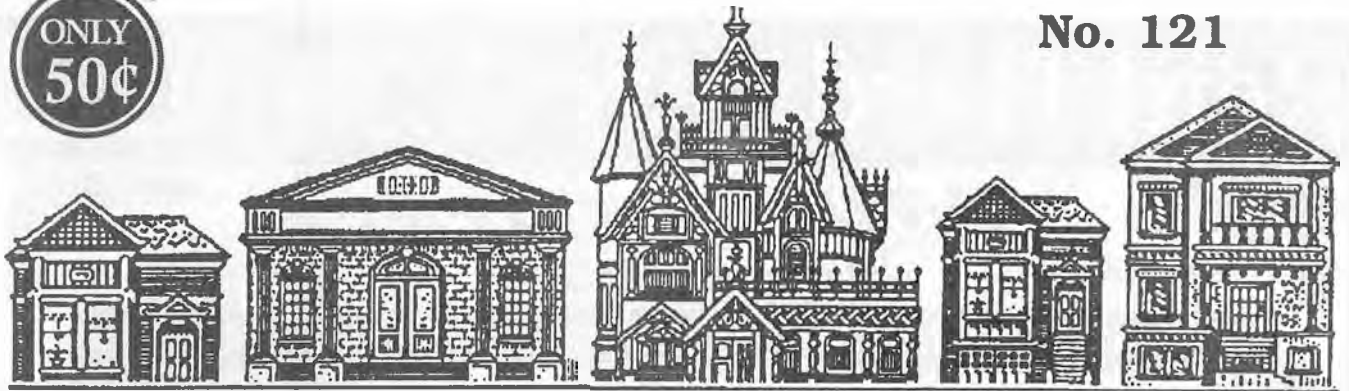


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HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY



Tragedy On Sharp's Mountain

It was one of the most tragic events to ever occur in North Alabama. A mother and daughter perished and two daughters survived.

Almost immediately, however, questions began to be asked and now, seventy five years later, people are still wondering about what really happened on Sharp's Mountain in the winter of 1929.

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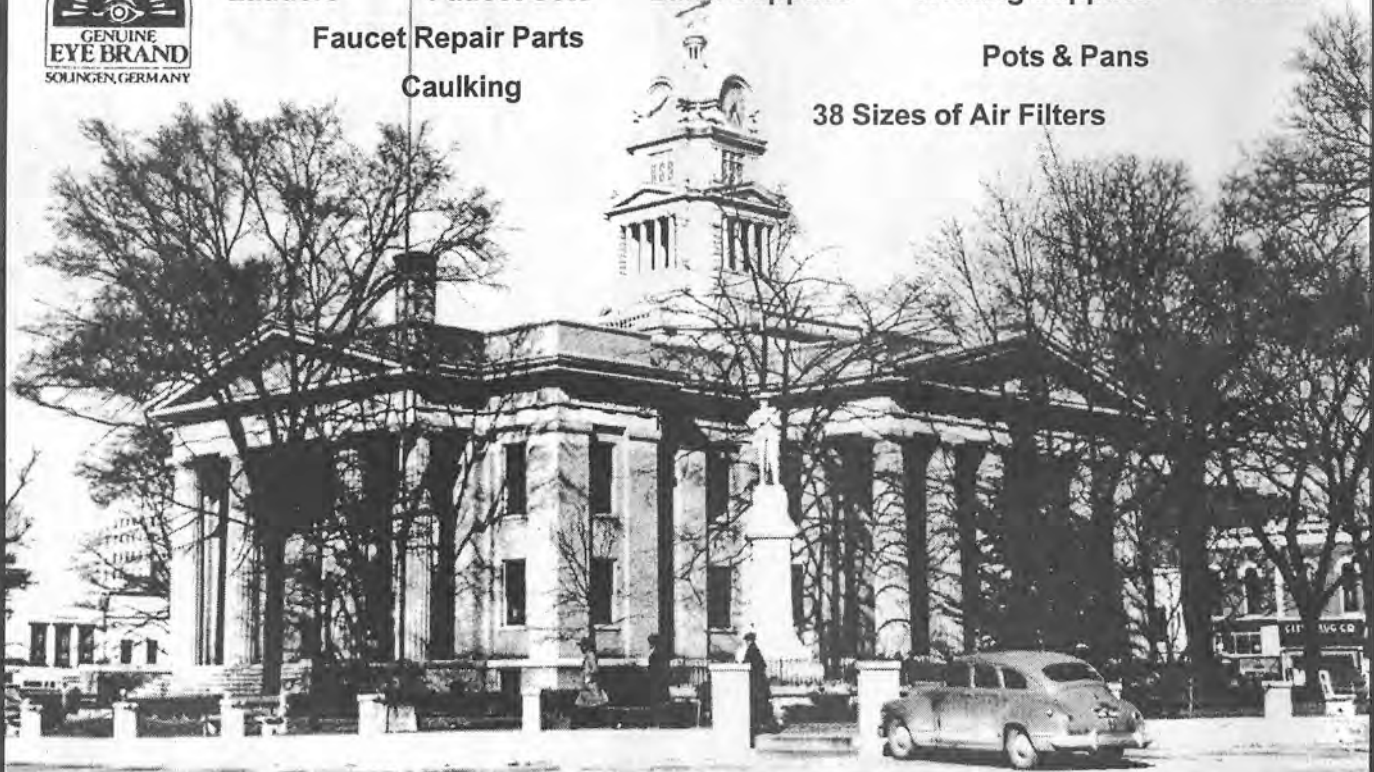
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Tragedy On Sharp's Mountain

by Linda (Herring) Kapes

For the residents of Lincoln Village, the Christmas season of 1929 was one of mixed emotions. The mill had cut back to a skeleton staff, laying off hundreds of workers at the very time the paychecks were most needed. For many people, despite the financial uncertainty, it provided a rare chance to spend time with family and friends.

Mary Markham was planning to spend the holidays with her husband, James Markham, on Sharp's Mountain in northeast Madison County. Their home, a small rough-hewn cabin, was located high on the mountain at the end of a wilderness trail, miles from a road or any neighbors. The reclusive family had lived there for years, eking out a living by trapping, making whisky and gathering ginseng.

As their three daughters began to grow older, the family decided that Mary would move to Huntsville where she would work at the mills and the children could attend school. As often as pos-

sible, Mary and the children returned to the mountains.

On December 19, a Thursday, the public schools closed early for the Christmas holidays. Mary had borrowed a car from her father and as soon as her daughters returned from school they set out on the twenty-mile trip to Sharp's Mountain. The weather had been unseasonably warm, in the high fifties and sixties, and despite the children's protests, Mary made them wear sweaters.

That evening, about 3:00, the family reached the home of Harvey Allan who lived at the base of the mountain. Mary was anxious to continue on up the mountain but Harvey and his family beseeched her to spend the night. The children, excited about being around other children, begged their mother to stay. Reluctantly, Mary agreed.

The next morning, December 20, after a hearty breakfast, Mary and the children began the trek up the mountain to the cabin. The weather was overcast with the temperatures hovering in the fifties. A strong wind blowing out of the northwest made Mary aware that she and her children were not dressed warmly enough for the changing weather. Although it was a long and difficult walk, almost four miles, the family always looked forward to it. The rough wilderness had a certain fascina-



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tion that only one who had been raised in the mountains could understand. About a quarter way up the trail the weather began to change drastically.

The dark clouds that had been hovering in the distance now enveloped the mountains in a cold mist, bringing with it strong gusting winds that made walking difficult. The temperatures began to drop - in fifteen minutes the temperature dropped by 20 degrees. At the end of the hour the temperature was below freezing and still dropping. The mist changed to sleet with the pellets being driven sideways by the hurricane force winds.

The once beautiful wilderness trail was suddenly becoming a nightmare as ice began wrapping the mountain in its freezing embrace.

The sleet quickly gave way to a wind-driven snow so thick that within minutes a heavy white blanket covered the mountain. Mary pushed and urged her daughters to walk faster but the task had become almost impossible. Every step became a test of their strength and endurance as the family fought their way up the icy slopes. Bruised knees and elbows gave silent testimony to the treacherous ice and snow. The two youngest girls began crying as the bitter arctic wind made a mockery out of their light cotton dresses.

The snow began falling harder and the trail grew more obscured. Any semblance of a footpath was now hidden beneath the snow and landmarks once familiar and comforting could no longer be recognized. The family was adrift just like the snow. When the evening darkness began to cast its long shadow on the mountain, visibility became even more difficult as Mary began to realize that they were going to have to spend the night outside, exposed to the elements. They found a large, hollow tree, with an opening just wide enough for them to crawl inside. All night they huddled together, taking turns rubbing each other in a feeble attempt at warmth. At one point Mary passed out the cookies and oranges the children had saved from their school Christmas parties the day before. There was little sleep that night as the family listened to the terrifying sounds of the storm whipping more snow across the mountain. Ice laden branches snapped from trees throughout the night, sounding like gunshots in the darkness.

This freak winter storm that would paralyze North Alabama for days had caught Mary totally unaware. Temperatures set records as they plummeted to below zero and the snow created blizzard conditions not seen in almost a hundred years.

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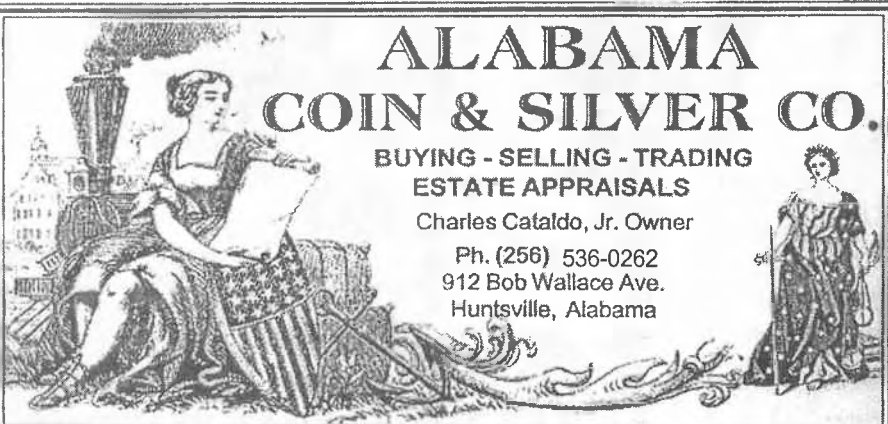
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did not bring the sunshine they had prayed for. Instead, the snow was falling just as heavy and the temperature was hovering around zero. Mary, who had placed herself at the opening of the hollow tree in an attempt to block the wind from her children, was suffering from hypothermia and was too weak to walk. It was decided that Jane, the eldest daughter, would take Pearl and together they would try to find the trail. After hours of searching in vain they returned to the tree where Mary and the youngest daughter, Viola, were still huddled. Another night was spent in the bitter cold praying for miracles that were nearly beyond hope.

The next morning, Sunday, Mary was worse, barely able to talk or move. Jane and Pearl set out again to try and find the trail that would lead them home to

their father. All day was spent criss-crossing the mountain and retracing their footsteps in the snow. Finally, at about three o'clock that afternoon, they stumbled on to the trail. It was barely two hundred yards from the hollowed tree and less than a half mile to the cabin. Relieved and excited, Jane and Pearl rushed back to the hollow log where their mother and Viola were waiting. Excitedly, Jane told of how they had found the trail and it was just a short walk on to the cabin. She was sure, she added, that they could make it before dark. But spending two nights in the unrelenting cold had taken its toll on Mary and so she pleaded that they wait until the following morning when surely the weather would be warmer. Jane reluctantly gave in to her mother's wishes.

The following morning they began the short journey with Jane carrying Viola and Pearl helping her mother. They had not gone very far however, when it became apparent that Mary's weakened condition would not allow them to continue. Mary begged them to help her back to the hollow tree, saying she did not want to die out in the open. A saddened and disheartened family returned to the hollow tree that had become their safety and refuge. Nature's shelter would now become a coffin for

two.

That night, with her head lying in Jane's lap, Mary succumbed to the cold. Jane, knowing she had to protect her sisters

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from the same fate, placed her mother's lifeless body in the opening of the tree as a shield against the arctic wind. Hours later, Pearl joined her mother in death. With a determination born of necessity, Jane removed the sweaters from the cold bodies and placed Pearl in the opening beside her mother.

The next day, Christmas Eve, Jane and Viola once again attempted to find their way to the mountain cabin. By this time they had spent five nights and six days lost in the wilderness with zero temperatures and no food.

That afternoon, around four o'clock the two girls finally arrived at the end of their long and sad journey. As their bodies warmed before the open fireplace, they tearfully relayed the events of the past week to their father. That night James Markham returned to the hollow tree and retrieved the bodies of his wife and daughter.

As word of the girls' miraculous survival spread they became almost instant celebrities. Their pictures appeared on the front pages of newspapers throughout the country, with detailed accounts of their harrowing life and death experiences. The following Sunday Mary Markham and her daughter Pearl were buried at Cameron Methodist Church. A charitable fund was established for the care of Jane and Viola.

It was a story that tugged the heartstrings of everyone who heard it.

Within days of the rescue, however, a story quite different from the first was being told. One that was steeped in local suspicion and mystery.

It went as follows: James Markham was well known as a man who loved his whiskey. From the day he first appeared on Sharp's Mountain, sometime around 1915, he had the reputa-

tion of a rough-talking, whiskey drinking man who didn't like people "meddling in his business."

The few people who ever visited Markham's cabin all came away with a sense of pity for the family. Markham, his wife and three daughters all lived in a one-room cabin barely 12 by 14 foot wide. The cabin was almost devoid of any type of furnishings. The mere basics, such as soap or combs, were a rarity and the girls' only bed was a pallet on the floor.

The stories that were told by neighbors about Markham's temper when he was drunk defy belief. Many people in the valley told of seeing Mary and the girls walking off the mountain late at night in attempts to escape Markham's drunken rages. Other stories were told of the mother and three daughters hiding in the woods for days at a time waiting for him to sober up.

In the summer of 1929, Mary Markham finally found the courage to leave her husband and

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move to town where she went to work at Lincoln Mills. Like so many other women in her situation, she was torn between wanting a better life for her family and loyalty to a husband she had sworn to love, honor and obey.

That December Mary decided to return to Sharp's Mountain and her husband's home. Mary and the children spent the night at Harvey Allan's house before walking up the mountain early the next morning. The weather was unseasonably warm, making the walk even more pleasant than usual. Even allowing for loitering along the way the family, at the latest, would have reached the cabin by 11:00 that morning. No one noticed the heavy clouds that were beginning to cover the sky.

That afternoon James Markham was seen walking along the road with a sack over his shoulder. When Kenneth Pitts stopped to give him a lift, Markham explained he had been to the store to purchase more supplies. Pitts got the impression that Markham's wife and children were waiting at home. He said Markham was intoxicated.

What happened next can only be conjecture. As evening approached, it started sleeting and

then changed to snow. By the next morning the mountain was completely snowed in, making any kind of travel impossible. Six people - James, his brother Robert, Mary and three children - were trapped in a small room barely large enough for two. James was drinking, along with his brother. The cramped quarters and the whisky led to arguments. At some point, as many people believe, Mary decided to take her daughters and walk off the mountain as she had done so many times before.

On Christmas Eve, a neighbor who lived about a mile from the Markham cabin heard three shots, placed closely together. This was an age-old sign of distress. His first thought was of fire as he scanned the horizon for signs of smoke. Seeing none, he started to go back into his house when he heard three more shots. Quickly he saddled a mule and began cautiously making his way through the ice and snow toward the Markham cabin where he thought the shots originated.

When he reached the cabin he found the blackened bodies of Mary and Pearl lying on the floor. Jane and Viola were huddled, terror stricken, in a corner of the room while their father was try-

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2. **Historic Huntsville; a City of New Beginnings.** Updated edition by Elise Hopkins Stephens, \$32.95.

3. **Old Huntsville Photo Albums on CD Rom.** Vols I, II and III (The Monroe Collection). A priceless collection of Old Huntsville photographs, \$15.95 each.

4. **Lily Flagg - The story of Huntsville's prize-winning Jersey cow,** by Doris Benefield Gilbreath, \$10.95.

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

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

7. **Historical Markers of Madison County, Alabama,** \$18.95.

8. **A Dry Dusty Wind - A collection of historic short stories** by Jacque Gray, \$15.95.

9. **Grits: What Makes Us Southerners - Vol. I CD** by Kathryn Tucker Windham, \$16.05.

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ing to boil a pot of coffee.

After listening for a few minutes as the girls told a story of spending 5 nights in the freezing wilderness, the neighbor rode his mule on down the mountain and called the authorities. No one knows what story he told the authorities, but the next morning two officials from the County Health Department, along with three armed deputies, appeared at the cabin with a warrant to take the girls into custody. The girls were taken to town where they told their story again. The next day Judge Thrasher signed an order appointing himself as guardian. The newspaper said, "Mr Markham agreed to stay in the background for his daughters sake."

Almost seventy-five years later the tragedy of Sharp's Mountain is still being debated. Did the family perish going up the mountain or leaving it?

Records prove it did not start snowing until that night, long after the time the family should have reached the cabin. A puzzling question probably never to be answered is, "How did two of the girls

live while the other two froze to death?" Most medical authorities insist that it would have been impossible for the girls to survive the bitter temperatures dressed only in light cotton dresses. Did Jane and Viola return to the cabin earlier than people thought? Was it possible that they never left the cabin? What did the neighbor see or hear that made armed deputies arrive with a warrant? Why did the judge remove the girls from their father's home? Could it be that Markham's reputation as a drunkard and brute prompted them to take this action? Most importantly, why did the two girls relate the story as told above? A story that was passed on to their children and children's children for 75 years. A story that from outsiders points

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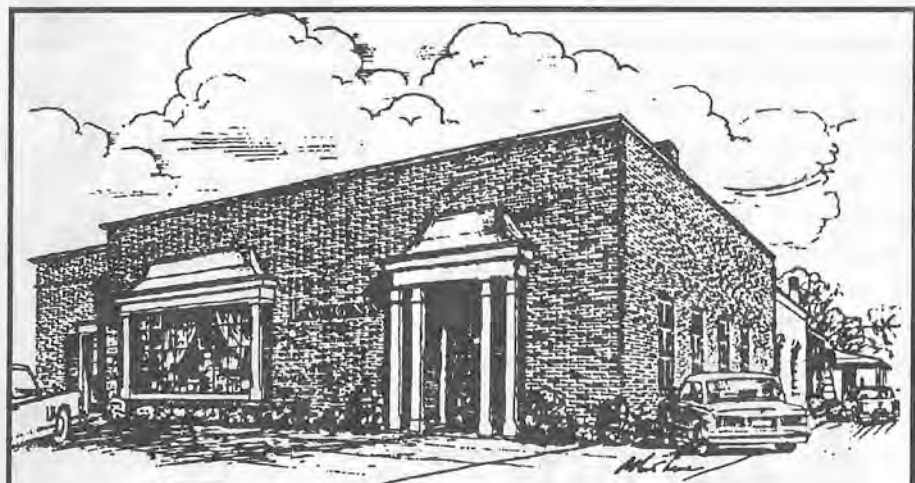
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of view contradicts the accounts told by neighbors and some historical records regarding the timing of the snow storm of the century. Was it loyalty for their father, fear, or shock that would block their memories? Or could it be that the truth lies somewhere in between the accounts as told by Jane and Viola and the stories passed down as legend by old timers of Hurricane Creek?

My mother was the youngest survivor of this mountain tragedy, but her story does not end the winter of '29. She lived for two years with Mary's brother and wife. When the funds that had been donated by the kind citizens of Huntsville ran out, my mother was placed in the Alabama Children's Home in Troy, Ala. There she grew to adulthood. During the summer of '41 she met a soldier who would become the love of her life, and in the spring of '42 they were married. The tragic story of being in the snow and cold for days, and the trauma of having to leave her mama behind produced deep fears in my mother

that she never overcame. She had a fear of storms and snow that would affect the way she raised her children. When we had the occasional snow or severe storm my mother would not allow us to go outside to play. We had to stay in doors until the snow melted.

Viola's older sister Jane was able to go to school from the donated funds. Although nominated for the Carnegie Award for her heroic action, nothing ever transpired. She became a schoolteacher and later married and became a mother of two children. She and my mother kept in close contact throughout their lives. However, they did not ever talk about the tragedy.

James Markham, my grandfather, had an emotional break-



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down, but later remarried and had other children.

Although two stories emerged from the tragedy, one factor cannot be ignored. The good people of Huntsville joined together to assist the survivors. From the many volunteers who carried the stretchers containing my mother and aunt, down the mountain to the ambulance; to those who donated money to provide for my mother and aunt; to the flowers dropped on their cabin by the airmen from Robert's Field.

I speak for the children of these two survivors when I express our heartfelt thanks to Huntsville for their help.

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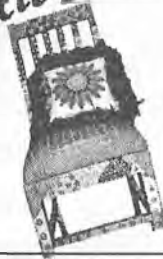
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News from 1885

- The case of J. R. Stegall, against the city for impounding his hogs, was tried before Justice Figg yesterday but the justice withheld his decision until today. This case involves a nice point in law. The defendent's counsel, Oscar R. Hundley, Esq., holds that the city has no right to take possession of the hogs without due process of law, it being in contravention with the constitution of the state. And if the city had such a right it could not prevail in this case as the hogs escaped from the owner's premises or were let out, without the owner's knowledge.

- Decatur, Al - The quiet of the Sabbath was somewhat disturbed at the report being circulated on the streets Sabbath morning of an assault made by Rev. L. Hensley Grubbs, editor of the Decatur News, upon one Mr. Bennett, his printer. The particulars of the matter are somewhat concealed and as a result, quite a number of reports are in circulation. The best we can gather are these: The printer was on

his usual Saturday night drunk, and made some demands on Mr. Grubbs for money which he could or would not comply with. Words passed, and finally the printer was collared and shaken up a bit. Being too drunk to resist, he submitted as best he could.

- Will Weaver entered the offices of the Mercury this morning with a huge rattlesnake which measured four feet three inches in circumference. The snake had been killed a few hours previously by Squire Cornelius on A. J. Esslinger's place. It was adorned with thirteen rattles and a button.


- Mr. J. C. Dilworth, a highly estimated and generous citizen of Huntsville, died at his residence on Meridianville Pike, last evening at 6 o'clock. The deceased was beloved by all who knew him. He bore his painful illness with the fortitude and resignation of the Christian soldier, and it is a grand consoling thought for his family that he is finally at peace.

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Joe Bradley School

In 1914, a four room brick school building was erected on Triana Pike. The enrollment during the first year averaged seventy-five pupils to a room, making around three hundred pupils for the four-room building. Attendance, however, was still very erratic and continued so until the passage of the compulsory education laws.

It was during the period 1907 to 1919 that the state and county first began to levy taxes to make available funds adequate for the support of a good general free education program. Through this increase in funds, it was possible for the county to engage more teachers than ever in its history. With the greatly increased enrollment and the additional teachers, the four room school at Merrimack became entirely inadequate.

In 1919 the Merrimack Manufacturing Company, aware of the deplorable overcrowding, began the construction of a larger school building at their own expense. The original frame structure was extended and renovated, becoming part of a beautiful modern brick school building. This handsome

edifice was named the "Joseph J. Bradley School" in honor of the agent of the Merrimack Manufacturing Company.

The new building was completed in 1920. Cecil V. Fain was principal then and continued through 1922. In speaking later of his years at Joe Bradley, Mr. Fain listed the following "firsts" as belonging to the community: the first high school in a suburban area of Huntsville, the first Boy Scout Troop in the county, the first camp for youth in the county, the first Girl Scout Troop, the first American Legion post, first vocational high school and first school for adults to learn to read and write.

In 1923, E. F. DuBose became principal of the school, having served as assistant principal under Mr. Fain. At that time, the school offered many high school subjects including vocational studies, domestic sci-

ence, sports and adult training in many subjects

In 1926, the Joe Bradley School became an accredited high school. The 1927 class, first to graduate at the school, had as their session room teacher, Mrs. J. B. Clopton (the Miss Annie Bradshaw), who had taught the first school in the community twenty six years before. At this time, the school had a faculty of nineteen teachers and was continuing to grow. Additional rooms and a library study-hall were added in 1929.

By 1944 the Joe Bradley School stood as one of the finest

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accredited high schools in the southeast. It had an enrollment of 800 students, 22 teachers and offered courses in Home Economics, Shop, Commercial, Sciences, Music, etc.

In 1951, the Huntsville Manufacturing Company made a gift of the entire school property and facilities to the Madison County School System. The class of 1951, was the last to graduate from the Joe Bradley School. In 1952 students from West Huntsville began attending the modern Butler High School.

Old Fashioned Tips

- A tablespoonful of turpentine boiled with your white clothes will greatly aid the whitening process.

- When food becomes scorched on the bottom of a good kettle or pan, allow it to cool gradually, then fill with cold water to which baking soda has been added. Slowly bring to a boil, repeating the process if the food has not become softened.

- Paint the bottom cellar step white. It may prevent accidents in the dark.


Man Slaps Wife But Not Hard Enough To Hurt

from 1885 newspaper

Esquire Figg had a case yesterday which was "a family affair." From the evidence it would appear that James Rutledge whips his wife. Mr. Rutledge admitted having "slapped" his other half, but not hard enough to hurt her.

His Honor delivered a lecture bearing on the conjugal relations which should exist between "twain of the flesh" and explained to Mr. Rutledge that "slapping" was not in accordance with the teachings of the Apostle Paul, who exhorted husbands to love their wives.


Figg then slapped a fine of seven dollars and a half on Mr. Rutledge, saying the court hoped the fine was not hard enough to hurt him.



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Huntsville Coffee Talk

by Aunt Eunice

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



Hello! I hope you all have stayed well during this bad flu season. We have sure had lots of rain in this area. Our prayers and sympathy go out to the families of those who lost loved ones because of the flooding and torrential rains. We love you and pray for you all.

The Picture of the Month was our very own dear friend and judge **Buddy Little**. So many people called to guess and every single one of them guessed that it was Judge Little. That has got to be a record! I think they remembered him from his younger days - and that means he hasn't changed a lot! **Ella Ree Craig** was the first to call and guess correctly so she's the Winner - I expect you to come in and claim your Country Home Breakfast!

Our friend **Janie Cowan** lost her father recently. Janie, we love you and our prayers and sympathy go out to you. I know you'll miss him so much.

We had some travelers who were here on business and spent

the night just so they could come to Eunice's Restaurant and have a big breakfast the next day. **Carl Weaver** from Gadsden, **Len McRae** from Meridian, Miss. and **Jeff Everett** from Moon Town came to eat breakfast, and did they have a great time! It was so nice to meet each of them.

Well, **J.B. Tucker**, Mayor of Hurricane Creek is getting his fishing poles ready. Spring must be getting close!

We are so happy to read all those good news articles the Times has been running recently about 5 Points, Old Town and Twickenham, and how our area over here is now in so much demand. We always knew it was quaint, homey and neighborly - now everyone else knows it too! I think it's one of the few places where you can see people walking through the neighborhood, saying hello to each other, and just enjoying the renovations going on with those old homes. Kind of like in the old days!

I just got a call from my Pat - **Pat Colson** told me that she had just lost her Daddy and was feeling so sad. Our sympathy and love go out to you, Pat. **Mr. Smith** was a wonderful man, spent lots of time visiting with us here and we'll never forget him. He was just one of us.

Jeanne Henry and her son, **James Henry**, came by from Locust Grove Baptist Church Sunday to see us. It was so good to see them, I love you. Hello to my good friend **Connie Mason** who had knee surgery and is having a hard time moving around. Get better, Connie.

I keep hearing rumors about who is going to run against our mayor, **Lorretta Spencer**. Folks, listen to me - save your money - she's going to be hard to beat!

Our good friend **Robert Madison** has been seen out courting young beautiful girls. Better watch

Photo of The Month

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

Hint: He's at Eunice's a lot but spends time flying all over Alabama.



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out, Robert! You'll end up married one day.

I fed the group **Huntsville Flight Basket Ball** players one day for breakfast. They had a really good time, and we almost ran out of food! They were surely a fine bunch of young men.

Our sympathy goes to the family of **Ray Gurley**. The folks in Owens Cross Road will really miss him.

We are very happy to report that our dear **Mr. Ray Pearman** is doing much better now – we are so happy about that. Our friend **Lori Johnson** accepted a job with NASA. She is a great lady and will be a wonderful addition to their team.

I like to remember our friend **Mr. Jim Oakes** and **Miss Ann**. They do such wonderful work in our community, and they have done more for our runners than anyone else. They really put their hearts into it.

We wanted to pass along a message to **Barbara Fortner** in California who visited with us for the first time last year and absolutely loved Huntsville – come back to see us this year – you are a real Southern Lady at heart even though you live way over there. She visited with her daughter **Cheryl Tribble** from Atlanta and we want to see you back again, too!

To all of our dear friends at NASA – our love, prayers and sympathy have been with you during the tragic times we have all gone through recently. **Jan, Mr. Art, Mr. O'Keefe** – we love you all very much.

I have a wonderful brother and sister that stops by to eat with me. Both **Jeff** and **Jamie Smith** are planning weddings this summer and we are so looking forward to both. Jeff's bride-to-be is beautiful **Amy Perry** and Jamie's

groom-to-be is **Garrett Miller**. Don't you know that their Mom and Pop **Glen** and **Debbie Smith** are so proud? I have several others who are getting married by summer – but I'll tell you all about them next month!

The **Singing Valentines** came by and sang to me. 20 beautiful and talented ladies – all dressed in red and white and accompanied by the handsome **Jon Knowles** to be my special Valentine! Thanks so much for that – it was great fun.

I've been hearing so many good things about **Jane Tippett**, a nurse at the Huntsville Hospital emergency room. She's really a sweet and caring person.

Our buddy, **Blake Dorning**, got moved into his new job as sheriff. Looks like the job fits him well and he still stops by to pour coffee sometimes!

Well, that's about all for this month. Just remember I love all of you and come see me!

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Delicious Fudge

Put 2 cups sugar, three heaping tablespoons cocoa, 3/4 cup sweet milk and 1/4 cup white Karo, and butter the size of a large walnut into a pan. Let come to a boil, then cook slowly until it forms a soft ball in cold water. Remove from the heat and beat vigorously until it holds shape. Pour immediately into buttered dish. Nuts may be added before pouring into dish.

Mrs. Shelby Bragg

Pineapple Meringue

6 whites of eggs beaten very stiff with a pinch of salt. To this add 2 cups of sifted sugar and beat in slowly and hard. Add a tablespoon of vinegar and 1 teaspoon of vanilla flavoring. Put in spoon form on a cookie sheet and bake about 225 degrees for 40 minutes to one hour.

When ready to serve add one can of grated drained pineapple

and top with whipped cream.

Mrs. I. Wind

Date Crumb Cookies

Crumb Mixture:

1/2 c. butter

1/2 t. salt

1 t. baking soda mixed with 1 1/2 c. flour

1 3/4 c. ground oatmeal

Cook til thick and then cool.

Spread half of the crumb mixture on a well-greased pan and cover with the date mixture:

Date mixture:

1 package dates

1 c. sugar

1 c. water

(mix in order given)

Add the remaining crumbs to the top, press down firmly. Bake 45 minutes at 375 degrees.

Mrs. Vera Howard Hall

Stuffed Sweet Potatoes

6 medium-sized sweet pota-

toes

2 T. butter

Juice of 1 orange

1 c. shredded pineapple

1/2 c. chopped English walnuts

1 dozen marshmallows

Bake potatoes, scoop out shells. Mash potatoes, adding butter and orange juice. Stir in all ingredients except marshmallows. Refill shell with mixture. Cut up marshmallows, place them on top. Put potatoes in the oven until heated through and browned slightly on top. *Mrs. T. P. Hay*

Potatoes in Sauce

1 T. fat

1 onion, sliced

1 t. chopped green pepper

5 cold boiled potatoes

1 t. parsley

Salt and pepper

1 c. gravy or thick broth

Melt fat in heavy pan and saute onion with green pepper. Do not brown. Slice potatoes thickly and add to onion/peppers. Add the parsley, season to taste, add gravy. Cover pan and simmer til most of the liquid has evaporated.

Mrs. Allen Cobb

Lemon Pudding

3 T. flour

1 c. milk

2 eggs

1 c. sugar

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3 T. butter

Juice of 1 lemon and rind

Combine flour, butter and 3/4 cup of sugar. Cream well, then add yolks of eggs, juice and rind of the lemon. Beat egg whites stiff, then add remaining 1/4 cup sugar. Fold whites into mixture and pour into buttered baking dish. Place dish in pan of hot water, bake in oven for one hour at 350 degrees. The top is like cake and the under part is a lemon jelly.

Mrs. Sidney Schiffman

Old Days Pound Cake

2 c. flour (sifted twice with salt)

1 c. butter

1 2/3 c. sugar

5 eggs (unbeaten)

1/8 t. salt

Cream butter and sugar, add one egg at a time, mixing well after each. Add flour last and put in well-greased cold pan. Bake in a slow oven one hour. Grease cold pan and coat well with flour. Mrs. Claude Lawler

Easy Magic Macaroons

1/2 c. Eagle Brand Sweetened condensed milk

2 c. shredded coconut

Mix Eagle Brand and coconut together. Drop by spoonfuls in well-buttered pan about 1 inch apart. Bake in moderate oven (350 degrees) until a delicate brown.

These crunchy, crispy, coconutty macaroons make a tremendous hit! Remember evaporated milk won't - can't - succeed in this recipe. *Mrs. Sam W. Smith*

Scandinavian Cookies

1/2 c. butter

1/4 c. brown sugar

1 egg, separated

1 c. sifted flour

3/4 c. chopped nuts

Tart jelly

Blend butter, add sugar and egg yolk - blend until light. Blend in flour and roll dough into small balls about one inch in diameter. Slightly beat egg white with a fork. Dip cookies in egg white, roll in chopped nuts and place on a greased cookie sheet, making a depression in center of each. Bake for 5 minutes in a slow oven (300 degrees) Remove from oven and press down centers again and continue baking for 30 minutes. Cool slightly and fill centers with jelly. Candied cherries or small pieces of candied apricots or other fruits may be used.

Miss Bernice Lawler

Orange Marmalade

1 orange - 1 lemon (1-1 ratio)
Sugar

Quarter the fruit and shred with a sharp knife. To each measure of fruit allow 3 full measures

of water. Allow to soak for 24 hours, then boil hard for 10 minutes. Set aside for another 24 hours. For each cupful of fruit mixture, add 1 cupful of sugar. At least, add 1 extra cupful. Cook until it will jell. This makes 7 glasses of marmalade.

Mrs. A. S. Hodges

Hard Sauce

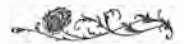
1/3 c. butter

2/3 t. vanilla flavoring

1 c. confectioner's sugar

Let butter stand at room temperature until easy to work with but not melted. Cream thoroughly and beat in sugar. Continue to beat until smooth and fluffy. Add vanilla slowly. For a richer sauce, beat in 1/4 cup heavy cream.

Helen McCown



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The Calhoun House

by Stephanie Troup

In 1833 Judge William Smith hired William and Thomas Brandon to build a house for him. This home would become one of the largest in the southeast, spreading over 12,000 square feet, and housing one of the most extensive art collections in the state. It would also remain empty for years, maintained by a staff of servants, while its owners lived in Europe.

The initial purchase to begin the building of the home was an order of one million bricks. Construction began and progressed slowly because Judge Smith was not easily pleased. The building went on for seven years. In 1840 Judge Smith died, never seeing the completion of the house. His grandson-in-law, Meredith

Calhoun, as executor of the Judge's Will, supervised the completion of the house.

The house faced Eustis St. and included a five-foot brick wall surrounding the entire block of what is now Lincoln, Eustis, Randolph, and Greene Streets. The 12,000 square foot house sitting within the brick wall was formidable and imposing with three stories, seven windows across the façade, and a gleaming copper roof.

In his collection of articles on celebrated Huntsville homes, Pat Jones wrote that the house sat on the "highest spot in the block...Wide stone steps ran the length of the small porch in front." He said it was outstanding and unparalleled for beauty and elegance.

Meredith Calhoun, his wife Mary, their three boys, and the Judge's widow and Mary's grandmother, Margaret Smith, lived in the house. In 1842, Margaret died, and shortly afterwards the Calhoun's eldest son, Willie, experienced a crippling spinal injury. But possibly the most tragic event for the Calhoun family during these years was the death of their middle son, John, at the age of four.

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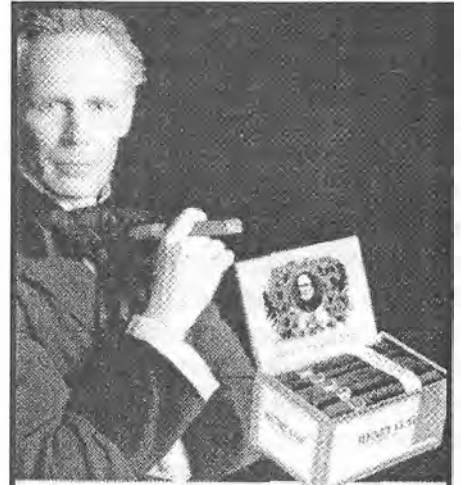


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Grief-stricken, the Calhouns decided to travel abroad to seek medical care for their son Willie in France, but it was hinted that Mrs. Calhoun herself was so distraught and ill that she required medical care as well.

While the Calhouns lived in Europe, the palatial house stood empty for years and was maintained by a staff of servants. The interior was filled with the Calhouns' art collection that they had amassed during their travels. It was considered by many to be the largest and finest private collection in the South at the time.

During the years that the great house stood empty, a friend and neighbor of the Calhouns, Mary Lewis, commented that the house "...looks sad....flourishing with mellowness over its sad history."

The house was very attractive to occupying troops during the civil war. Unruly prisoners were kept in the underground kitchen behind barred windows. Other parts of the house were used as a hospital and the rooms were crowded with beds, not only for battle wounds, but for the many soldiers who were stricken with measles. In 1867 the house served as military headquarters.

The house was rented in 1874 and used as a dance studio, and in 1876 it became the offices of the U.S. Circuit Court for the Northern District of Alabama.

The most illustrious event in the Calhoun House's history was the trial of Frank James in 1884 for a payroll robbery three years earlier. Huge crowds came from far and wide to witness the trial or just to be near the excitement. James was quite a celebrity and when he was acquitted, the sympathetic crowds cheered.

The house, the remaining art collection, and the entire block were sold to Milton and Ellelee Humes in 1887.

From 1895 - 1898, the Calhoun House served as the location for a boy's school, the Huntsville Academy.

In 1907 a fire struck the house, and the burned out building remained an empty eyesore close to the heart of downtown Huntsville, until 1909 when it was sold to L.C. Sugg for \$10,800. This is the house that cost Judge Smith over \$75,000 to build in the 1830's.

In May of 1911 after another fire, the Calhoun House was demolished. It is now a parking lot, located directly to the right of the YMCA (now law offices) as you look east. Today there is nothing to remind one of it's past glories and drama except for the historic marker at the location, which describes the trial of Frank James that took place there.

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Early History Of Huntsville

"Between 1810 and 1816"

by Brig. Gen. E. C. Betts and published in 1909

As an introduction to this chapter, the author asks leave to quote briefly from a letter written in 1815 by John W. Walker, later United States Senator, to his friend at Washington, W.H. Crawford, then Secretary of the United States Treasury: "Huntsville is situated around the finest spring in the world; the spring forms a semicircle 100 feet wide, and at a trivial expense the stream can be made navigable for batteaux to the Tennessee river; which is only ten miles distant. The market house is of brick; the jail of wood. In its immediate vicinity are five cotton gins. The average land in the county will produce 1,000 pounds of cotton to the acre, and 800 bales will be this year's crop. The land is also admirably adapted to tobacco raising. Besides the gins in Huntsville, there are twenty in the county."

Such expressions as these reflect the spirit of the times. An exhilarating air of buoyancy and hope pervaded every phase of life in the community. The atmosphere was electric with ardent optimism for the future, which was so abundantly warranted, as

is eloquently attested by history's narration of that future.

As the beginning of this, the second era in the growth of the settlement, is the ending of the first at which lands were bought, the inhabitants were primarily engaged about the business of establishing their homes. Most of the wealthier citizens built houses along the south of the town, just out of the town limits, ranging from Pope's - now Echols' - hill on the east, to the spring bluff on the west, along what is now Williams street, which was lined with towering oaks and stately poplars; while others erected their houses along what is now Maiden Lane, just south of a rugged and picturesque bluff, upon which was later situated the home of Leroy Pope. From time to time residences were changed from one part of town to another, and from the country to town, and the reverse. Thomas Bibb and Henry Minor being among the most noteworthy of those who moved over to the south side of town.

After the matter of housing the settlers had been properly disposed of, the attention and energies of the entire community seem

to have been directed to the development of the economic interests of the town; not to the exclusion of, however, but with due and commensurate regard for its proper political development as a factor in the governmental life of the territory.

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Some time during the year 1810, Alexander Gilbreath opened a mercantile establishment at the corner of Gates and Henry streets, and about a year later formed a partnership with James White. This firm enjoyed a large and lucrative business for many years. John Brown erected two storehouses on Exchange Row, being the first on the north side of the square. Near these J. O. Crump built one.

In 1810 John Read came to Twickenham and erected the first house on the old Schaudies property, at the southwest corner of the square. This house was later purchased by A. Jameson, who ran a hotel there, and some time thereafter it was acquired by Allen Cooper, who continued to operate the hotel. The first storehouse on the east side of the square was built by Neal B. Rose, Leroy Pope and John Hickman.

For a number of years the first and only paper in the territory was the "Madison Gazette," published at Twickenham by Mr. Parham, having been established

in the early part of 1812, as a weekly. Later, in 1816, this paper changed hands and was thereafter published by T B. Grantland, under the name of "The Huntsville Republican."

As early as 1803 the Territorial Legislators conceived the idea that taverns were institutions peculiarly subject to governmental control, even to the extent of fixing the rates to be charged; however, notwithstanding this, hotels or taverns were numerous in Twickenham. On the west side of Jefferson Street, just off the square, on the site of the old Huntsville Hotel, C. Cheatham owned and operated a tavern, and just across the street, in the center of the block, Archibald Maderra ran his tavern, which was headquarters for the delegates to the Territorial Constitutional Convention held at Huntsville in 1819.

Between these years, the population of this, the oldest English settled town in the State, was of slow growth, notwithstanding that Madison county then held within its limits more than one-half the entire population in that scope of country which later became the State of Alabama. Nevertheless, during this period the business and commercial interests of the settlement grew by leaps and bounds. Many cotton gins and mills of various characters were located in and around the town.



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The author will be pardoned for here digressing, and recording the fact that the first cotton gin in the county and probably in the State, referred to by a chronicle of the times as a cotton factory, was erected by Charles Cabaniss on Barren Fork of Flint river, soon after the land sales in 1809.

When the court house was completed in 1816, it was flanked about on all sides by handsome brick storehouses, and in all parts of town many elegant and costly homes had been erected and many more were in the process of completion. This material growth of the town represented the skill and handiwork of two brothers, Thomas and William Brandon, who came into the community in 1810, with nothing but their mason's tools, and in these few years had transformed the crude log hut settlement into the brick and mortar metropolis of

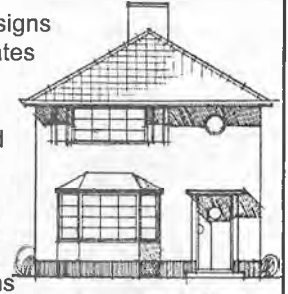
the territory, it had by this time become.

Though engrossed in and busied about the reclamation and development of their own wonderful county, the fires of patriotism still burned brightly in the souls of Madison's men and women. On October 13, 1813, General Andrew Jackson, and his command, after marching from Fayetteville to Huntsville in five hours, halted at what is now the intersection of East Holmes and North Lincoln streets, for rest over night, having learned on arriving here that the report of the "rapid approach of the Indians was exaggerated." General Jackson and his command the next day continued their march through the country of hostile Indian tribes to Horse Shoe Bend, where that sanguinary battle was fought with the Creek Indians. Nor was their departure unattended, for the county had contributed liberally

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of its men; four companies from Huntsville, one the "Mounted Rangers," under the command of Capt. Eli Hammond and a fifth company from Hazel Green, with Captain Jack Mosley as its commander, had joined General Jackson's forces here.

In those strenuous times, when safety lay in one's ability to shoot a muzzle-loading-flint-lock-squirrel-rifle, "military preparedness" was not merely a fad to be indulged according to political exigencies, and universal military training, in a measure, was a reality. The duty of every male citizen to bear arms in defense of his country and be subject to its call, was not a myth. To the accomplishment of this end, laws governing the same in the territory had been enacted, which, we have observed, were made to apply to Madison county, on February 27, 1809.

It was required of the commanding officers of the companies that they enroll "every free white male who shall have been ten days in their respective beats—each beat in the county having one or more companies and who shall be above the age of eighteen and under the age of forty-five, and shall give notice to such person of his enrollment. Thereafter militia duty or service was compulsory upon males so enrolled.

The regiment was required by law to hold a muster once a year, and the company once every two months and oftener, at the discre-

tion of the commanding officer.

During the war of 1812 the settlement had furnished its quota of men to defend the country. Two companies, one under the command of Capt. Jack Mosley, and the other with Captain Gray as its commander, went forth from Huntsville; however, both companies were mustered out without having seen service in actual war.

At the end of this era, between the years 1815 and 1816, there was a pronounced inflated condition of affairs. Land values, which, in some instances, had increased tenfold, bear unmistakable evidence of this forward tendency of things and events in the life of the settlement.

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square known in later years, as the Schaudies corner- sold in 1811 for \$715, and without having been improved with a costly building, brought \$7,500 when sold during the last year of this period; and it is said by a narrator of those times, that this instance of the rise in property values, is a fair index to the advance in the price of all property.

Not alone did these conditions prevail immediately in the town, but throughout the county as well. Farm lands approximate to the town brought \$100 per acre.

As a corollary of these advances in the wealth and financial resources of the settlement, as a town, the per capita wealth of the individuals of the community kept pace.

The Bootlegger

by Jim Latham

De Mitt Kelly lived in the block of West Clinton where Planter's Union bank now stands. He wore a heavy, long wool coat the year round in which he carried pint bottles of whiskey that he sold all over town.

The First Methodist Church was starting a Men's club, and they invited all the prominent men in Huntsville. Since he was so well known, De Mitt decided he would attend the meeting. The men were asked to stand up and introduce themselves. They stood and told the crowd that they were doctor, attorney, business man, etc.

De Mitt stood up and said, "I, De Mitt Kelly, am a bootlegger. No need to deny it, as I have sold whiskey to most of you fine fellows who are here today."

Want To Find My Mother

I desire to locate my mother, Mattie, who belonged to the Chapman plantation. At the end of the war she worked for the Harolds family in Huntsville. Her last name is probably Chapman or Withers. Anyone having information can contact me at this paper.

from 1871 newspaper

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Old News From 1904

Injured in runaway

As the result of a runaway accident near the Wade Mattress Factory yesterday afternoon, Mrs. R. B. Searcy was badly injured and Mrs. Frank J. Thompson was painfully bruised.

The ladies were driving in front of the factory when the horse got his tail over one of the reins and began to run.

Mrs. Searcy attempted to jump out of the buggy and was thrown with great force against the ground, the back of her head striking against the stone curbing and cutting the scalp very badly. Mrs. Thompson did not jump but was thrown from the buggy a little further down the street. She was painfully bruised but was not cut.

Mrs. Searcy is believed to be serious. The ladies were attended to by Dr. Brooks and last night both were resting quietly.

Joe Mason Arrested

He claims that he did not sell whiskey but only bought it for his friends. Joseph Mason, the well known egg and produce dealer, was tried before Commissioner Greenleaf yesterday on a charge of retailing whiskey.

The revenue men claim that Mason has been violating the revenue laws with impunity for several years and has kept a wide section of Paint Rock Valley supplied with whiskey.

Mason, on the other hand, claims that he was not selling whiskey but that he merely took orders for it and delivered it to his friends and customers whom he desired to accommodate and furthermore, that he made no profit whatsoever by delivering the li-

quor.

The case is unique and will be an interesting one for the next grand jury to pass upon.

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The Gypsies

by Helen Miller

Apparently the glorious days of the care-free vagabond gypsies are over. I haven't heard or seen any physical evidence of them now in over 50 years. Back in the 1920's, they came in covered wagons to our small Southern town, pitched tents on the outskirts and camped for weeks at the time. Their unique lifestyle attracted me to no end and with wild imagination and excitement. I viewed in awe those strange people whose life was so different from mine.

I was warned by my elders to stay away from where they were because they were lazy, had no fixed dwelling and were without means of an honest livelihood.

The women wore long bright colored purple or blue velvet dresses and sparkling swinging ear rings that hung down to their shoulders. Each finger, on both hands, had at least one ornate ring and their chests were covered in a mass of dangling beads that would start every dog barking within hearing distance as they shouted out "We can tell your fortune! Come let us read your future from our crystal ball! You may never have this opportunity again!"

The men were dressed oddly also with bright red and yellow sashes around their waists and forehead and decorated boots. They could cleverly play a violin and dance at the same time as the children sashayed around in their soiled worn clothes that didn't seem to bother them one bit. They appeared to be one big happy family jingling their tambourines and keeping in step with the music. They would come riding into town in horsedrawn wagons, then split up into small groups going in every direction in and out of shops pretending to look for something special but never buying anything. I would stop and listen with great curiosity as they loudly chatted to each other using strange words and phrases that I was unable to understand. I supposed gypsies had a language all their own. Some proprietors would miss items from their counters and complain to the law, but their slight of hand technique was so skillfully mastered it was impossible to catch them in the

act of stealing. Every day we heard another story about their sticky fingers or how someone foolishly lost their money having their fortune told by "Madame Evelyn". In exasperation some of the church women of the town talked about going out where they were camped and try to evangelize them, but the city fathers advised against it.

Usually after a few weeks the gypsies became restless and moved on, much to the relief of everyone. Stretching my memory a bit it seems like I can recall an old classic English nursery rhyme that reminds me of those unique but happy people and a phase of American life that is gone forever.

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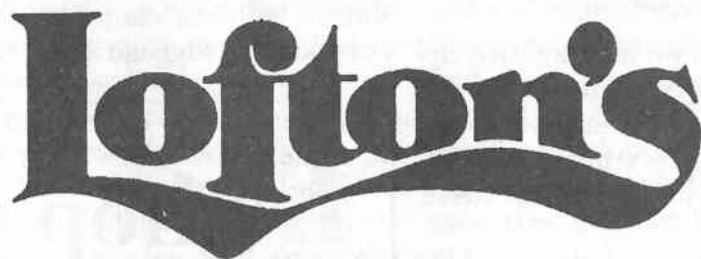
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Featuring A New Restaurant Every Month

Downtown and the Big Spring Park

by Jerry M. Wilbanks

The big yellow city bus would take you downtown for a dime (later a quarter) and bring you back home, practically to your doorstep. All this, and the schedule was amazingly accurate. The bus came all the way out to Huntsville Park, made a loop around the neighborhood and then headed back to town. It was extremely convenient for youngsters and for those adults without an automobile. It seemed like there was a bus waiting at our corner stop every half hour; and if you missed it, you could just run up the street one block and catch it at the end of its neighborhood loop. My sister Dorothy was an acknowledged master of this maneuver. When she had to ride the bus for any reason, I don't think she ever once made it to the first stop on time! (Only kidding, Dot).

My father worked a short stint as a bus driver back in the fifties. I don't remember too much about that except that he wore a kind of gray uniform and a cap with a big shield on it that made him look for all the world like a policeman. Encouraging this mistaken belief, he enjoyed a special kind of respect around me and my young friends. By the time we had gotten old enough to know better, he had gone on to another job.


Sometimes on Friday afternoon, I would ride the bus downtown with my Mom. There she would take care of banking business, shop the ten-cent and department stores and wind up the afternoon at the A&P Grocery

Store. When we had finished up with the grocery shopping, my dad would appear and we would load the grocery bags into the trunk of the family car and drive home.

My sisters worked at the Woolworths, Walgreens drugstore soda fountain and anywhere else they could find after school employment. After all, the bus service was always available for the back and forth commute. There were no malls to speak of in those days, but teenage girls loved to hang out and shop downtown. That's where the stores and the movies were!


Alone, I liked to ride the bus downtown to go to the movies. I remember that the Lyric and the

Grand Theaters were directly opposite each other on the same street. The movie theaters were usually my destination on Saturday and Sunday afternoons (after window-shopping the hunting knives, guitars, cameras, Army surplus and luggage at the local



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pawnshop on the square.) Occasionally... almost always ...I would spend all my money at the theater's concession stand, and I would be forced to walk home. This was quite an uneasy journey and usually in the dark! I would come straight down Clinton Street, past the sometimes dangerous red brick projects, turning at the Butler High School intersection and proceeding through the very scary district of West Huntsville, and thus into the familiar village of Huntsville Park. Each time I made this harrowing trek, I promised myself it would be the last. And it always was ... until the next time.

Another destination on the bus route was the Big Spring Park. The area had been developed into ponds, bridges and neatly trimmed expanses of grassy landscape. The ponds and waterways were home to ducks, geese and giant goldfish. These little carp had been given plenty of room to

grow and grow they did. Some of them were huge! We liked to bring along bags of popcorn and bread scraps to feed fish and fowl alike.

Located near the Big Spring Park was the Huntsville municipal swimming pool. We came there on hot summer mornings and spent the day swimming and sunbathing. During the fifties, before the development of the polio vaccine; many parents became concerned that their kids might be at risk around public recreational areas, and for at least one summer attendance at the municipal swimming pool was noticeably down. Sometimes the facility looked downright deserted. Although there has never been any scientific evidence to support the idea, many people still believe that public swimming pools are high risk areas for infection by the polio virus! Around our neighborhood, parents just didn't feel good about communal swimming during the unfortunate polio epidemic of the fifties.

One of the big attractions of Big Spring Park was

the Big Spring Cafe. In those days before the proliferation of fast food joints, the Big Spring Cafe was a destination in itself. The food was just great. Delicious chili dogs and slaw dogs made with ketchup, hamburgers, cheeseburgers and chili; these are just a few of the items to be found on the menu. Even today the Big Spring Cafe continues to serve all the old favorites, along with stew, hamburger steak, Double Cola and Coke in bottles and the ever popular "greasies". These are little burgers with mustard and onion. (Did you want fries with that greasy?)

Along with an army of other customers, my Dad especially liked the hamburgers. Upon request, both sides of the bun, top half and bottom, could be dipped in the grease that the burgers were cooked in. This was considered the apex of gourmet dining among burger enthusiasts of all ages. A note to the health conscious: don't try this at home. My Dad somehow made it to the age of eighty-seven, in spite of such reckless dining and utter disregard for all

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seven, in spite of such reckless dining and utter disregard for all the rules of a healthy diet.

Riding downtown on the bus was a big deal to us kids. It sort of expanded our universe and allowed us to browse around beyond the confines of our little village. Of course we were always happy to get back home to familiar surroundings. In those days, a trip downtown for shopping, business or recreation was an event to be enjoyed. Even though the town itself began to grow and expand and businesses began their slow, inexorable crawl toward the outlying complexes and malls, the downtown was slow to give up its dominant status in the estimation of old time residents. Downtown was still the big story in most people's minds and endures in memory unchanged and undiminished.



Judge Parsons

by Jim Latham

A young girl and her mother appeared before Judge Elbert Parsons in Circuit Court at the Madison County Courthouse.

Judge Parsons, a curt man, said "What is your name, girl?"

She replied, "Sweet Thing."

Judge Parsons said, "I mean your REAL name!" She replied, "Sweet Thing IS my real name, that's what my mother named me."

"Well," said the Judge, "I'll just call you ST because I sure ain't calling you Sweet Thing!"

Huntsville Man has Tornado Fighting Invention

from 1885 newspaper

A local man has thought of a way to fight tornadoes, which he has described in a letter to "The Scientific American". His plan is to blow them up with gunpowder.

A keg of powder is to be kept to the southwest of the house or village to be protected. The reason for placing it at that particular point of the compass is because experience shows that tornadoes generally move toward the

northeast.

When the dreadful funnel is first seen, Mr. Schultz would have a cool-headed man wheel the powder into line with the approaching storm, then to retire about 100 yards to the northwest, wait until the devouring air monster was just over the keg and then fire the powder, by electricity, we suppose.

His idea is that, as it is a well known characteristic of tornadoes to take long leaps through the air sometimes skipping wide reaches of country, a charge of gunpowder properly applied would give the tornado a lift that would save a village.





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News From The Year 1901

News From Huntsville and Around The World

Oklahoma Territory Open

Aug 9. Oklahoma Territory has grown by 2,080,000 acres overnight, and a lucky 6,500 homesteaders have staked their claims. Federal agents acquired the fertile land south of the Cimarron River from the Comanche, Kiowa and Apache for \$2 million. Ranchers and railway barons lobbied for the purchase, seeking grazing grounds and increased traffic, respectively. Miners know the area offers coal reserves, and farmers believe the soil is good for corn, wheat and cotton.

Previous expansion in Okla-

homa had been a chaotic affair; in the 1889 land rush the mad scramble resulted in at least one death. This time, authorities submitted nearly 170,000 would-be claimants to an orderly lottery. The winners are required to remain on their allotments for five years before obtaining titles.

The land would have been available to the public sooner if the Indians living on the eastern half of the territory had not known their rights and exercised them so well. The tribes there have written constitutions and well-established systems of self-

government.

They demanded, in addition to the cash payment, a 160-acre allotment for each member of their tribes.

Oldsmobile Horseless Buggies To Be Built In Quantity

Ransom E. Olds predicts he will produce and sell over 400 of his curved-dash Oldsmobiles before the year is out. The \$650 vehicle, which resembles a horseless buggy, is affordable by many middle-class families. Still, Olds cannot assume the public will prefer his experimental internal-combustion engine to a steam-driven one.

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Stock Market Takes Dive

May 9. In the largest single-day break on Wall Street since 1803, mayhem ruled today as previously rational men punched and kicked each other in the scramble to unload their plunging stocks.

Quotations started falling at about 1 p.m. By closing, some prices had crashed a full 20 points. The situation was so critical that bankers conferred late into the night to find a means to prevent total financial catastrophe. Although this plunge has been predicted by some, it caught many by surprise. All eyes had been on the phenomenal rise in

Northern Pacific stock, which gained 70 points in three days. It remained unscathed, with a net gain of 16.5 at the end of an otherwise disastrous day.

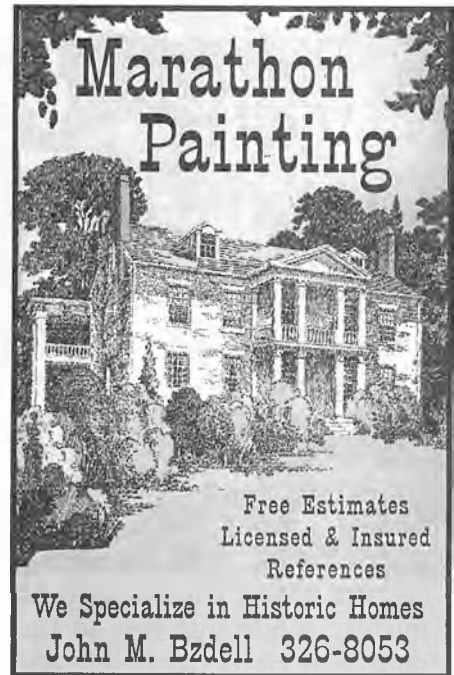
Auto Club Gets Speeding Ticket

May 11. Members of the Automobile Club of America were arrested today in Morristown, New Jersey, for breaking the speed limit. The drivers violated the posted eight-mile-an-hour ordinance during a cross-state race. Witnesses said the auto enthusiasts had reached speeds up to 30 miles per hour. When the gentlemen stopped for lunch at a local hostelry, the Morristown justice of the peace presented them with a lump fine of \$10.

Jacksonville Fire Leaves 10,000 Homeless

May 3. A defective wire at a factory in Jacksonville, Florida, is thought to have sparked the worst fire in the city's history. The fire caused about \$15 million damage and left 10,000 to 15,000 homeless.

An area two miles long by a half mile wide was razed and about 130 blocks were scorched, many in the heart of the business and residential sections of town. An estimated 1,300 houses were destroyed, along with hotels, theaters, shops and churches. Casualties could not be immediately determined. Fed by strong winds, the blaze spread so quickly that firefighters were unable to get it under control. After about ten hours, it finally burned itself out



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Memories of My Visit to the Monte Sano Hotel

by Newman Ward

Bess, my wife, and I were out riding one early Sunday morning many, many years ago and decided to go out Pratt, across Monte Sano, and back by Governor's Way. While on Monte Sano, we made our way to the Monte Sano Hotel - we had heard so much about it and were very curious about what it actually looked like.

After much calling we aroused the caretaker, who was not too crazy about showing unannounced visitors through the hotel. But after much cajoling, and a bribe of 25 cents, he let us look around.

He showed us "Memphis Row," and told us that so many people came from Memphis every year that they occupied an entire wing. This must have been before 1937 because after that I worked Sundays at the Post Office. Of course, the Hotel had been closed for some time by then, but was still standing, vacant, with only the caretaker to keep it company. It was sort of sad, actually, such a

beautiful building.

I don't remember it's being open during my lifetime. It was situated on the edge of the mountain with a breathtaking view of Huntsville. We mostly looked through the windows at the empty rooms.

I remember that Charlie Crute, the owner of the Lyric and Grand Theaters, had a house near the hotel and his daughter (Martha Fleming I think) might know more about the hotel. My mother's sister married Carlyle Patterson, and Charlie Crute married Carlyle's sister, all deceased now. I can't think of anyone else who lived up there back then, except Dr. Burritt of course, and Ernest Coe who had a hol-

lowed-out tree log that he usually slept in.

I remember the Times had written a story about Ernest Coe that was really interesting. This was probably back in the '30's.

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Abe Pizitz and Poppa

by Jim Latham

Hazel Battle was the Madam of a bordello in downtown Huntsville. It, as well as several others, were located on part of what is now the South Hall of the Von Braun Civic Center. They were all forced to vacate when Redstone Arsenal was opened.

Abe Pizitz ran a dry goods store on Jefferson Street. Abe supplied Hazel Battle with towels, sheets and garments for her ladies.

Abe's father, an Orthodox Jew from Russia, came to visit him. He wore a black suit, black hat and had a long beard.

Hazel called Abe to deliver 2 dozen thick towels. Abe had to

take his Poppa along as he had no place to leave him. Abe delivered the towels and returned to the car, but Poppa was gone! Abe could not find him anywhere. He then went back into the house where he found Poppa sitting with one of ladies of the house, in a lively conversation.

In Yiddish Abe said, "Poppa, do you know where you are?"

As the women were stroking Poppa's long beard, they said "We like him!" "Come on, Poppa, I have to get your out of here," said the son.

In Yiddish, Poppa replied, "You go on, Son, I know what I am doing!"

There will always be death and taxes; however, death doesn't get worse every year.

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My Sheltered Memories

by "Blossom Wood"

I was five years old and the year was 1966. At that time, the city of Huntsville was inching toward the mountain to the east. California Street was once the continental divide between the small town metropolis and the uncharted territories gingerly crossed by the real estate pioneers four score and some odd years prior - this area became the new suburb as the city kept pushing onward toward Fagan Springs, as if the reverberating booms of rocket testings were vibrating Hunstvillians away from its epicenter.

From the front yard of our house on Owens Drive, I could

look to the right - up the hill to the bend beyond which the big houses stood on their rocky ledge pedestals, and to the left where all the other houses that looked just like ours - fresh and new - rambled for what seemed like miles. Those clean, well-lit abodes all seemed the same, and granted, at my age I knew more about the pets that lived there than I did about the people who owned those manageable mortgages, I came to realize that each was different in a way that was permeated by voices, smells and furnishings.

It is a cliché to say that our lives were simpler then, because that is just how this era will be fondly referred to in the future, but to a five year old it is the simplicity that brought the joy. The sixties will always be, to me, the beginning of the age of manufactured happiness. Cheap, clean and simple was what was strived for and what was easily obtained. Plastic items were plentiful, and pretty things could be bought with S&H Green Stamps. A few coins in our pocket would transfer us into the most master of manipulators, with us giving our all to convince our parents for a jaunt to Murdock's for a holiday of wonderment, joy and impatience as we would scour the shelves, trying to get the most from our meager budget.

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Owens Drive was the fairly new thoroughfare from which the avenues of three-bedroom-ranchers fingered from at planned intervals. This was the place where newlyweds started their lives, homes and families. Where girls with last names that had been in the town for generations would change them to those strange and exotic last names of the clean cut newcomers brought here for military purposes. Where the housewives would preheat their pristine electric ovens, trying to make cheesestraws and biscuits that were just like their Mother's, but never were as good, and where the husbands would try their best to emulate their fathers by joining the Acme Club and hunting dove on the weekends.

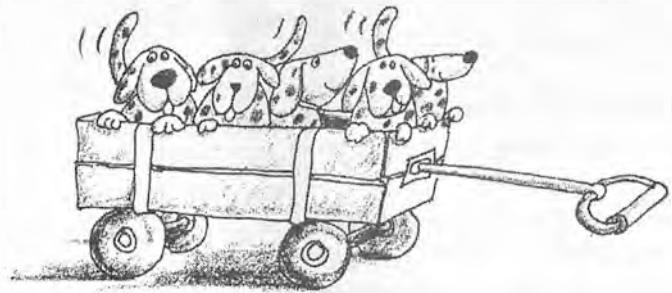
There was a swimming pool. Certainly not at our house. The only private pool I remember as a child was one that my Grandmother would take me to, nestled between huge trees at someone's house on Adams Street. I would swim with other children my age while our grandmothers chatted, smoking cigarettes in cat-eyed anonymity, whispering most of their stories so we wouldn't be able to hear. But between their gasps and laughter, we would listen, hear, and learn.

Our neighborhood pool was along side the "big ditch", a place of designated rules and the sound of bright whistles - with straight lines and distinctive colors of blue and green. I can still feel the Coppertoned oiliness on the skin of the tanned lifeguard as she car-

ried me from the deep end, frightened, after my first attempt at solo-swimming. She knew my name. I had no idea who she was.

On the other side of the "big ditch" was the school my older sister attended. It had a style that mimicked the pool - straight lines, clean - a temple to orderliness and good manners. It was with awe that I once watched the "young adults" there, some as old as eleven, wind and dance their way around a sky-high flagpole - each with a different color ribbon until the first (and only) May Pole I was privy to was completely dressed in its woven, bright colors.

In our world of red-bricked, car-ported castles, there was a definite division of generations. The children ate separately from the parents, went to playschool as our Dads went to work, entertained our neighborhood friends as quietly as possible, and felt safe between our boundaries of Big Cove Road and Hermitage Street. While we dined on our Chef Boy-Ar-Dee boxed pizza, our parents busied themselves dressing in their dark colors getting ready for a late dinner at Boots, having the scent of perfume and face powder trail my Mother as she came into the kitchen looking for something



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with an intent purpose. My father would smell of British Sterling and look just as he did when he went to work, only happier. These nights meant something fun would happen - we would have a baby sitter.

Babysitters were my introduction into what was, and still seems, cool. They were usually Huntsville High School teenage girls who would put on a show without even knowing it. I would drink in their every move, word, and essence of style. To me they were Supermodels - movie stars - even more famous in my eyes than H. D. Bagley and almost as glamorous as the waitresses at the Waffle House.

Before they would tire of me and my sister, and put us to bed, they would include us in their world of music and knowledge of which I thought was all-encompassing. Suddenly, our world of Benny Carl and Fantasy Playhouse would seem trite and passé and we would catch a fleeting glimpse into what would be in store for us when we too could wear clothes from The Snappy Turtle.

Huntsville was a magical place for us tail-end baby boomers to grow up - beyond the miracles of the escalator at Pizitz, the smiling midget on the tall stool holding court over the cash regis-

ter and balloon room at Britlings, and that bright colorful Maypole. There was a comfort level there that I'm not sure is in the minds of the five year olds of today - the soothing sheltered lack of knowledge of why we were so lucky, yet we didn't even know that we were.

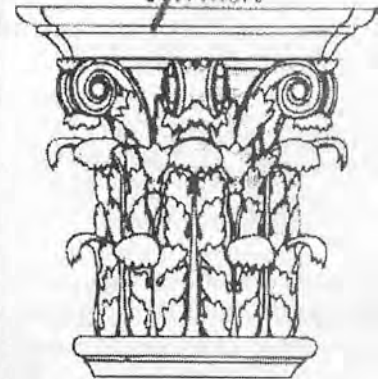
In the other areas of our Huntsville there was poverty and racial unrest - as there was, and is, in every city. I was unaware. People of color other than my own were nice and sweet to me - not only because they were compensated to be in my life, but more because they had my attention and respect. I was under the wing and ward of Arnelle, my grandmother's house was filled with the joys of Bella, and out on our farm there was strong and smiling Cletus and large and huggable Dora - all just as much a part of my life as everyone else. My life was good, and they were instrumental in making it that way.

What will the five year olds of today who are lucky enough to be raised on those well-heeled street remember when they surpass their own forty year mark? It is a much more complex world now and there are different concerns with daily changes of fear. Youthful innocence is a prize that is encased without a lock. Premature

maturity is a viable threat, and a constant fear. But tucked in tight, in the next room, sleeps tomorrow's newlyweds who are having sweet dreams - blanketed by the comforts of Blossomwood.

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John Watkins, predicting what life would be like in 100 years in the pages of the Ladies Home Journal, 1900.

"There are not enough society cream-puffs, political grafters, underworld gunmen or social morons in the land to prevent the fulfillment of. . . prohibition."

Wayne B. Wheeler, General Counsel of the Anti-Saloon League of America, September, 1925.

"Schools will be open 12 months a year [by 1982]. Courses will be speeded up; instead of a four year high school education, three-year plans may be in effect. Another variation will be staggered semesters - some students studying while others are vacationing."

Changing Times Magazine, 1957.

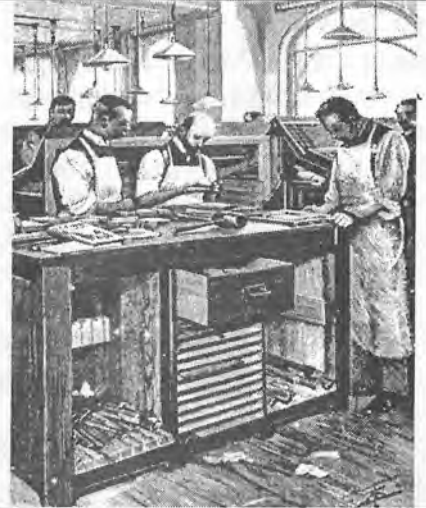
"Women beware. You are on the brink of destruction; You have hitherto been engaged in crushing your waists; now you are attempting to cultivate your mind ... Beware!! Science pronounces that the woman who studies is lost."

Dr. R. R. Coleman, late 1880s.

"I see no reason to suppose [steam locomotives] will ever force

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Reverend Thomas De Witt Talmage, on the state of medicine in 100 years, 1893.

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The Quarterly Review, 1825.

“Law will be simplified [over the next century]. Lawyers will have diminished, and their fees will have been vastly curtailed.”

Journalist Julius Henri

Browne, 1893.

“With over 50 foreign cars already on sale here, the Japanese auto industry isn't likely to carve out a big slice of the U.S. market.”

Business Week, 1979

Tom Dark Drugstore

by Jim Latham

A little boy came into Tom Dark's Drugstore on the square. Scotty, the pharmacist, asked what he could do for him. “Momma said she needed 10 cents worth of assfedia.”

Scotty got the ill-smelling drug and gave it to the boy and said, “That will be 10 cents.”

“Momma said to charge it,” the little boy claimed.

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“Hunkapillar.”

The pharmacist said, “Take it for free. It's not worth a dime for me to try to spell both assfedia and Hunkapillar.”

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Martin Luther King Slept Here

by Ben Johnson

In terms of black activism, civil rights and desegregation in Huntsville, historic events can be told from the perspective of two distinct periods. That would be "BK" and "AK."

"BK" is Before King. "AK" is After King.

That would be Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Straddling those two periods is 101 Whitney Ave. That modest house - brown brick with yellow trim, two bedrooms, a den, a kitchen and a bath - sits at the corner of Whitney Avenue and Meridian Street. A few decades from now when historians get around to labeling historic sites, 101 Whitney will rate a bronze plaque that says: "Martin Luther King Slept Here."

This is the house where King and his top lieutenant, Dr. Ralph Abernathy, stayed during King's one and only visit to the Rocket City. The stay stretched over March 19th and 20th, 1962. He came here to give a boost to the fledgling civil rights movement led by the Rev. Ezekiel Bell, then the young pastor of Fellowship Presbyterian Church. By all accounts, including Bell's, King did what was expected of him.

"We needed something, somebody to give the movement a boost," Bell recalled in a phone interview from his home in Memphis. "That's why we invited Dr. King."

Bell was pastor of Fellowship Presbyterian Church from 1959-1966. He also headed the Community Service Committee, Huntsville's anti-Jim Crow, pro-desegregation organization.

The Whitney house, purchased in 1959, served as the church's worship center for several years until a new facility was built at the church's current location, 3406 Meridian St. "We had church in every room of that

(Whitney Avenue) house except the bathroom," Bell said.

Bell, a native of Alligator, Miss., had moved to Huntsville after graduating from the Chicago Theological Seminary (1956-59). He was the valedictorian at Douglass High School in Memphis. He did his undergraduate studies in history at Tennessee State University (1953-56) finishing in two years and nine months.

The Whitney house served as

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the church's parsonage, where Bell lived with his wife, Eltie Mae. Two of their three sons, Fred and John, were born while they lived there. (The third son, Philip Ezekiel was born in Memphis.) The church's charter members include Edward Hill, Norman Fletcher, James Crawford and Mrs. Tommie Bradford and her family.

"The movement was getting in high gear when we asked him to come over" from Atlanta where King had started the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Bell said.

He added, "When Dr. King came to town, he and Dr. Abernathy slept in our children's room. We slept in our bedroom and put the children in there with us. This was done because there were no hotel accommodations for blacks."

During King's overnight stay, "men of the community stood guard when Dr. King and Dr. Abernathy were our guests," Bell said. "They surrounded the house and kept it surrounded all night. We didn't have any problems." The guards included Willie Brownlee, Charles Briggans, Norman Fletcher, Edwin Hill and Dr.

George Jones, as well as the late Samuel Sanders.

During King's and Abernathy's stay, they talked about civil rights and politics with Bell and his wife. The next morning Bell and his wife had breakfast in the kitchen. "We had bacon, eggs and grits," Bell said. "They ate up all the bacon and eggs we had. They both had very good appetites, especially Abernathy."

"We talked, of course, about our families," Bell said. "We talked about the conditions of America and that we had a long way to go. But they agreed we were going to make it. It would be a rough road but we were going to make it."

King and Abernathy weren't the only celebrities to grace 101 Whitney. Civil rights leaders Dr. Mordecai Johnson and C.T.

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Vivian and Andrew Young (later to be United Nations ambassador in President Carter's administration) "all would be guests of ours at that house," Bell said. "That, again, was because of public accommodations."

Bell remembered those days with fondness. Most mass meetings were held at First Missionary Baptist Church, then located on Church Street and headed by the Rev. Horace Snodgrass.

"Most ministers were supportive in terms of contributions and making their churches available for meetings," Bell remembered. "I'm sure there were some ministers who didn't participate. But they all spoke up in favor of having the meeting. They all participated in marches and a few of us went to jail."

The house now is the rental home (\$375 monthly charged by its current owner, a black female lawyer) of a black Huntsville couple and their two children.

As for the AK period that continues on, Bell said King did his job in helping change Huntsville racial climate.

"Things really picked up after he came," Bell said. "People really started participating (in the movement)."

"We always could depend on the students," he added. A lot more of them started coming. They really didn't have anything to lose. Before King, the adults

were very supportive, giving donations and some of them even marched. I don't know of any faculty members who marched. There may have been. But after King, things picked up even more."

By the end of the next year (1963) segregation barriers had tumbled down. Seemingly everything opened up: lunchroom counters, bus stations, hotels, motels, drinking fountains, toilets. Public accommodations, all.

"Dr. King's visit... was sort of the grand coming out, an anti-climax before things were really opened," Bell said.

"Nothing has occurred like that in Huntsville since."

Chinese Proverb: "War does not determine who is right, war determines who is left."

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OLD NEWS

From the Year 1886

- Two days ago the "stick-ring-ing" man took possession of the corner of Randolph St. and the square, and he has done a thriving business. Yesterday the "Electric Shock Battery" man installed himself on the other corner and his machine attracted a large crowd all day long.

- In the case of H. W. Binder, the man who placed a cross tie on the track of the M & C Railway, three miles below the city; it was yesterday decided by Judge Richardson to send him to the State Lunatic Asylum at Tuscaloosa.

Binder, it will be remembered, was the party who attempted to hew down the flag staff at the National Cemetery in Chattanooga, and also raised considerable Cain at the engine room of the Bell Factory a while ago.

- For rent - The valuable plantations belonging to the Estate of the late Josiah Springer, deceased. Apply to Allen R. Campbell, Lawrence Cooper

- Yesterday while Mack Keenar, colored, was cleaning out a hog pen at the Fair Grounds, the vicious occupant of the pen made a savage attack upon him, terri-

bly lacerating his thigh.

Dr. S. H. Lowry was at hand, and he attended to the wounded man. We understand the wound is quite serious, although at last accounts the wounded person is resting comfortably.

- Judge Richardson has received warrants for amounts appropriated to disabled Confederate soldiers by the last legislature, and by calling at the Probate Judge's office, they will be paid.

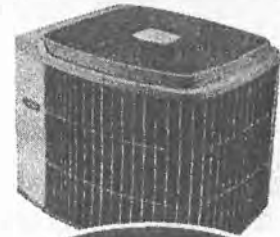
- Messrs. Cooper and Lovett have supplied the State Normal School with one of their elegant Everett Grand Pianos. If this house keeps on moving pianos at the rate they are doing, most every family and Institute of learning in North Alabama will be supplied with this piano.

Writers

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News From New Market

(Editor's Note: In the late 1800's, 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 fourth of a series of articles based on the contents of those eight-page weekly tabloid newspapers.)

by Waylon Smithey Volume I, No. 6, July 28, 1888

Someone broke into the railroad depot through a window and took three or four boxes from a drummer's case. The railroad agent, J.B. Andrews, also "lost a very fine and highly prized razor and strap."

Page 1 News Briefs:

"A few of our citizens had the

pleasure of witnessing the grand eclipse of the moon on the night of the 23d inst."

"Rev. R.T. Blackwell delivered an earnest discourse to an attentive audience at the M.E. church at 8 p.m. Sunday, from James 3:2: "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man,

and able also to bridle the whole body."

"Master Willie Cochran handed into this office Wednesday an ear of corn which measured, 11-3/4 inches in circumference and seven inches long. Nine developed ears lie around the parent one with well-matured grains."

Also from Page 1:

"There are but few men that can say as much as a citizen of this place, Mr. Joseph Pike, who is 77 years old, and who cultivated crops of corn and cotton this year. He never was drunk; never chewed a squid of tobacco, not smoked in his life. Judging from the general use of cigarettes, there are but few boys clear of the injurious habit."

It was reported that townsman Thos. Nichols had an unusual ex-

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perience on one of his fishing excursions. "After landing four fine game fish, stringing them and staking them to the bank of the stream, he absented himself for a time. On his return he found that three of his fish had been taken and a pair of spectacles left in exchange for them. He says he would have demanded good boot had he been allowed a voice in the trade, as the glasses are too old for so young and aspiring a man as he is."

This note from the Plevna correspondent: "Crops still promising and farmers cheerful. Shipping timber and finishing up our threshing is the principal work going on here, except those who are harvesting their extra fine crops of millet hay."

Under the heading "New Market, Its Location and Surroundings," the newspaper gave a detailed report on what the community offered:

"Business is not surpassed by any place of its size. The merchants are young, live and pro-

gressive business men of experience and vigilance. There are seven dry goods and general merchandise houses, one drug store, saddle and harness shop, two shoe shops, blacksmith and wood working shops, a good hotel, printing office, etc. While there is no regular bank, there are brokers that do a good business. The monetary facilities are aided by an express office and money order post-office.

"The Baptists, Methodists and Cumberland Presbyterians have good, nice houses, with regular service, and maintain good Sabbath-schools. There is also a Primitive Baptist church near the town, and country churches of the various denominations every three or four miles. There is a good high school in the place with a corps of efficient teachers, with several good country schools in the township.

"The country is sufficiently undulating to drain itself without the use of tiling. It is adapted to the growth of cotton, corn, small grain and the grasses. It is one of the most fertile portions of North Alabama. The land has a red clay foundation, and is susceptible of receiving and permanent retaining fertilizers. Where barn-yard

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fertilizers have been used the result has been highly satisfactory. Very little commercial fertilizers have been used (except guano for cotton) but with good results.

"The annual cotton shipment is from five hundred to eight hundred bales. Plenty of corn is produced for home consumption and some for shipment. While wheat is not grown for the market, yet from ten to twenty bushels per acre were harvested this year, and if proper attention was given to its cultivation a much larger yield could be attained.

"Timber is abundant and of superior quality for building and agricultural uses - the finest white oak for wagons, plows, etc.; and unlimited amount of mountain white ash, for agricultural implements; vast groves of second-growth hickory for all kinds of handles and spokes; thousands of acres of post-oak, suitable for hubs; an inexhaustible supply of cedar for pencils, hollow-ware, telegraph poles and fencing posts; walnut, cherry and gum, for furniture, with bass and many other kinds of timber.

"There have been shipped from here within the last six months one hundred car loads of timber and over fifty car loads are now awaiting shipment.

"Minerals of various kinds are

found, both in the mountains and on the table-lands. The iron-ore in the table-lands is brown hematite, varying in physical structure, but mostly laminated and granular in formation; in color from a light to a dark brown. Copper ore and outcroppings of coal are also found in the table-lands. In the mountain stratas dark brown and black hematite are found from six to fifteen feet thick; great boulders, weighing many tons, have broken from the ledges and are strewn along the mountain sides. Stratas of fine coal, from two to six feet, crop out of the mountain side. Good lead has also been mined.

"Located, as it is, on the table-lands of the Cumberland, it is free from all noxious effluvia, hence free from epidemics that infect the low lands. Being above the malarial point, chills and malarial fevers are very rare. There is, four miles west of this place, one of the finest watering places in the State - red and white sulphur and chalybeate waters; also some fine mineral springs on the mountains but a short distance from the place. "It is as fine a fruit country as can be found, north or south. All varieties of fruits, except tropical or semi-tropical, grow here. Peaches measuring eleven inches in circumference have been brought to *The Enterprise* office

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this season. The peach crop never fails on the mountains. Grapes and berries grow luxuriantly and of the most luscious flavor.

"There has been but little attention given to pasturage and stock-raising, yet it would be equal to any place for stock-raising. Good native grasses afford fine pasturage. The mild winters here obviate the absolute necessity of housing cattle, hence requires less feed. If the land was seeded to the right kind of grasses stock would not need dry feed more than three months in the year. A few car loads of beeves are shipped from here annually and have proven profitable, as the land is cheap. Land ranges in price from \$8 to \$25 per acre.

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from 1911 newspaper

Gurley, Ala - Four years ago a 10-year old daughter of Thomas Sanford, near Gurley, swallowed a cockle-burr that lodged in her windpipe. Physicians said it could not be removed without endangering her life. An orifice was made in her throat and a tube inserted through which she has breathed ever since. When talking, in order to articulate distinctly, she would place her finger over the tube. She has had splendid health until recently, when she took measles

and also had pneumonia. Yesterday, while coughing violently, she dislodged the burr.

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The Pioneers

The following account of Huntsville's early days was written in the late 1800s by Judge Thomas J. Taylor, a probate judge of Madison County from 1886 until 1894.

As more settlers moved into what we know today as Madison County, they were greeted by a vast untamed wilderness. From the year 1805 to 1809 transportation of supplies of all kinds was laborious and difficult and what few supplies did come into the county were often so expensive as to be out of the reach of the common settler. Forced to do without many of these necessities, the pioneers had to improvise.

During the first year, far from other settlements, they had to bring corn and salt on pack horses through the wilderness. The first settlers in Madison County had no mills for bread nearer than the neighborhood of Winchester. In those days this involved a tedious journey, and frequently the settlers would be without bread or salt for many days, subsisting on jerked venison.


The first priority for every new

settler, after building a shelter, was to plant and cultivate a corn patch and raise corn for bread. There were no mills convenient for the first two or three years, and each family constructed a hominy mortar by burning or digging out a large bowl in the end of a large piece of hard, tough timber, in which they pounded their corn by the use of a large pestle worked by a sweep. Many families living at a great distance from mills subsisted for many years on bread pounded in these mortars.

Clean wood ashes were easily procured, and after they raised a corn crop, lye-hominy was a favorite substitute for bread. Bread from wheat flour was seldom seen, as the roads to Tennessee and Virginia were not yet opened. For many years little or no wheat was raised in the county.

When the county had largely increased in population, flour was brought down the Tennessee River in considerable quantity, and Ditto's Landing was the rendezvous for the flatboats that supplied the area. A flour inspector was appointed at the landing to inspect, grade, and stamp the flour offered for sale.

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Parched corn was the portable food of the explorer and hunter, on which, together with the game found in the forest, they were able to live for long periods of time during their hunting and exploring excursions. They had great abundance of meat and a variety of fish, flesh or fowl, but were frequently without salt, which first was brought from Nashville on flatboats, then over the roads in wagons.

After boats were used in carrying cotton down the Paint Rock and Flint rivers, salt was frequently brought back, though it was hard work propelling the loaded boats against the current.

Iron was scarce and expensive, and many of the first houses built did not have a particle of iron used in their construction. The doors swung on wooden hinges and were fastened, if fastened at all, with wooden locks. The floors of the rooms were dirt or made of puncheons; the boards were laid on the roof and held fast by weight poles laid on each course, the lowest pole pegged down and the others separated and kept in position by timber pieces between them.

The settlers dug their bread trays and turned bowls and tableware out of the buckeye, basswood, and other soft timber, but some of the more pretentious made a display of pewter table service.

China and delphware were not in use, and the neat housewives scoured their pewter plates until they shone like silver and set them edgewise on shelves. The tinkers, pliers of a profession now obsolete, traveled from house to house, repaired and mended the family pewter, and received in payment a little money and a great deal of barter in the way of family supplies.

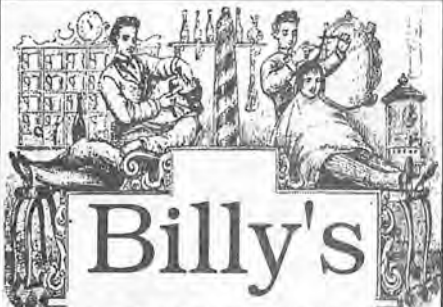
At first they depended on game for a supply of meat which was shot or trapped, and in every family were two or three good steel traps. In hunting, the old-fashioned long rifle with flint lock was the universal weapon and as lead was essential they never wasted it and generally managed to keep a supply.

Powder was also scarce and dear, but the settlers, when they could not buy it, were equal to the emergency. Sulphur was easily procured and they constructed hoppers in the mountain caves and made saltpetre. They burned willow for charcoal and made gunpowder. Though it may not have been as good and reliable as that made at the present time, yet it answered their purpose.

These men were expert in the use of the rifle, and it was not considered an extraordinary feat to bring down a deer at full speed at

a distance of seventy-five or eighty yards.

When our forefathers located in this county, they depended largely on dressed buckskin for clothing. From it they made covering for their beds, garments of every description, moccasins, sacks and hunting pouches, and it was cut into thongs for sewing purposes and twisted into ropes. Many of the families had flax wheels, and with the flax, made



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cloth from it of excellent quality. Cotton was soon introduced, patches were planted for spinning purposes, and the old spinning wheel and cards, the loom and winding-blades and reel soon became common in every settler's house.

As there were no gins to clean the cotton, the family in the long winter evenings would pile it before the fire and all hands would clear it of the seed by picking them out with their fingers. In this way they would prepare enough of the snowy fabric for a year's supply for the wheels and looms of the family.

Suspended from pegs inserted in the walls of the room were usually to be seen bunches of "shanks" of homespun thread ready for warping, bars, and loom. The cloth made from this material was of a coarse nature and well-suited to the rough wear to which it was exposed.

From the bark of various forest trees and by the use of copperas and indigo the cloth was dyed in a variety of colors. Calico was almost unknown and was worth fifty cents a yard, much too expensive for the average settler.

House furniture was of the rudest character. Shelves were used for cupboards, their dining tables were made of puncheons. Their cabins were without glass in the windows, and cooking utensils were few in number. Tallow and rosin and beeswax furnished them light. First they used bear's grease in their lamps, which were homemade, but when cattle became common they had moulded or dipped tallow candles with a cotton wick.

In summer they retired early and seldom used a light except in sickness. In some places they would construct a cotton wick fifteen or twenty feet long, dip it in

beeswax and rosin and wind it round a corn cob, making a taper that lasted for a long time. In those primitive times houses were generally small and families generally large, and they generally managed to divide sleeping spaces when it was time to retire by the use of curtains of buckskin. The little children were stowed randomly about on pallets on the floor, while the larger boys would normally sleep in the loft.

Such were the lives of our ancestors, apparently full of privation and hardships, yet they were a cheerful and contented lot who managed to carve their homes out of the wilderness and leave a great legacy behind them.

**"A verbal contract isn't worth the paper it's written on."
Samuel Goldwyn**

Famous Birthdays in March

- 1 - Dinah Shore
- 1 - Booker T. Washington
- 2 - Jean Harlow
- 5 - Nikki Taylor
- 6 - Shaquille O'Neal
- 7 - Tammy Faye Baker
- 10 - Sharon Stone
- 12 - James Taylor
- 14 - Albert Einstein
- 17 - Clarence Scott
- 18 - Charlie Pride
- 23 - Werner Von Braun
- 24 - Harry Houdini
- 25 - Aretha Franklin
- 26 - Tennessee Williams
- 27 - Mariah Carey
- 28 - Reba McEntire
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The Genius

John W. Hanner, a staff writer for the *Brooklyn Gazette*, while visiting Alabama in 1847, wrote a story about a slave in Huntsville who belonged to a Mr. McLemore. The slave had been born on the place where he lived, but had never traveled more than a half-mile away from home.

Apparently, the slave was born retarded, but had become a favorite of his master. Although able to perform simple chores, the man was unable to care for himself. He slept in the main house, where someone could watch over him.

Mr. Hanner described the slave as a very large, but calm, person who was never known to tell a lie. His voice was low and his enunciation slurred. He never became angry or excited about any of the ordinary things of life. Like all other slaves at that time, he was unable to read or write.

What made the slave so unusual was the fact that he was a mathematical genius. The man did not know one figure or letter from another, but was able to add, subtract, multiply, and work complicated mathematical problems in his mind faster than most people could on paper.

Word of his unusual ability spread and before long he became a local celebrity. The Rev. John C. Burruss and Thomas Brandon, prominent men in the early days of Madison County, heard of the strange slave and decided to see for themselves.

Some of the questions used in testing the slave were as follows:

"How much is 99 times 99?"

Answer: "9,801."

"How much is 74 times 86-1/2?"

Answer: "6,401."

"How many 9's are there in 2000?"

Answer: "222 with 2 over."

"How much is 321 times 789?"

"253,269."

"How much is 7 times 9,223?"

Two-second pause. "64,561."

"How much is 3,333 times 5,555?"

This was the only question that seemed to stump the slave. He pulled at his clothing, wrung his hands, sucked his thumb and then ran out of the house into the yard where he began skipping and leaping into the air.

Satisfied that they had finally been able to best the slave genius, Burruss and Brandon were about to leave when the slave ran back into the room.

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"18,514,815," he shouted to the bewildered guests.

A week later he was able to recall to the men what the last problem, asked him on that day, had been. He never had an explanation as to how he arrived at the answers, stating only, "I studies it up!"

When word of the slave's uncanny mathematical gift begin to spread, his master was besieged by requests from people wanting more information. One group of learned professors from Nashville spent three days with him in an effort to prove trickery. All attempts failed as the slave answered each question correctly.

Finally, in a last effort to discredit him, one of the professors asked how many stars were in the universe. The slave jumped up, ran out of the room and never returned. Almost an hour later the professor found him hiding behind a woodshed.

"You don't know the answer!" exclaimed the jubilant professor.

"Yes sir, I knows the answer ... there jest ain't no word for a number that big."

No one knows whatever happened to the slave who was a mathematical genius. Years later, people could not even remember his name and he became just another footnote in Huntsville's history.

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The hardest years in life
 are those between ten
 and seventy.
Helen Hayes

Mr. Brooks

by Jim Latham

A woman came into Brooks and Collier and told Mr. Brooks that she wanted 2 pounds of chicken laying mash. He started weighing it up in a bag, when she said, "Are you going to charge me for the bag?" He said, "No, just hold out your hand."

"Please don't misconstrue my 14 jobs as "job-hopping" - I have NEVER quit a job."

Taken from local resume

Information Needed

Looking for information concerning Ernest Coe, also known as the hermit of Monte Sano Mountain, who supposedly lived in a hollowed log during the 1920s.

Also looking for information about a group of foreign spies who were captured/exposed here during 1958 when they were supposedly spying on the rocket program. Some of the spies lived in what is now Old Town.

If you have any knowledge of these stories, please call Old Huntsville at 534-0502.

Tips For Spring Cleaning



With EnviroSafe

As the weather gets warmer some start to look to the pro's for help with spring cleaning. As a home owner it is your right to know what they use. Not all chemicals are safe for your home or the environment. One of the most common chemicals is bleach. Bleach does not really clean, it bleaches. Bleach also breaks down many surfaces like wood, roof shingles, vinyl siding and outside paints. Also note Sodium Hypo Chloride is the base for bleach. Some other harmful chemicals to look for are: Potassium Hydroxide, Sodium Hydroxide, Muratic Acid, ANY degreaser on roofs, and any form of caustic soda.

EnvroSafe uses an enzyme based cleaner that is totally tested and safe. We think this is the best way, but to be fair there are other safe methods and other good cleaning companies in Huntsville. We hope the above information helps you choose the right cleaner for you. If any questions feel free to call.

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The Rebel Yankee

Major Sweinhart was a member of an Ohio volunteer regiment and had participated in some of the bloodiest fighting of the war. While stationed in Alabama, he was captivated by the warm climate and the natural beauty of the Tennessee Valley.

When the war was finally over and the soldiers had stacked arms for the last time, Major Sweinhart moved to Huntsville, determined to make it his home.

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

But time has a way of healing all wounds and as the Major grew into old age, he began taking his place on the old courthouse bench, reliving and refighting the battles of his youth.

In 1927, Major Sweinhart was awarded the highest accolade ever given to a Yankee by Confederate veterans. The story can best be told by a newspaper article of the day:

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

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

in thought, rose and stood at attention.

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

long to you."

"The Confederate veterans gave a hearty cheer, and one of them proposed Major Sweinhart for membership. The proposal was accepted immediately."



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Home Tips

by Liz

If you store your patio umbrella in one leg of a pair of panty hose, this keeps it together and allows it to breath.

To clean silver: in a tin pie plate mix 1 tablespoon water softener, 1 tablespoon salt and 1 1/2 cup hot water. Add your silver and watch the change.

A piece of orange rind in your morning coffee cup lends a good, but subtle, flavor

Place jars of sticky food such as molasses or jelly on plastic lids in your pantry to avoid sticky messes.

A good air freshener is to combine 1/4 cup orange rind (use vegetable peeler for large pieces) with 1 cup of coffee beans (hazelnut is good) in a Ziploc bag. Let alone for a day or so, then open bag and place in small saucers throughout your home.

To get odors out of your plastic containers, crumple up pieces

of newspaper to put inside the container, add top and leave for a few days.

Shaving cream rubbed onto your eyeglasses will keep them from fogging up

Make your own superfine sugar by whirling regular sugar in a blender or clean coffee grinder.

Have a bad water ring on your wooden table? Simply coat the stain with a thin layer of mayonnaise to remove

Many of your old wall clocks have quit working. To get them going again, use a couple of cotton balls soaked in kerosene, placed inside the clock near the works, to fume away the dust and muck.

Keep a pair of scissors in your kitchen drawer for quick opening of packages, boxes, etc.

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Local News From 1911

- Pick Roden, the king of moon shiners of Marshall county, was yesterday sentenced to five years in the penitentiary and fined \$700.

- For sale - my residence on Walker street, or will exchange for farm property. Price reasonable. Apply to Robt. L. Adair, care of Henderson National bank

- Lost - Pair kid gloves at the Elks building during dance Tuesday evening. Finder phone 418 or return to Miss Donnie Dillard.

- For rent - two cozy little bedrooms at reasonable prices. Gentlemen preferred. Mrs. James Lines, 207 East Holmes St.

- For sale - a secondhand 2 horse wagon in good running order; also 2 sets double harness. Apply to Mrs. S. E. Sibley, east Randolph St., opposite Butler's school.

- For rent - 7 room modern cottage on Walker Street - apply to J. N. Mazza

- Wanted - a good nurse and house keeper. \$10 a month in addition to board and room.

- For rent - my residence on Adams Ave. - furnished or unfurnished. Possession given at once. For terms apply to Mrs. Chas. P. Lane

- For rent - two upstairs rooms or one large room down stairs. Suitable for light housekeeping within a short distance of the square. Apply to 314 Randolph St.

- The Queens Daughters of St. Mary's Catholic Church will have their regular market at De Stefano's store Saturday. The menu will consist of Lady Baltimore, Grand Duke, Caramel and

Pineapple cakes. Also available will be snow balls, mince meat pies, salt rising bread, light bread, beaten biscuit and home made Italian spaghetti. They would be pleased to have you call.

- For Sale - the brick residence now occupied by Mrs. George White on Adams Ave. Anyone interested is at liberty to call and examine the place.

- Mr. Knott had to pull a Huntsville-bound auto out of the Mill Creek at Fisk Friday morning. Water too deep.

- Will Land, aged 15 years old, died at the Lowe Village yesterday evening at 6 o'clock. The remains were carried to Hurricane for burial. The deceased leaves a widow.



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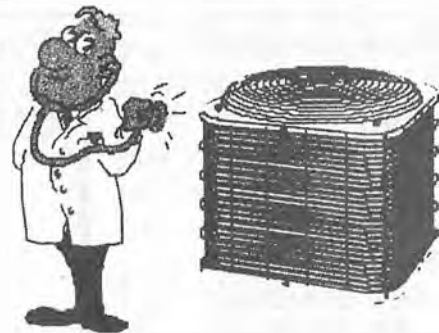
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The Diary of John Beatty

April 4, 1862 - As we approach the Alabama line we find fewer, but handsomer houses; larger plantations, and negroes more numerous.

April 9 - Moved at six O'clock this morning. Roads sloppy, and in many places overflowed. Marched sixteen miles.

April 15 - Resumed march 'at six this morning. Passed the plantation of Leonidas Polk Walker. He is said to be the wealthiest man in North Alabama. His domain extends for fifteen miles along the road. Reached Huntsville at 5 in the afternoon.

April 20 - At Decatur. The town is as ugly as Huntsville is handsome. There is a cane brake near the camp, and every soldier in the regiment has provided himself with a fishing rod.

April 24 - Our forces are on the alert. Before leaving this place, the rebels built a cotton fort, using in its construction probably five hundred bales of

May 2 - Took the cars for Huntsville. At Paint Rock the cars were fired upon, and six or eight men wounded. I had the train stopped and taking a file of soldiers, returned to the village. The telegraph line had been cut, and the wire was lying in the streets.

Calling the citizens together, I said to them that this bushwhacking must cease. Here after every time the telegraph wire was cut we would burn a house; every time a train was fired upon we would hang a man; and we would continue to do this until every house was burned and every man hung between Decatur and Bridgeport.

I then set fire to the town, took three citizens with me, returned to the train and proceeded to Huntsville.

May 10 - Have been appointed President of a Board of

Administration for the post of Huntsville. After an ineffectual effort to get the members together, I concluded to spend a day out of camp, so I strolled over to the hotel, took a bath, ate dinner,

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smoked, read, and slept until supper time.

May 16 - Appointed Provost Marshal of the city. Have been busy hearing all sorts of complaints, signing passes, sending guards to this and that place in the city.

May 23 - The women are outspoken in their hostility. A flag of truce came in last night from Chattanooga, and the bearers were overwhelmed by favors and visits from the ladies.

July 3 - It is exceedingly dull; we are resting as quietly and leisurely as we would at home. There are no drills. Tomorrow is the Fourth.

July 7 - Am detailed to serve

on court martial. The first case to be tried is that of Colonel J.B. Turchin.

July 14 - Turchin's brigade has stolen a hundred thousand dollars worth of watches, plate, and jewelry, in Northern Alabama.

August 3 - The gentlemen of the South have a great fondness for jewelry, canes, cigars, and dogs. White men rarely work here. Judging from the number of stores and present stocks, Huntsville, in better times, does a heavier retail jewelry business than Cleveland or Columbus. Diamonds, rings, gold watches, chains and bracelets are to be found in every family. The negroes buy large amounts of cheap jewelry, and the trade in this branch is enormous. One may walk a whole day in a Northern city without seeing a ruffled shirt. Here they are very common.

August 7 - General McCook was murdered near Winchester, yesterday by a small band of guerillas. When the Dutchmen of his old regiment learned of the unfortunate occurrence, they became uncontrollable, and destroyed the building and property on five plantations near the scene of the murder.



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Weird and Strange News

- When his 38-caliber revolver failed to fire at its intended victim during a holdup in Detroit, Mi. the would-be robber James Elliot did something that made sense to him at the time: He peered down the barrel and tried the trigger again - this time it worked.

- A teenager in Mississippi was in the hospital recovering from serious head wounds received from an oncoming train. When asked how he had received the injuries, he told police that he was simply trying to see how close he could get to a moving train.

- A man in New Jersey shoveled snow for an hour to clear a space for his car to park during a blizzard. When he returned with his car to park it, he found a woman had taken his space. It was reported that he fired a gun into the car she was sitting in.

- The chef at a famous hotel in Switzerland lost a finger in a meat cutting machine and, after hopping around for some time, submitted a claim to his insurance company. The company suspected negligence and sent out one of its agents to get a closer look. He tried the machine, and promptly lost his finger. The chef's claim was finally, to no one's surprise, approved.

- There were worse inventions than the Amphicar. The U.S. Army once spent \$200 million for 1400 "Gamma Goat" amphibious trucks that were incapable of floating. Their performance on land was bad enough as they frequently broke down, but in water they sank like rocks.

Encounter with a Sting Ray

from 1896 newspaper

Maj. Sheffield, of this town, was on crutches the other day receiving the congratulations of his friends, stating that he felt first rate and hoped to be able to throw his "wooden legs" away in short while. While in Mobile, at the beaches, he waded into the water and had an encounter with a sting ray.

The fish was about a yard wide, and the sting penetrated his leg about three inches. He was about 200 yards from the shore at the time.

Knowing himself hurt, he got back to shore as soon as possible. About halfway there the poison began to pass through his system, and the pain became terrible. When the stinger was pulled out it left a hole an inch wide.

"Ordinarily," said the major, "a little whisky affects me very quickly, but on this occasion I drank over a pint of whisky - maybe a quart - and swallowed two doses of morphine, and all of it had no more effect than so much water."

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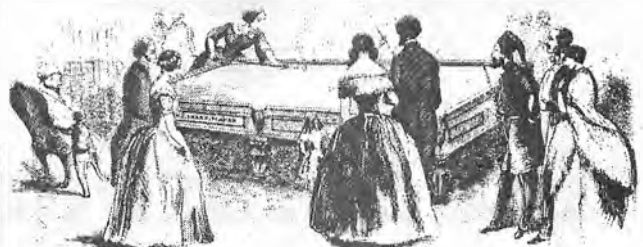
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