity.

Many widows had remarried, and once their second husbands died, many were left destitute and oftentimes in worse straits than before.

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2. Lily Flagg - The story of Huntsville's prize-winning Jersey cow, by Doris Benefield Gilbreath, \$10.00.

3. Glimpses into Antebellum Homes of Historic Huntsville Alabama - \$16.95.

4. Wildflowers of Tennessee - Including North Alabama and the Tennessee Valley. Over 780 color photos by Jack Carman, \$27.95.

5. Historic Mooresville: A Guide to the First Town Incorporated by the Alabama Territorial Legislature, \$25.00.

6. Alabama Gardens Great and Small; a Guided Tour. Over 250 original color photos by Givhan and Jennifer Greer, \$26.95.

7. Cemeteries of Madison County, Vols I and II, \$25 each.

8. Historical Markers of Madison County, Alabama, \$18.95.

9. Some Like It With Herbs by the Huntsville Herb Society, \$14.95.

10. Herb Fare by the Huntsville Herb Society, \$14.95.

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Over the years Mrs. Martin made several inquiries about applying for the pension. She never got a reply. Strange as it may seem, although the state of Alabama was collecting millions of dollars in taxes for the fund, there was no system set up to actually pay the pensions "The paper work to fill out for a Confederate pension," said one state employee, "just didn't exist."

In 1996 Mrs. Martin was "discovered" by the news media who declared her "the last living Confederate widow."

Fame does not guarantee riches, however. People would stop and take pictures, and maybe ask for her autograph. Some people would even leave a dollar or two to help her out. But when all the excitement was over she still had to worry about saving pennies to pay the bills, or putting off doctors appointments because she didn't have the money to pay.

Many people asked if there was anything they could do for her. She always replied with the same answer. "Help me get my pension."

When people began making inquiries in Mrs. Martin's behalf, the results proved almost as unbelievable as her story. Yes, there was a Confederate Pension Tax, but there was no money to help the last living Confederate widow!

As the veterans and their widows had begun to die out, the state continued to collect millions of dollars every year in their behalf. Several administrations used the fund to finance their pet projects and to provide jobs for friends. In the 1940s, when there were only a few people drawing Confederate pensions, one source claimed there were seventeen people employed administering

the fund.

In the 1970s the bulk of the tax was diverted to the Department of Human Resources with another part going to Veterans Affairs. Ironically, although millions of dollars were collected and dispensed to the Veterans Affairs Administration, Mrs. Martin did not qualify for any assistance from them because her husband had fought for the wrong side!

Apparently, the state justified the continuing of the "Confederate" tax by contributing 1% (out of almost thirty million dollars) to the upkeep of a Confederate cemetery in south Alabama. Almost even more unbelievable is the fact that, once the state diverted the money, it actually applied for, and received, Federal matching funds. This, in effect, makes Alabama the



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only state in the Union to receive Federal matching funds for a Confederate pension tax!

After tremendous pressure was applied from different groups, the State of Alabama reluctantly agreed to pay Mrs. Martin a pension from the Department of Human Resources. Even this proved controversial when some people tried to label her husband as a deserter from the Confederate Army in order to deny the payment, despite the fact that the state of Alabama had granted him a pension almost a hundred years ago.

The small pension she recieved allowed her to enter a nursing home where she requires constant medical care. Unfortunately, once the nursing home bills are paid every month there is no money left for doctors or medicine. These bills are being paid by friends, and in many cases, complete strangers who have heard of her plight.

State officials, when asked to consider paying her medical expenses, replied, "If she would go on welfare, then we could pay her doctor bills." Mrs. Martin refused welfare, saying "she was not go-

ing to beg for what her husband fought for."

One official in Montgomery perhaps summed it up recently in an "off the record" interview. "We all feel sorry for her but there's nothing we can do. If anyone proposed a bill in her behalf, they would be committing political suicide. Her case is really an embarrassment for most of the people down here, because she's just not politically correct. I doubt seriously if the state will even help bury her once she dies."

"No one wants to repeal the tax," he continued to say, "because then they would have to pass another tax to make up for the lost revenue."

Almost a century and a half


ago, hundreds of thousands of young men followed Alabama's flag as they marched off to distant battlefields. The ones who returned came back to a land devastated by war and conflict. They asked nothing for their services but when it was offered they gratefully accepted.

They had no idea that one day their widows would be an embarassment to the State of Alabama.

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 Last Widow Catherine S. Damon: died November 11, 1906, age 92  
 Last Dependant Phoebe M. Paimeter: died April 25, 1911, age 90



## The War Of 1812 (1812 -1815)

Last Veteran Hiram Cronk: died May 13, 1905, age 105  
 Last Widow Carolina King: died June 28, 1936, age unknown  
 Last Dependant Esther A.H. Morgan: died March 12, 1946, age 89



## Indian Wars (1861-1898)

Last Veteran Fredrak Fraske: died June 18, 1973, age 101

## Mexican War (1846 - 1848)

Last Veteran Owen Thomas Edgar: died September 3, 1929, age 98  
 Last Widow Lena James Theobald: died June 20, 1963, age 89  
 Last Dependant Jesse G. Bivens: died November 1, 1962, age 94



## Civil War (1861 - 1865)

Union Veteran Albert Woolson: died August 2, 1956, age 109  
 Confederate Veteran John Sailing: died March 16, 1958, age 112

## Spanish-American War (1898)

Last Veteran Nathan E. Cook: died September 10, 1992, age 106

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# News of The Weird From 1910

**Atlanta** - After lying 36 hours in her coffin Mabel Person, the five year old daughter of C. M. Person, has been revived.

The child was saved through the intervention of Dr. E. S. Norton, a relative who was at the house to attend the funeral. Dr. Norton noted the rosy cheeks and unchanged appearance of the child and refused to permit the coffin to be closed. He called other physicians and an effort was made to revive the child. At last signs of returning animation were noted. Half an hour later the stethoscope indicated a return of strong heart action. An hour later the child was sleeping in the arms of her mother.

**Lexington, KY** - Police John Riley today revived the old whipping post regime when he sentenced Simon Scerace, a 15 year old boy, to be whipped in the public square.

Scerace had struck a small white boy. The court decided that the boy's mother should take the Negro to the public square and give him 20 lashes with a buggy whip. The mother, in the presence of a large crowd, administered the punishment as directed.

This is the first time such an incident has been witnessed in Kentucky since the Civil war.

**Knoxville** - Mrs. Fred Smith was instantly killed by lightning at her home here Sunday. Mrs. Smith was standing in the front door when struck, the stroke doing considerable damage to the

doorway and passing on to the back veranda, where the lattice and a post were torn to splinters. Other members of the family sitting near were not affected by the bolt. Mrs. Smith is survived by her husband and 2 small daughters.

**Chicago** - diamond rings valued at \$23,000 have been found in the toe of a slipper that had been thrown with other discarded footwear at a garbage dump.

The jewels were the property of Mrs. George Frank, who had hidden them in the slipper. Her daughter, ignorant of its valuable contents, gave the slipper with its mate to the elevator boy at the apartment building to throw away. The police were notified when the loss was discovered.

The elevator boy said he remembered taking the old shoes from Mrs. Frank's apartment Saturday and throwing them into the garbage can. The driver of the garbage wagon was found and sent at once to a park, where he collected all the old shoes he could find. In the 15<sup>th</sup> shoe examined the diamonds were found.

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# The Vengeful Spirit of Briarfork Road

By Amber Chattee Saunders

Deep in the heart of Lickskillet thrive some of the oldest and best told ghost stories in Madison County. Out there, a word of mouth story is taken as solid as the truth. Elderly men sit on weathered benches in front of ancient convenience stores spinning to one another and anyone else who may be interested in listening. Perhaps one of the most repeated tales is that of a vengeful spirit who may still linger in the old Briarfork bottom.

Unfortunately, there is not much left of the old bottom. What remains has now become what is known as Bolen Huey Road near Hazel Green. The wooden bridge

that once stood there marking the spot of a popular local myth has disappeared. Horses no longer travel through the bottom. It seems as though the only thing left of the old legend is the cemetery and the Briarfork Primitive Baptist Church. Although, the legend itself has also withstood the test of time.

The tale begins in the 1900s with a beautiful wild mustang and the man determined to break it. People who still relay the story say that the horse's coat was a deep ebony color, as black as the sky at midnight. Appropriately enough, Midnight was what the horse was later called. Yet, no one recalls the name of the man who came to own the horse. The first

attempt to break the beast was unsuccessful and tragic. As soon as the man mounted the horse, it broke into a mad run down the hillside. Just before reaching the bridge, Midnight began to thrash and kick and eventually bucked the rider from his back. The man desperately tried to pull himself off the ground, but the horse con-

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tinued to buck, trampling the man to death. People say that the man's screams and curses could be heard for miles. It has been said that his remains now lie in an unmarked grave beside the Briarfork Primitive Baptist Church.

Possibly, the most bizarre point of this legend is that the horse was not shot; though, that is what usually happened in cases such as this. On the contrary, Midnight was sold to a neighboring family. The head of the household was a horse farmer and after many unsuccessful attempts, he finally broke that horse. Eventually, Midnight became the favorite of his new owner.


One night, the horse rancher decided to take a short cut through Briarfork Bottom. The old wooden bridge there would take him directly home. Midnight was the only horse pulling the buggy that night. As they started down the hillside, the rancher noticed a large white stone that seemed to emit an unearthly glow, in the middle of the dirt path. The man tried to convince himself that it was the moon casting such an eerie glow on the pale rock, but the stone gave him an uneasy feeling. Midnight began to slow his pace, as the load was heavy for only one horse to pull. Though the night was cool, the man began to sweat and pleaded with Midnight to go faster. The horse refused to

quicken. They inched nearer and nearer to the rock. The man could finally see the bridge. They were almost home. Suddenly the rock shot up from the ground revealing its true form. It was not a rock at all, but a ghostly white hand. It grabbed the horse's hoof toppling it and killing it instantly. Not long after, the horse rancher sold his horses, packed up his family, and moved away never to return to Alabama.

For decades the people of Licksillet swore that the ghostly hand belonged to the original owner of the horse and that he had finally gotten his revenge. Others are not so sure that the ghost was completely satisfied, including a man who has now since passed. His name was Gus Patterson and though he despised doing it, he would occasionally have to ride through Briarfork Bottom. Gus told his friends and family members that every time he had to ride his horse through the bottom, it would slow down to a crawl, as if it were carrying a heavy load. No matter how long Gus cursed, whipped, and pleaded with his horse, it would not budge. The whole time he pinched his eyes shut and prayed that he would not see any ghostly rocks in his path. He never did and once his horse had reached the bridge, he never had another problem making it home.

Anyone venturing through

Licksillet should speak to some of the residents there. Ask the old men if they know any good stories. They always do. Take a drive down Bolen Huey road to see the old bottom. Just be wary of any white stones in the road.



La Treida Moss,  
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# Huntsville Coffee Talk

by Aunt Eunice

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



The Election is over and summer is here and it's really hot! Not everyone could win the elections, but a great big congratulations to all the winners. As I said last time, we had some really fine people running for office this time. So now we have it narrowed down to what most of our voters think are the best. We have some outstanding people to work and get out the vote for. Of course, the main thing now is to get people to vote. I'll have more later on voting.

The Picture of the Month was so much fun. We had so many people calling to guess. We had them guess about every farmer around. Finally, **Joyce Kelly** of Owens Cross Roads guessed the right one. Our "young boy" was **Mr. James Long** of Big Cove. A big thank you Mr. Long for letting us use your picture.

**Mary Meddey**, a good friend of mine, had back surgery this month. I'm so glad you're doing well.

**Mr. Ray Pearman**, we wish

you well. Hurry and get back home. We don't much like you being in the hospital. There are lots of people praying for you because we love you.

**Jimmy Evans** brought his children to breakfast this month. They are **Dawn, Melanie, Daniel**, and Daniel's girlfriend **Christen**. Lovely children. Funny how I met **Jim**. His daughter **Dawn** and my granddaughter were born the same day. The guys were sitting at the hospital waiting and I sent a big bag of honey and biscuits to the hospital, and I haven't got rid of Jim since, ha ha!

My sympathy goes to the **Jack and Faye Kelly** family in the death of Jack's brother **Marvin** and sister-in-law **Betty**. I love the Kelly family. Jack and Betty were wonderful people. We were all childhood friends and we all went to the same church as we grew up. Love you all!

We lost several great friends this month. Love and sympathy to Ric Ottman's family. They have

been a big part of my life through the years.

My sympathy to the **Lois Hunt family**, and to the **Roberta Carroll family**.

To my family we had a great loss since last writing. We lost my 92 year old Sister. The oldest of my family. She was a great and wonderful lady. She left a lot of good things for us to walk in her footsteps. I really believe she was the finest lady I ever knew, and I loved her so much.

To my friends from the **New Hope Methodist Church** that come to see me for breakfast. It's always so good to see you all. I won't call any names for fear of leaving someone out. So good to see you all.

We were sorry to hear about the death of **Richard Rausch**. He came to America over fifty years ago and never regretted it for a

## 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: Very busy lady in Five Points.



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Sandra Steele, President

second.

Our good friend **John Malone** (WRSA radio) did his program from my place one morning. Lots of people came by to see John. We had fun. We love you John.

Happy birthday **Lewis Ellenburg**. My daughter has a birthday this month. You're growing older Linda. Love you!

**Angie Congo** and **David Whitener** were married June 15, 2002 at the Trinity Methodist Church. A beautiful garden reception was given by **Lisa** and **Mark Congo** and lots of friends enjoyed the happy occasion before the bride and groom left on a cruise.

**Diane Holmes Herbert** of Jacksonville, Florida was joined for breakfast here by **Anabell Contrell Craig** and daughter **Josie Craig**. It is always so good for old friends to get together. They had so much fun.

Some more old pals got together here and had a wonderful time. You should have seen how happy these girls were. **Jackie Nieder, Chole Hunt, Blair Glenn, Nancy Campbell, Margaret Davis, Sylvia Mitchell, Renny Hart** and **Marion Merrell**. Love you all.

Good morning to **Mr. Cecil Ashburn**. Sure hope you're feeling better.

Well, we got three places in the City Council coming up in August. So we are getting some of them politicking. We see **Mark Russell** is running for Place 2. He seems to be a mighty fine young man, and well qualified. We see **Shar Hendrick**, who seems mighty fine, and **John Glenn** as being a long-time special friend and they don't come any finer than him. I also understand that **Dick Hiatt** and **Mark Anderson** are running, but they haven't told me as I haven't seen them.

I understand that **Mrs.**

**Sandra Moon** is running, but I don't believe that anyone can beat her. **Bill Kling** is running in his spot. Bill, you better work hard because that young lady running against you is really out there beating the bushes. Bill, you know I won't tell you wrong. No one has beat you yet.

I don't know what we'll do when the election is over, because **Billy Bell, Fran Hamilton, Mark Craig, Blake Dorning, and Mark Russell** are the best coffee pourers we've seen. I'm sure all the others running are good, but we don't see them much.

If any of you have a birthday or would like someone's picture to be the Picture of the Month, just bring me a picture of that special "young girl or boy" or tell me about your birthday, wedding or anniversary, or what ever.

I really enjoy watching **Mary** and **Larry** make bracelets out of beads down at Mary's shop on Pratt Avenue. I think it's fun.

Well, that's it for now but always remember that I love you all.

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## Sweet & Simple From New Hope

*These recipes are taken from the "New Hope Library Heritage Cookbook" and are available from the New Hope Library.*

### Million Dollar Pie

- 1 large Cool Whip
  - 1/4 c. lemon juice
  - 1 large can crushed pineapple, drained
  - 1 can Eagle Brand milk
  - 1 8-oz. can mandarin oranges, drained
  - 1c. chopped pecans
  - 2 graham cracker pie crusts
- Mix all ingredients well, pour equally in the 2 graham cracker crusts. Cover and chill 2 hours or overnight.

### Old Fashioned Egg Custard

- 3 eggs
- 3/4 c. sugar

- 3 T. flour
  - 4 T. butter, melted
  - 2 c. milk
  - 1/2 t. vanilla
  - 1/4 t. nutmeg for top
- Beat eggs slightly, then beat in the sugar and flour (that you mixed together). Add the melted butter, milk and vanilla. Pour into pastry-lined pan, sprinkle top with nutmeg. Bake at 450 degrees for 10 minutes. Reduce heat to 300 degrees and bake til filling is firm.

### Paradise

- 1 box yellow cake mix
  - 1 stick butter, softened
  - 3 eggs
  - 1 c. pecans, chopped
  - 1 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese
  - 1 6-oz. pkg. semi-sweet chocolate chips
  - 1 box confectioners sugar
  - 1 can coconut
  - 1/2 c. cherries
- Mix cake mix, butter, pecans and 1 egg. Pour into 13x9 pan,

greased. Pat down well. Mix the remaining 2 eggs, cream cheese, chips, sugar, coconut and cherries and pour over crust. Bake for 30 minutes at 350 degrees.

### Donna's Almond Toffee

- 1 lb. butter
  - 2 c. sugar
  - 1 T. light Karo
  - 6 oz. slivered almonds
  - 1 large pkg. chocolate chips
- Cook first 3 ingredients to hard crack stage. Add almonds, pour candy onto buttered cookie sheet. After candy has cooled break it into small pieces. Melt the chocolate and dip candy to cover.

### Muddy Buddy's

- 9 c. Rice Chex cereal
  - 18 oz. peanut butter
  - 1 bag chocolate chips
  - 1 stick butter
  - 1 box confectioner's sugar
- Melt the peanut butter, chips and butter. Pour over cereal and stir well. Put the confectioner's sugar in a large bag, add the cereal and shake. This makes a good party mix.

### Cherry Cheese Crunch

- 2 c. flour
- 1 c. pecans
- 1 stick butter, softened
- 8 oz. cream cheese

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1 box confectioner's sugar  
1 large can cherries  
1 carton Cool Whip

Mix the first 3 ingredients and press into baking dish. Bake at 350 degrees til brown - about 30 minutes. Cool. Combine the cream cheese and confectioner's sugar, cream it together. Fold in the Cool whip, pour the cherries on top. Keep in refrigerator til ready to serve. This is addictive.

### Caramel Corn

2 c. brown sugar, packed  
½ c. dark corn syrup  
1 c. butter  
½ t. cream of tartar  
1 t. soda  
6 qt. popped corn

Combine the brown sugar, syrup, butter and cream of tartar, in a saucepan. Bring to boil and stir til the sugar is melted. Boil for 5 minutes. Remove from heat, stir in soda. Pour over the popcorn, mix well. Place in oven in a roaster, and bake at 250 degrees for about an hour. Stir occasionally, store in tightly covered containers.

### Travis House Cookies

2 egg whites  
2 c. light brown sugar  
4 T. flour  
dash salt  
2 c. chopped pecans

Beat egg whites to stiff froth, add sugar and continue beating. Add flour and salt. Stir in the pecans. Drop by small teaspoons onto a buttered cookie sheet and bake at 300 degrees for 10 minutes.

### 49'ERs

4 eggs, beaten  
1 lb. light brown sugar  
2 c. biscuit mix  
2 T. vanilla  
2 c. chopped pecans

Combine ingredients, bake in 15x10x2" greased pan at 350 degrees for 35 minutes. The secret is to let it cool in the pan before you cut. Cut and dust with confectioner's sugar.

### Lemon Tarts

1 can Eagle Brand milk  
½ c. lemon juice  
3 egg yolks  
2 c. Cook Whip

Mix together all ingredients and pour into mini tart shells. Chill 3 hours prior to serving.

### Sand Tarts

2 sticks butter  
5 T. powdered sugar  
1 ½ c. chopped pecans  
2 c. flour  
2 t. vanilla

Cream the sugar and butter, add flour, vanilla and pecans. Mix

and form small balls. Place on greased cookie sheet, bake at 325 for 30 minutes, roll in powdered sugar while tarts are still warm.



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# A Tiger By The Tail

*When General Mitchel captured Huntsville in 1862, he had every right to believe his hardest task was behind him. In reality, he was faced with a new set of problems as he dealt with renegade soldiers, embittered Huntsvillians and newly freed slave. Some people would later say he had a tiger by the tail.*

Headquarters Third Division,  
Huntsville, Ala., April 11, 1862  
Capt. J.B. Fry:

Sir: After a forced march of incredible difficulty, leaving Fayetteville yesterday at 12 p.m., my advanced guard, consisting of Turchin's brigade, Kennett's cavalry, and Simonson's battery, entered Huntsville this morning at 6 o'clock.

The city was taken completely by surprise, no one having considered the march practicable in the time. We have captured about 200 prisoners, 15 locomotives, a large amount of passenger, box, and platform cars, the telegraphic apparatus and offices, and two Southern mails. We have at length succeeded in cutting the great artery of railway intercommunication between the Southern States.

Respectfully,  
O.M. Mitchel, General

Headquarters Third Division,  
Huntsville, Ala., April 11,  
1862

General Buell:

The work so happily commenced on yesterday has been completed today upon a train of cars captured from the enemy at Huntsville. A heavy force of the Ninth Brigade (Ohio and Wisconsin troops), under command of (Joshua W) Sill, was ordered to drive the enemy from Stevenson in the east, while an equal force from the Eighth Brigade, upon captured cars, was directed to seize Decatur upon the west. Both expeditions proved eminently successful.

To prevent the enemy from penetrating toward Nashville, I ordered the destruction of a small bridge between Stevenson and Bridgeport, which we can replace, if necessary, in a single day. The expedition from the Eighth Brigade, under the immediate command of Colonel Turchin, proved eminently successful. To arrest his advance, the enemy fired a bridge on the farther side of the Tennessee River, but our troops reached it in time to extinguish the flames. A small force of the enemy fled from the town, leaving their tents standing and their camp equipage behind them.

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taken and now hold a hundred miles of the great railway line of the rebel Confederacy. We have nothing more to do in this region, having fully accomplished all that was ordered. We have saved the great bridge across the Tennessee (at Decatur), and are ready to strike the enemy, if so directed, upon his right flank and rear at Corinth.

Respectfully,  
O.M. Mitchel, General

Headquarters Third Division,  
Huntsville, Ala., May 4, 1862  
Hon. E.M. Stanton:

I have this day written you fully, embracing three topics of great importance-the absolute necessity of protecting slaves who furnish us valuable information, the fact that I am left without command of my line of communications, and the importance of holding Alabama north of the Tennessee. I have promised protection to the slaves who have given me valuable assistance and information. My river front is 120 miles long, and if the Government disapproves what I have done, I must receive heavy reinforcements or abandon my position. With the aid of the Negroes in watching the river I feel myself sufficiently strong to defy the enemy.

O.M. Mitchel, General

General Mitchel,  
Huntsville, Ala.

Sir: Your telegrams of the 3d and 4th have been received. No general in the field has deserved better of his country than yourself, and the Department rejoices to award credit to one who merits it so well. The Department is advised of nothing that you have done but what is approved. The assistance of slaves is an element of military strength which, under proper regulations, you are fully justified in employing for your security and the success of your operations. It has been freely employed by the enemy, and to abstain from its judicious use when it can be employed with military advantage would be a failure to employ means to suppress the rebellion and restore the authority of the Government. Protection to those who furnish information or other assistance is a high duty.

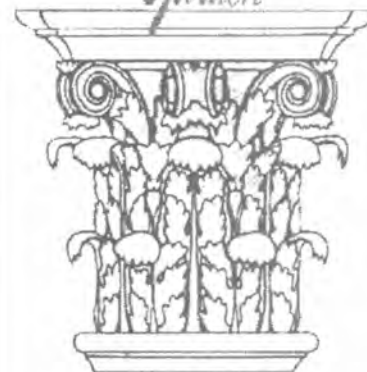
Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War

Headquarters Third Division  
Huntsville, Ala., May 5, 1862  
Hon. E.M. Stanton, Sec. of War:

The occupation of Huntsville and this railway line by my troops seems to have produced among rebels the bitterest feeling. Armed

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citizens fire into the trains, cut the telegraph wires, attack the guards of bridges, and cut off and destroy my couriers, while guerilla bands of cavalry attack whenever there is the slightest chance of success. I have arrested some prominent citizens along the line of the railway and in this city. I hold some prisoners (citizens) against whom the negroes will prove charges of unauthorized war. Am I to convict on the testimony of the blacks? Have I your authority to send notorious rebels to a Northern prison? May I offer the protection of the Government to the negroes who give valuable information?

O.M. Mitchel, General

Hon. E.M. Stanton, Sec. of War:

No answer has been received to my request for authority to send two or three notorious rebels to a Northern prison. Judge (George W) Lane and Senator (Jeremiah) Clemens believe it necessary. Would it avail anything for General Clemens to appear in Washington as the representative of the citizens of Northern Alabama, his object being to learn unofficially in what way the existing controversy

might be ended? He will come if you approve it. Since the driving out of the regular troops, guerrilla warfare has been commenced, and advocated by the very men I wish to send to a Northern prison. The failure to occupy Tuscumbia, I fear, is to become a frightful source of trouble. (John Hunt) Morgan is said to have crossed below Florence, and it is now said other cavalry, and even (Sterling) Price's infantry, are now crossing. I have not heard from General Buell or General Halleck in two weeks. No re-enforcements have reached me. If guerrilla warfare is to be waged, I must have a large force of cavalry. Am I to expect soon any addition to my command?

O.M. Mitchel, General

Headquarters Third Division  
Camp Taylor, May 19, 1862

Hon. E.M. Stanton, Sec. of War:

My line of posts extend more than 400 miles. My own personal attention cannot be given to all the troops under my command.

The most terrible outrages-robberies, rapes, arson, and plundering-are being committed by lawless brigands and vagabonds connected with the army, and I desire authority to punish all those

found guilty of perpetrating these crimes with death by hanging.

Wherever I am present in person all is quiet and orderly, but in some instances, in regiments remote from headquarters, I hear the most deplorable accounts of excesses committed by soldiers.

I beg authority to control these plunderers by visiting upon their crimes the punishment of death.

O.M. Mitchel, General

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# A Forgotten Hero

For Peter Daniels it was just another day. An ex-slave who had purchased his freedom, Daniels had built up a good business in a little shop off the courthouse square where he worked as a barber. Although quiet-spoken, he was well respected by both the black and white communities.

He was probably cutting hair, or maybe sweeping up his shop when he first noticed the excitement outside. Quickly finishing his chores, he made his way to the square to see what was happening.

A large crowd had gathered. Word had just been received of the massacre at the Alamo in a far-off place called Texas. A pall seemed to settle over the crowd as the news began to sink in. All the defenders had been slaughtered. Even Davy Crockett, who had visited Huntsville so many times in the past, was dead.

As is true with all major events of this nature, once the horrible news was realized, the citizens began to get angry. Immediately, talk began to circulate of forming a company to go to Texas and avenge the fallen dead.

One young man in the crowd, with a loud whoop, yelled, "All for Texas!"

The cheer was taken up by the other young men in the crowd and within minutes it seemed as if the whole population of Huntsville

was about to march on Santa Anna. Fortunately, cooler heads prevailed.

Several old-timers, who had seen service in the War of 1812 and in the Indian wars with Andy Jackson, convinced a local businessman by the name of Peyton White to organize a military company. White had experience in the military and he was also fairly prosperous, a major qualification for anyone who wanted to raise a company. In those days, the officers were expected to contribute to the expense of supplies, clothing, weapons, and various other things.

Peter Daniels, like everyone else that day, must have felt a surge of pride as the young men flocked to enlist. But what could he do? He was black and lived in a society that condemned men to perpetual servitude for the color of their skin.

Slowly he made his way back to his shop. It was probably best to just put it out of his mind. Besides, there were a lot of other things to think about. It seemed as if everything in the world was happening right here in Huntsville. His thoughts raced:

"They are erecting a bank building on the square; people say the marble came all the way from Nashville. James Bierny is running for president on the abolition ticket; he used to live right here in Huntsville, and they got government troops over in Guntersville.

People say they're gathering up all the Indians over there and sending them out west ... and besides, I've got my fife. "

Daniels was known far and wide for his ability to play the fife, a flute-like instrument. Probably self-taught, he was an attraction whenever a crowd gathered in Huntsville. On muster days or when the local militia would practice marching in the town's dusty streets, Peter was often seen at their head urging them on with his fife. People claimed that he had a God-given talent with the fife, and though many people tried, no one

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could ever produce the stirring martial music the way Daniels could.

Over the next few weeks, the town was a flurry of activity as men prepared to embark for Texas. Women and children both were kept busy making the Lindsay hunting shirts that the men preferred to wear. William Wilson was kept busy drilling the new recruits, while Peyton White was huddled with the shopkeepers every day, trying to raise the necessary supplies. Daniels, like everyone else, must have been caught up in the patriotic fever that had engulfed the populace.

Today, it is impossible to know how Peter Daniels became part of the company. Possibly some of the troops saw him sitting outside his barber shop, playing the fife, and approached him. Or maybe he spent so much time playing the fife for the troops as they drilled that people just automatically ac-

cepted him.

We do know for a fact that he did not enlist as a regular soldier, as blacks were not allowed to carry guns or enlist in service. The most they could hope for was a job as a servant, or a teamster, or maybe, as in Daniels' case, a job that no one else could do.

Regardless of how or why, when Captain Peyton White and his small band of volunteers marched out of Huntsville early one morning in the spring of 1836, Peter Daniels was at the head of the company, blowing mightily on his fife.

From Huntsville, the troops marched to Ditto Landing where they boarded a boat that carried them to Muscle Shoals. There they were transported around the dangerous shoals by a horse drawn railway that had just been completed, saving the soldiers from a long, hot march.

After boarding another boat at the foot of the shoals, life for the volunteers must have settled down to an every day routine of boredom. It was a long trip and as the flatboats slowly drifted down the Tennessee to where it met with the Ohio River and then over to the Mississippi, there wasn't much for the troops to do.

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The men would occupy their time by cleaning their rifles, sharpening their Bowie knives, and of course, telling tall tales. Most likely, Daniels was not af-

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forded the privilege of having much spare time. Even though he was the fife player, he was still black, and blacks were the people who did the chores.

Occasionally, they might meet with another flatboat carrying more volunteers to Texas. When this happened, it was a time of rejoicing and bragging, with each boatload trying to outdo the other with their boasts and achievements.

And finally, as always, after the men had exhausted every excuse for a conversation, someone would call for Daniels and his fife. It's easy to imagine now, over a hundred and fifty years later, how it must have sounded as the boats floated slowly in the current down the river with both banks covered by lush foliage. Men silently lying about the deck, lost in thoughts of home, or maybe, the approaching battles, while listening to the soulful music of Daniel's fife.

By the time the group reached New Orleans, word of Peter Daniels' musical ability had preceded him. Fife players were rare and every self-respecting military company was expected to have one. One musician, Justin Jeffries of Mobile, was actually kidnapped by members of another unit. When the members of his company realized what happened, they armed themselves and went after the kidnappers with a vengeance, resulting in a near-riot.

Daniels was recognized as one of the best and he was besieged by generous offers from many companies. But Peter Daniels was not for sale to the highest bidder, and accordingly, when the small band of Madison County volunteers marched out of New Orleans, Peter Daniels, with his fife, was again at their head.

The war in Texas was enter-

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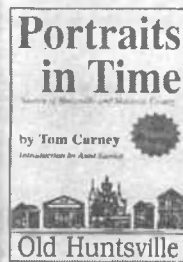
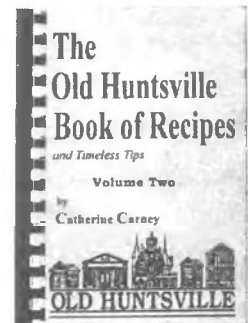


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ing a terrible period. Santa Anna, faced with ever-increasing swarms of American volunteers, hoisted the black flag. As with the Alamo, Goliad, and countless other places, there would be no surrender. If the volunteers failed in battle, they would be massacred to the last man.

It is hard to imagine what must have been going through Daniels' mind as he marched across the barren plains of Texas with the volunteers. Everyday brought fresh reports of atrocities committed by the Mexican troops, and yet they kept marching bravely on.

The war consisted mostly of small skirmishes; small bands of men constantly harassing their opponents. Hit and run; hide for a while and then hit again. With few men, and fewer supplies, this was the only military tactic the Americans could employ.

It was during one of these skirmishes somewhere on the plains of Texas, the exact location has been forgotten for over a century, that Daniels was taken prisoner.

The Mexicans immediately recognized Daniels as the wonder-

ful fife player they had heard so much about. The Mexican army was renowned for its military bands, so any prisoner with musical ability instantly became a topic of discussion at headquarters.

Santa Anna believed men fought better when inspired by music. Months earlier, at the Alamo, four regimental bands played constantly throughout the final battle, and even during the massacre that followed.

Daniels was taken before the Mexican officers, who after confirming his identity, offered him a position in their regimental band.

"No," replied Daniels. "I can't do that."

The Mexican soldiers explained to him that the only other alternative was death before the firing squad. Still, Peter Daniels refused.

The soldiers must have been impressed by Daniels' courage, for instead of ordering his immediate execution, they placed him under guard for the night. Likely, they were hoping that after having time to reflect on the matter, Daniels would change his mind.



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A thousand thoughts must have played on him during that long, dark night. Thoughts of home and family and friends. Thoughts of the injustices that he had known. Thoughts of Huntsville that now seemed so far away.

And yet, he never wavered. His loyalty was not for sale...not even for his life.

As the sun began its slow climb over the bleak desert floor, the Mexican officers sent for him. Standing before them, likely with his life in hand, Daniels was once again offered the choice. Join the Mexican band, or refuse and die.

And like other men, whose likenesses are carved in stone all across our nation, had also chosen, Peter Daniels resolved to die as an American.

Peyton White and the rest of the volunteers returned to Huntsville at the end of the conflict. Daniels was the only casualty of

the company.

For awhile, whenever men would gather, they would talk about Daniels and his heroic choice. But then, as the years passed by, people began to forget and within the span of a hundred years he had become just a footnote in an old, dusty book locked away in the archives of the public library.

Today, visitors in Huntsville are shown the fine antebellum homes of yesterday and they learn of the hardy pioneers who built them. They are told tales of the trial of Frank James and numerous other accounts of Huntsville's legendary figures, but not a word is ever mentioned about Peter Daniels.

And now you know.



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If a garter breaks in church the wearer's marriage will be happy, but if the accident happens at a dance it is a sign that the wearer's sweetheart is unfaithful.



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by Tommy Towery

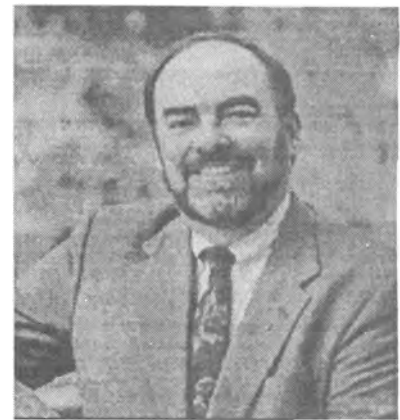
How long has it been since:

- You used an ice pick to chop on a block of ice you bought with coins fed into an ice machine?
- You drank a beverage out of a non-aluminum can?
- You opened a beverage can with a churchkey instead of a pop-top?
- You paid a penny for a piece of candy?
- You put a penny in your shoes?
- You had a car that did not come with a radio?
- You helped someone push a car to get it started, not just to get it to the side of the road?
- You made your parents stop at Stuckey's on a trip to fill up with gas just to get the free candy?
- You poured oil into your engine from a real can and not a plastic bottle?
- You chipped in with your friends to buy gas on a date?
- You had someone check your oil and tires and clean your windshield while they filled your car with gas?
- You got a free orange juice glass with a gasoline fillup?
- You saved a peanut butter or jelly jar to use as a glass and actually use it?
- You bought a box of cereal

you didn't like just for the prize inside it?

- You got a free dish towel with a bag of flour?
- You got a free drinking glass in a box of detergent?
- You had a television in your living room that you had to get up and manually adjust the volume or change the channel?
- You had a black and white TV set in your living room?
- You dialed a number on a telephone with a rotary dial?
- You circled things that you wanted for Christmas in a catalog?
- You ate ice cream from a Dixie-cup with a flat wooden spoon?
- You got a genuine thrill out of a goodnight kiss?
- You made a prank phone call to someone you didn't know?
- You rushed out and bought

- a 45rpm record of a new song?
- You slept on a pallet on the floor?



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# Babies Will Vanish

Special to the Times in 1910

There will be no children in the United States under 5 years of age in the year 2020. Babies, accordingly, will have disappeared from this country as early as 2015.

This is the mathematical conclusion of Prof. Walter F. Wilcox, of Cornell University, announced to the American Statistical Assoc. at its concluding session on Saturday.

The only hope of seeing babies in the U.S. after 2020, according to Prof. Wilcox' calculation, is in possible importation from France. France, he says, will continue to have babies eighty years after the U.S. has quit the business.

"There is proportionately more race suicide in the U.S. than in France, added the professor.

An endowment for the stork was recommended to the American Sociological Assoc. by George

Elliott Howard, professor of sociology in the University of Nebraska. In an address of "The Social Control of Domestic Relations," he declared the state should honor motherhood by endowing mothers.

Parents who raise families," he said, "are entitled to payment,

and security from the state the same as the soldier or any other public servant. The woman who gives a child to the state should be allowed an income by the state for taking care of the child. That would make the mother the ruler in the home. That would ensure social justice."

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# News From 1911

## Corpse Winks at Undertaker

In Birmingham a local undertaker received a telephone call, telling of the death of an old woman, who had for years been an object of charity in that city.

On entering the door of the room the undertaker's assistant went first, but he remained only a very short time, for the "corpse's" eye winked at him. There was an open door near, and he didn't stop to tell his employer of his astounding discovery, but took advantage of the opportunity for getting out of the room.

But the undertaker made the same discovery himself, and instead of bolting, he made a hasty examination and found the woman indeed alive. Then he decided that the woman's condition was critical, believing that she was in the last throes of death, and he decided to sit down and wait.

He waited about two hours and on discovering that the woman was breathing stronger he made another exam and

found that her strength was rapidly returning. She was not even dangerously ill.

He has since learned that she has been guilty of "dying" a number of times before in order to get sympathy from the people.

Now this young undertaker (who has many friends here) is looking for the person who sent in the telephone call.

## DAR Meeting Yesterday

Melrose, the handsome home of the Websters on Meridian Street, never looked more pretty than on yesterday afternoon when the queen of that household, Mrs. F. W. Webster, entertained the Twickenham Town Chapter, D.A.R.

The front parlor was a dream of beauty, and from this point Mrs. Webster received the club officers. She was handsomely attired in a gown of black lace, the first dining room was decorated in George Washington cherries and little boats with yellow tulips and American flags. The red white and blue streams reached from the chandeliers to the tables.

The meat course was served in this room. Tea and coffee were served by Mr. Willis Garthand and Miss Alice Garth, both of whom wore colonial costumes. In the lovely hall Misses Margarette Wallman, Lucille Anderson and Macon Webster dispersed frappe.

In the second dining room the center piece was a cluny lace with a handsome basket of flowers in the center.

Mrs. Clinton Howard, dressed in a handsome colonial costume, was assisted in serving by Misses Alice and Mary Murray and Mrs. Alberta Van Busen. It was a dreamy occasion and will fashionably and pleasantly be remembered throughout the memory of the present D.A.R club members and their friends.

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# Memories

By Lisa Bailey Dove

Paul Aaron Bailey was born in Sheffield, Alabama in 1922, the son of George and Mary Bailey. His family had lived in Bailey's Cove, the land in south Huntsville settled by their ancestors, prior to moving to Sheffield. They moved back to Huntsville in a mule-drawn covered wagon when Aaron was just six months old.

On the way back to Huntsville, a seldom seen car passed them on the road, scaring the mules that pulled the wagon. The wagon (along with the Bailey clan) toppled over but fortunately no one was harmed. They settled in the area in Huntsville that is now known as the Blossomwood Community.

"We moved from Sheffield to the W.I. Thompson place (where Shades Crest and Kennamer now meet)," Aaron recalled, and lived there for two years. Then we moved over to the City Place (now a part of Maple Hill Cemetary) for another two years and from there to the Spraggins' place where we lived for about nine years."

Life was hard back then and even the children had to pull their weight on the farm, Aaron remembered. "When I was five or six years old, I was choppin' cotton on daddy's row and when they were pickin' I was pickin' on his row and putting it in his sack. I can't remember a time when I wasn't working. But, if we worked hard in those days, we played every bit as hard. I would follow my older brothers, Shelby and Luke, down to the swimming hole every chance I got. They would throw me in that creek and it was way over my head and I'd come walk-



ing out of there on the bottom. But, I wasn't tellin' for nothing. If I told on 'em, mama and daddy wouldn't let me go no more."

In between chores the budding cowboy also found time to make a pet out of a horse he called Tony. Aaron got the idea for his horse's name from a movie star cowboy by the name of Tom Mix. Mix, along with his trusty horse Tony, was a star of the silent films about 1932 when he made his first "talkie." At that time, the Bailey family only lived about a mile from the movie theatres in downtown Huntsville. "There were three picture shows," Aaron remembered, "the Lyric, the Grand, and the Elks. The cost of admission at the Lyric was 15 cents, the Grand was 10 cents and the Elks was a nickel. When Aaron would go downtown, he'd see all the big, glossy posters advertising the lat-

est cowboy picture show. The larger than life posters of the cowboy on his horse must have sparked young Aaron's thirst for adventure. "But I never got to see one of his movies. We were not allowed to go to the show."

Aaron's eyes lit up as he remembered those early days with Tony and it was clear that this was a boy who loved his horse. Aaron commented, "Tony was born out there on the home place. When he was first born I just started playin' with him and petting him. I was about seven or eight and I just started making a pet out of him. I got me an old bridle and fixed it up and put it on him. At first he wouldn't lead, and I got somebody to get behind him and drive him until he learned what I wanted him to do. Then he'd lead from then on. We had a pond about a quarter of a mile out; and we had two big barns down there; and I'd lead him out to that pond and let him get a drink of water; and then I'd lead him back to the barn. I had him in a stall in there, a big stall, and I'd feed him. After he was getting a little bigger, I started leaning on him in the stall and I just kept letting him get used to it without getting scared. After I did that for a while, I got on him. I sat on him and let him get used to that. Then I just gradually started riding him around and he never even bucked."

In the winter of '35-'36, the Bailey family decided to move to some better farmland in the area



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that stretched from what is now Hanson Road off Triana Blvd. The first of the year was the best time for a farming family to move once the crops had been gathered and accounts had been settled. Aaron's older brothers, Shelby and Luke, were already grown with children of their own. That left 13-year-old Aaron with the awesome task of seeing to it that the family's dairy cattle made the seven mile journey from Spraggins' farm to the new place.

Aaron saddled up ole' Tony and they set out on their adventure. Of course, no cowboy would be complete without a genuine honest to goodness cowboy hat. Aaron sported a fine looking cowboy hat and naturally there was a story behind that too. It seems there used to be a professional boxer in the area named Dummy Robinson. He was friends with Aaron's brother, Luke and frequently came out to the Bailey

place to do odd jobs to keep in shape for the boxing ring. Dummy had a hat that he gave to Luke, which Luke later gave to Aaron.

Aaron laughed when asked if he was afraid of herding the cattle through the middle of town. "No, I had my faithful horse. I wasn't afraid of nothin' and I had that Dummy Robinson western felt hat on."

Unfortunately, as the story goes, Dummy later got a job with a carnival and reclaimed his hat from Aaron.

The cattle drive started out at McClung Street, with Aaron following the herd of cows atride his trusty horse. There were hardly any cars on the road, and the few that were, moved to the side when they saw the herd coming down the middle of the road. After turning onto what is now California, he then headed west on Big Cove Pike which at that time ran all the

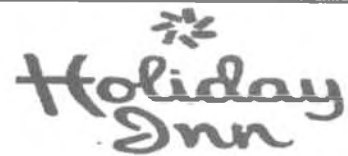
way up to Huntsville Hospital.

"Huntsville Hospital wasn't big as nothin," Aaron recalled, "it probably didn't have 15 or 20

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rooms in it ... it was just a little ole' bitty thing."

When asked if there was a road where Memorial Parkway is now Aaron laughed and said, "Lord No, There wasn't a street at all. There were fields all down through there. All those buildings and stuff weren't there. It was farms. All 5th Avenue was a graveled road. Once I walked from Patton Road to past the hospital and didn't pass a car coming or going. There weren't any houses to amount to anything. There were just a few ole' shacks along once in a while."

When asked about Bob Wallace and Drake Avenues, Aaron commented, "Those streets weren't around then. You've got to think of Huntsville as a 15,000 people town. There was nothing here but the mill villages. There was Merrimack, Lowe, Lincoln, Dallas, Erwin, Fletcher, and Thomas Mills. There was a streetcar that ran on a track right down the middle of the street."

"The streetcar would run every 10 minutes or so. It would go

all the way from Merrimack Mill to Dallas and Lincoln Mills downtown and turn around and come back for about a dime. I don't remember ever riding on it myself."

The fearless 13-year-old cowboy made the last stretch of his trip as he headed on southwest to where Hanson Road is now, just west of Triana Blvd. Aaron said, "Triana Pike (now Triana Blvd) used to run all the way to the river. There's a little old settlement down there on the river named Triana and that's where Triana Pike got its name."

When asked if the cows got spooked by cars along the way, Aaron said, "There were very few cars back then. You hardly ever met a car along the road. People back then weren't like they are now. When I was driving those cows down the road and cars met me, they would pull over and stop and let me go by with the cattle. People will run over you now."

After a long and grueling day, a saddle sore Aaron finished the cattle drive at what would be their new home. It was probably the last time anyone ever saw a herd of cattle being herded through Huntsville.

There's a picture of 13-year-old Aaron saddled up on Tony wearing that Dummy Robinson

hat and a red bandana, grinning from ear to ear. It conjures up images of those long ago movie posters featuring the famed cowboy, Tom Mix and his trusty horse, Tony. Aaron looks at it and remarks, "Yep, I reckon I was more of a cowboy than he ever thought about being." Truer words were never spoken.

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*Welcome Back!*



# A Huntsville Artist

We are all too familiar with fictionalized accounts of Southern women. But for 100 years appreciators of Maria Howard Weeden, known to the world as Howard Weeden, have kept her life, her works, and memory of a true Southern lady alive. A plaque on the Federal-style house, located on Gates and Green Streets in Huntsville, attests that it is "the home of poet-artist Howard Weeden.

Born on July 6, 1847, in the very house that stands today, Howard—as she chose to be called, adopting the family name of Scottish ancestors as her given name—was tutored as a lady.

Her father, Dr. William Weeden, died before she was born and left the family with the beautiful town home, a complement of servants, plantations, properties, and other real estate from which the family's income and life style was derived. Early in her life she demonstrated a talent for drawing, and received lessons from a local portrait artist—Mr. William Frye.

During the Civil War, when Huntsville was occupied by Federal troops, the Weeden House, known as "Aspen Place," was taken over by the commander of the occupying army. Mrs. Weeden and her daughters Kate and Howard were forced to move into the adjacent servants' quarters. As family members were in the Confederate army, the relationship between the family and the Federal officers, who had taken over the house, became intolerable. The family, feeling as prisoners and hostages in their own

home, fled Huntsville with their servants accompanying them and went to Tuskegee in South Alabama. There, Howard met Dr. George Price and his daughter, Elizabeth Price, who became a lifelong friend, supporter, and biographer of her life. At the Tuskegee Methodist College for Women, Howard studied painting and developed her exquisite talent in watercolor.

After the War, the Weeden family returned to their family home in Huntsville. What was valuable in the home had either been stolen or destroyed.

With the family fortune gone, Howard turned to painting to help provide needed income for the family. Howard conducted art classes for young ladies and produced hand-painted greeting cards and placards. This work further contributed to the development of her particular and unique, largely self-taught style. She also wrote poetry and her works were published under the name of "Flake Vite" in the *Christian Observer*, a Presbyterian paper.

In the late 1800s Southern

writers became recognized—especially with their stories of old plantation life. Howard Weeden read these stories and not only emulated the art of the day, she surpassed it. She was adept at drawing flowers, animals, decorative designs, and portraits.

While attending the Columbian Exposition at Chicago in 1893, she saw the unflattering sketches of Negroes by the leading illustrators of the day. Seeing this challenged and inspired her. She began to paint portraits of blacks accurately, and with dignity. It was a style unusual for any era. Due to fragile health and modest finances, she was unable to travel and so used local people around Huntsville as her subjects. With delicate care, using a brush with only three hairs, she recorded for posterity, both visually and poetically, the character and dignity of the vanishing race of ex-slaves.

She chronicled her subjects in watercolor with the accuracy of a portrait photographer and the sensitivity, simplicity, and feeling of a painter. But Howard Weeden went one step further—she wrote words to her pictures.

Her "Mammies" were not caricatures, but real as the beloved persons themselves, as a few lines taken from "When Mammy Dies"



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attest:

"We're always young till Mammy dies, but when her hand no longer lies, as once it did upon our head, we feel that youth with her has fled."

Uniquely blending pictures and poems, she illustrated the gaiety, the sadness, the real lives of people with more than dramatic technical skill—it was genius. In her poem "The Worst of War" she relates in sixteen lines more than the horror of war—she captures the utter sadness, loss, and personal tragedy felt as the ex-slave recalls the riderless horse of his slain young master and officer back home:

"I led his horse back home where dey sat expecting him, an' I saw Mistis' and Master's hearts when dey broke, an! dat was de worst of war."

The verses, she said, wrote themselves out of the Negroes' own words.

As the reputation of this refined, gentle woman grew, orders came in from all over the world for her works. In 1898, her little published book became the premier Christmas gift. She had to do all she could to meet the demands with what her pervasive ill health and nearsightedness would allow.

Praises came from near and far. Joel Chandler Harris, referring to the highly popular and published Southern writers of the day, called her the "best of us all....."

Extolling the virtues and realities of black people, she demonstrated her own uncommon, gracious brilliance. Pertaining to the ex-slaves she painted and wrote about, *The New York Times* Book Review of December 30, 1899 stated, "She revealed the whole race."

On April 12, 1905, she died at her home. But Howard Weeden

passed on a treasure of extraordinary published works, which include: "Shadows on the Wall" and "Bandanna Ballads" published by Doubleday and McClure in 1899; "Songs of the Old South," and her last book, "Old Voices" in 1904.

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# The Russel Erskine Hotel

More than nostalgia, the Russel Erskine Hotel still stands as a monument to a by-gone era, a time when Huntsville was young and growing. Now that there are other and newer monuments and skyscrapers, the Russel Erskine Hotel has taken a lesser, but still significant, role.

Albert Russel Erskine was the onetime president of the Studebaker Corporation. Although he did not have an important financial interest in the hotel, it was named for this local person of national prominence.

According to local folklore, the hotel ran into financial trouble before it was ever completed. In an attempt to raise more money, the owners came up with a plan to name it after Erskine, a local hometown boy made good, hoping to interest him in investing in the venture. When the hotel was dedicated, Erskine came to Huntsville, listened to the speeches honoring him, ate the free food, drank the free liquor, stayed in the free suite, and then went back to Detroit without spending any money!

As each city has its prominent hotel, the Russel Erskine was, "the place to go" in Huntsville, Ala-

bama. Officially opened on January 3, 1930, in the midst of the Great Depression at a cost of 1.5 million dollars, it was and still is a splendid building—12 stories high and 132 rooms. It became one of Huntsville's leading attractions and immediately became a popular spot for conventions and travelers.

Besides the convenience and availability of a large hotel in Huntsville, visitors noted the "completeness" and "exquisiteness" of the furnishings in 1930. It was also noted that such modern conveniences of the day as an electric fan and an RCA radio were in each room. One satisfied guest, Dr. George Alden of Massachusetts, wrote the hotel saying that the Russel Erskine was the best appointed and gave the best service of any hotel during his trip.

It was Huntsville's best advertisement and many balls and gatherings were held in its splendid ballroom and banquet rooms.

In the decade of the 1940s, the Russel Erskine grew and prospered with the development of the Army's newly founded chemical warfare arsenal. Rooms during

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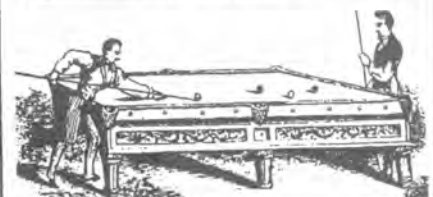
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the war years were easily filled and the guests were more than adequately served by a staff of over 100 persons. High ceilings, chandeliers, an inviting comfortable lobby with scurrying bellmen, entertainment, fine dining on tables with white linen tablecloths, and a barber shop on the premises seem uncommon to the average traveler today, but the Russel Erskine was the premier hotel in North Alabama. It was before the widespread use of motels, "no fhills," and budget accommodations.

After the War, as the Nation's economy sputtered, the Russel Erskine was merely changing gears. In 1949, with the advent of the Rocket Center, the hotel again had no problem filling rooms. The hotel continued its success throughout the 1950s, and in 1955 the Russel Erskine commemorated its 25th anniversary with a week-long celebration. From 1937 until its closing, the hotel turned a profit each year.

But as motels began to be built on the perimeter of the city, the hotel not only had to deal with competition, but also a change of taste and choice of potential guests. In the 1960s, the movement of commercial activity away from downtown areas in many American cities hastened the demise of many hotels and businesses. The stately Russel Erskine Hotel, so proudly rooted on Clinton Avenue, could not move with the new development and economic opportunities outside its downtown site. Measures to revive the hotel were short-lived. In March of 1971, the Russel Erskine Hotel closed its doors to transient guests. It's only business thereafter was to cater to conventions, civic clubs, and special accommodations.

Many well-intentioned plans

of a succession of owners to revive the hotel were unsuccessful. Consequently, the hotel was auctioned off to the First Alabama Bank in 1975 for \$300,000, which included the furnishings. Interestingly, this was far less than the construction cost of \$1,500,000 in 1929. If this was not indignity enough to the landmark hotel, in May, 1979 its contents went on sale. For thirty days the hotel was opened to the public to buy whatever they wanted.

The First Freewill Baptist Church bought the ballroom's main chandelier and the lobby's four metal chandeliers within the first half-hour of the sale. Visitors and buyers rummaged through the halls of the once-proud hotel, looking at price tags on the furnishings, and eventually removing the trappings of the hotel. Perhaps they bought for their own use, to resell, or to obtain a precious keepsake of the place that held for them a fond memory of a "Cotton Ball," an unforgettable evening for a debutante, or honeymoon. By any account, it was the wake of the hotel.

Ironically, in 1978, the Russel

Erskine Hotel was considered as a county-state work-release center for the Department of Corrections. Reportedly, a proponent of the idea said that, "It looks like the building was just built for this purpose."

Finally and happily on September 15, 1983, the Russel Erskine reopened its doors as a high-rise complex for the elderly and disabled. Renovated for \$3.6 million by local business people working with the Huntsville Preservation Authority the memory, the brilliance, and the hotel building itself has been revived.

Huntsville's premier landmark of the 30s and 40s remains, except now it serves to house its residents permanently—not as temporary guests. While the new tenants still share much of the same ambiance of this venerable building as the former occupants, still there is a distinction between a hotel and a high-rise apartment house.

But two facts are indisputable: the new residents still have magnificent views from their windows, and residents of any time have lived in a part of Huntsville's

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# A Letter

Woodville, Al.  
July, 1862

The infernal slave order is enough to make one curse the government that allowed it to be issued. A few days ago a rebel came here with an order to take away his slaves. The order was given by General (illegible) who now commands the division. I was away from camp at the time but the captain in command allowed the master to take his slave away.

Today, a notorious rebel lawyer came here wishing to search through the camp for his slave, but I refused to allow him to do so, and told him if the slave were in camp, he should not have him, if as I supposed, we had recieved information from him.

He told me he had been assured he could go through our lines and into our camps to find his property.

I assured him he could not go through mine. He will go to Huntsville and probably report me and I may be arrested I will give that rebel (illegible) crew a fight. I will appeal to the president If not arrested, I will resign rather than disobey orders.

Poor Miles, who was so badly wounded about three weeks ago, died day before yesterday. One of the gang that killed him and Capt. Moore, whom we arrested and sent to Huntsville, was released by Gen. (illegible). Oh, such conduct makes my blood boil!

(signed) J.M.



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# Things A Married Woman Cannot Help Thinking

from 1899 publication

- That she was very pretty at sixteen.
- That she had, or would have had, a great many good offers.
- That her lady friends are five years older than they say they are.
- That she has a very fine mind.
- That the people think too much of the looks of that Miss ...
- That her mother-in-law is a very trying woman.
- That her sister-in-law takes airs and ought to be put down.
- That her girls are prettier than Mrs. A.'s girls.
- That her eldest son takes after him.
- That he is going to throw himself away on Miss Scraggs.
- That Miss Scraggs set her cap for him and did all the courting.
- That her servant girls are the worst ever known.
- That she has good taste in dress.
- That she has a good temper.
- That she pities old maids.
- That her bread is better than her mother-in-law's.
- That if she had married some one else...

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