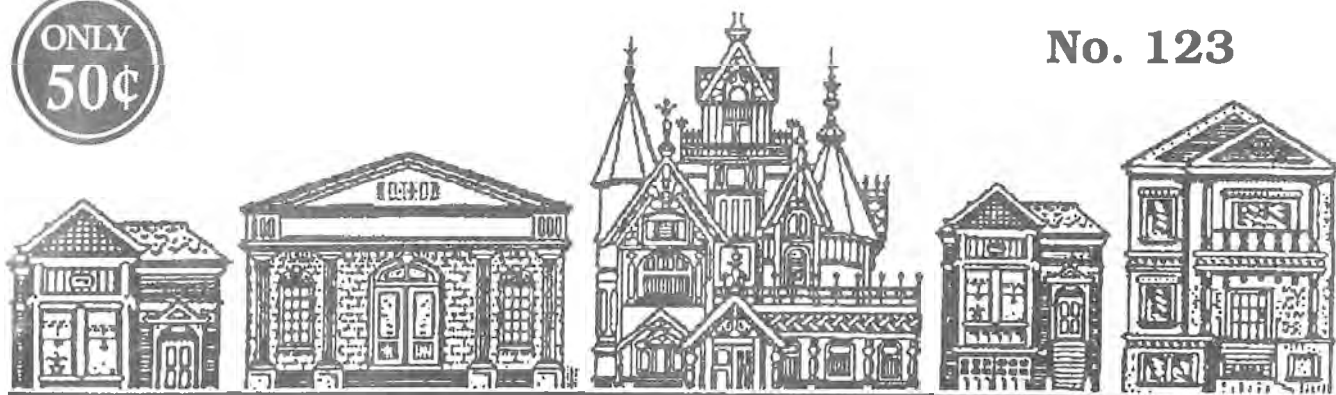


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# Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY



## Victoria Price

She was described as a promiscuous, hard drinking, hard swearing daughter of a Huntsville widow who lived in the mill village. She made love in box cars and fields, slept in hobo jungles and rode the rails in a pair of ragged overalls.

She was also a liar, whose testimony helped send a group of young black men to jail where they would spend a total of over 50 years trying to prove their innocence.

Also in this issue: Old Huntsville Legends

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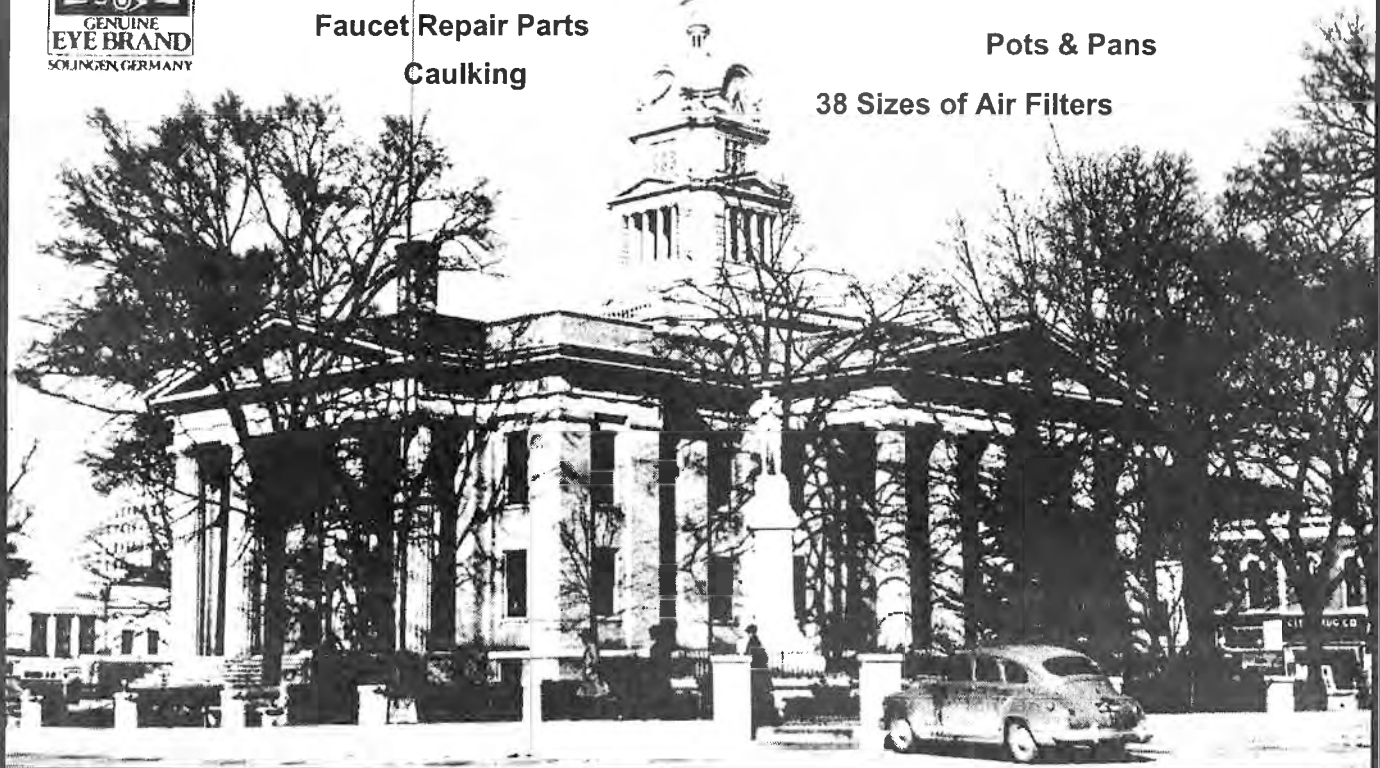
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# Old Timer's Sale



# Victoria Price

"We was just poor working girls. We had got laid off at Margaret Mills and there weren't no work here in town so we caught a freight to Chattanooga to look for work. We spent the night in a boarding house and the next day caught another freight back to Huntsville. While we were on the train these black boys got in a fight with some white boys on the train and threw them off. Then they started waving knives and a gun. There was nine of them and one of them held a gun on me. Anyway, they held us down and took turns ravishing us. I hope they all burn for what they did to me."

With these words, Victoria Price and Ruby Bates sat in motion a chain of events that would have world-wide repercussions. The case, known as the "Scottsboro Boys Case," would become the most notorious, and shameful, series of trials ever held in Alabama.

By most accounts, Victoria was a good-looking girl. She was raised in the cotton mill villages where she first went to work at the age of thirteen. The victim of a drunken father who beat her mother, Victoria married when

she was only fifteen. The marriage didn't last very long once she found out that her new husband was addicted to drinking "canned heat." The second husband, a year later, "just kind of drifted away."

By the time Victoria was in her late 'teens she had become known as a hard-drinking, devil-may-care woman to whom casual sex meant as much as a friendly handshake. Ben Giles, sheriff of Madison County, would later describe her as a "quiet prostitute who didn't bother nobody, so we didn't bother her much."

If Victoria had one weakness, most people would agree it was married men. Single men, she could take her pick of, but a married man was a challenge.

It was in early November, 1930, when Victoria first met Jack Tiller. He was a handsome, well built, hard-drinking and hard living guy. He was the type of man that Willie Nelson would sing country ballads about today - and he was married.

Within a week they were living together. Both Jack and Victoria had been laid off at Margaret Mills, and in the true American spirit, they decided to become entrepreneurs.

The section of the mill village they lived in was known for its gambling dives, houses of prostitution and bootleggers, so it was no surprise to anyone when



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Huntsville, Ala. 35801  
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they opened up their own "shot house."

Things seemed to be peaceful for a while until Jack, always a ladies' man, began to cast his eyes elsewhere. Coming home one night, under the influence, Jack was met at the door by a screaming Victoria waving a butcher knife. "If I can't have you, no one else will!"

Jack settled the argument by locking her in the coal shed until she calmed down.

It wasn't long before everyone realized Victoria had met her match. She still liked to drink, raise hell, and even have a couple of sugar-daddies on the side, only now she was careful not to let Jack know. One elderly person still living in Huntsville recalls, "It was kind of sad. That girl wanted to be in love only she didn't know how, And Jack ... well, he liked her all right, but he liked all the girls all right."

With all the screaming and fighting going on, it wasn't long before Jack and Victoria had come under the scrutiny of the Huntsville police department. Our fair city was undergoing one of its periodic "cleansings," and the H.P.D., after raiding their home and not finding any evidence of bootlegging or prostitution, decided to arrest Jack and Victoria on the charges of "Adultery."

Jack and Victoria were both given sentences of ninety days "at hard labor."

While in jail, Jack befriended a young vagrant by the name of Lester Carter. Lester didn't have a girlfriend, so Jack promised to have Victoria "fix him up" with one of her friends once they were released.

After getting out of jail Jack made arrangements to meet Victoria and her friend, Ruby Bates, the next evening at the entrance gate to Margaret Mills and introduce Lester. After stopping at a shot house and having a few drinks, Victoria suggested going someplace where they could have some privacy. Slightly tipsy, the two couples made their way to a group of trees located next to the railroad tracks known to locals as a "hobo jungle."

As Lester would later testify, "I hung my hat on a limb and went about doing it with Ruby Bates while Jack was doing the same with Victoria Price." During the night, their love-making was interrupted by a rain-shower. Getting up from the honeysuckle bushes, the four sought shelter in an empty railway car where they continued drinking and carousing.

No one knows how the argument began, but sometime during the early morning hours Jack and Victoria got into one of their legendary fights. "I'm tired of this whole damn city," Victoria cried. "I'm leaving and if you don't want to come - the hell with you!"

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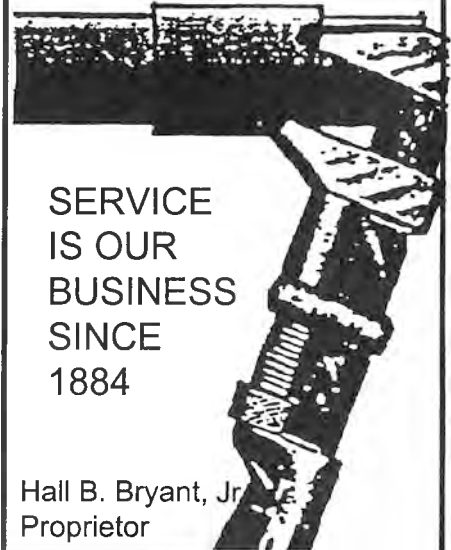


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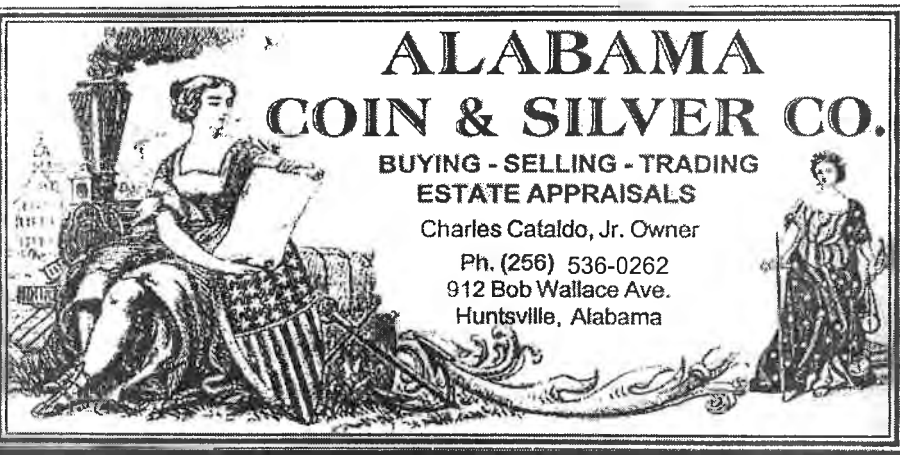
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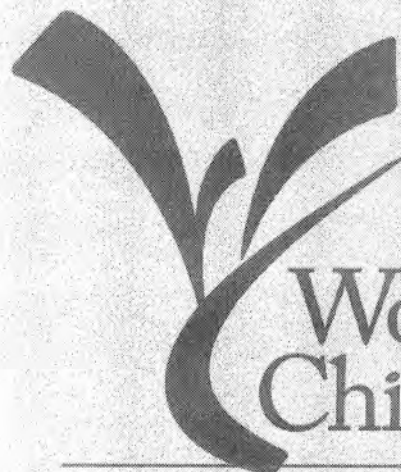
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Jack, by now, was tired of arguing. "Go on," he said. "I'll meet you in a few days."

After just getting out of jail for adultery, there was no way he was going to cross the state line with her.

Victoria was furious. If Jack wasn't going, she would go by herself, just to prove her point. That afternoon Victoria Price, Ruby Bates and Lester Carter met in the train yards and hopped a freight to Chattanooga. After spending only one day in the city Victoria talked Ruby into heading back to Huntsville, where she hoped Jack would be waiting.

As the train approached Paint Rock, Alabama, it began slowing down. Lining the track on both sides were armed men, flagging the train down and ordering everybody off.

No one can say for certain what was going through the girls'

minds, but we can be sure they were aware they were breaking the law and could be arrested for "hoboing" and vagrancy. And Victoria also knew that if she got locked up, Jack might find himself another girlfriend.

One of the posse members told the two girls to have a seat under some nearby trees. Sitting there, the girls watched as the armed men took nine black males, who had also been on the train, into custody. A deputy told Victoria there had been a fight on the train, with the blacks throwing a group of white men off.

Later, trial testimony would show that when the men finished arresting the prisoners and had secured them by tying them together with a rope, a deputy approached the girls and asked what they were doing on the train.

Victoria evaded the question by crying, "It's their fault," while pointing to the black prisoners. "Those boys held me and my friend down and raped us. All nine of them."

By the time the truck carrying the prisoners reached Scottsboro, word of the vile accusation had spread like wildfire. Within twenty-four hours the courthouse resembled a military camp, with armed soldiers guarding the entrances and a crowd estimated at ten thousand filling the square.

The good citizens of

Scottsboro took up a collection and purchased for the girls, who were wearing overalls, new dresses.

When the trial was held a few days later, Price and Bates both identified the boys and swore they had been raped. All nine boys were tried and sentenced to death in a matter of hours. The youngest of the boys was only thirteen years old.

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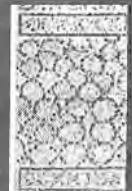
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Within days an appeal on the boys behalf had been filed. Unfortunately for the accused, the case was about to take on a new dimension.

People all across the country had become interested in the case, and offers of help for the defense started pouring in. None of the families of the accused had money to hire lawyers, so the boys were at the mercy of whatever organization that chose to offer help. Although most of the organizations meant well, some of them were not exactly the best choice to represent a defendant in an Alabama courtroom in 1932.

It was the most absurd scenario anyone could dream up. Nine black boys on trial for their life in Alabama, accused of raping two white women, represented by a Yankee, Jewish lawyer who was being paid by the N.A.A.C.P., and with the backing of the Communist Party.

It quickly became a case of Alabama versus the World. "Even if the girls were common prostitutes and even if they were lying," according to one old-timer. "The Blacks, the Jews, and the Communists were still wrong and had no business messing in Alabama affairs."

Returning to Huntsville as a martyred woman, Victoria once again set her sights on Jack Tiller, and within a matter of days they were back living together.

In May of 1933, Victoria indicated to the defense that she might be willing to change her story if she was bribed with "the right price." After much negotiation, two attorneys from New York chartered a plane and flew to Nashville, Tenn. Upon landing, they were arrested by the Nashville police. In their possession was the \$1,500.00 they had agreed to pay Victoria for changing her story. At the same time

in Huntsville, police arrested J. T. Pearson in connection with the bribery attempt.

According to one source, Jack and Victoria had gotten into a big fight when Jack found out about her offer. In an attempt to pacify Jack, and at the same time remain the martyred woman, Victoria went to the Huntsville police and informed them of the bribery attempt - neglecting to say, of course, that it was she who made the first overture.

Jack had always taken pride in being a truthful person and expected the same of others. He was also highly protective of anyone who had been wronged, and it was this weakness that Victoria played on.

Meanwhile, Ruby Bates was having her share of trouble, too. Myron Pearlman, alias Danny Dundee, was arrested by the Huntsville police on a routine charge of public drunkenness. While searching him, the police found a letter that Ruby had written to her boyfriend. The letter

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ing me. those police man made  
me tell a lie. that is my state-  
ment because i want too clear  
myself...*

*i hope you will you believe  
me. the law dont. i love you bet-  
ter than any Body else in the  
World that is why i am telling  
you this thing. i was drunk at  
the time and did not know what  
i was doing. i wish those negros  
are not Burnt on account of  
me....P.S. This is one time that i  
might tell a lie But it is the truth*

*Ruby Bates*

When Pearlman, under in-  
tense pressure from the Hunts-  
ville police department, realized  
that this letter did not coincide

with the police department's  
public statements, he quickly  
came up with a story about be-  
ing paid to get Bates drunk and  
getting her to write the "confes-  
sion."

A visit by the Huntsville po-  
lice produced a statement from  
Bates to the effect that she was  
drunk at the time the letter was  
written, and that it was all a lie.

A later investigation would  
point to Bates and Pearlman be-  
ing coerced by the police into  
signing false statements.

Several days after signing the  
statement for the police, Bates  
disappeared.

The second trial of the  
Scottsboro boys was scheduled  
to be held in Decatur with Judge  
Horton to preside. Leibowitz, the  
defendants' attorney, quickly be-  
gan to make a shambles of the  
whole case, or so he thought.

Medical evidence was pre-  
sented to prove the girls had  
never been raped. It was ignored  
by the jury.

One witness for the state tes-  
tified to seeing Victoria assaulted  
by the boys. When asked how  
he knew it was Victoria, he re-  
plied, "because of her dress."

Victoria was wearing overalls  
at the time.

When questioned about her  
actions in Chattanooga, prior to  
the alleged rape, Victoria testified

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she had spent the night at a boarding house while seeking work.

The boarding house did not exist, except in her imagination. Witnesses testified she had spent the night in a hobo jungle.

During this whole time, Jack Tiller had remained loyal to Victoria. Many times he had doubts, but in the end she was always able to make him believe her. Now, as he heard testimony unfold, he began to have doubts again. Witnesses later recalled seeing him standing in the back of the courtroom shuffling uneasily from one foot to another as he listened to evidence that seemed to indicate his girlfriend was lying.

Victoria would probably have been able to talk Jack into believing her again if it had not been for a surprise defense witness. Just when it seemed as if everyone had forgotten about Ruby Bates, she walked into the courtroom.

This time, however, she had a different story to tell.

The rape had never happened, she testified. Victoria had made her tell the story. As Ruby Bates continued her testimony,

she portrayed Victoria Price as a cold hearted woman who was willing to send nine innocent people to the electric chair. The whole story was a lie, told to keep from being arrested for vagrancy.

There was shocked silence in the courtroom. Jack Tiller, Victoria's strongest supporter, looked across the courtroom to where she was sitting, a look of disgust on his face. Slowly he stood up and made his way out of the crowded room, shaking his head in bewilderment. He never again looked back.

That afternoon when Victoria returned to Huntsville, Jack had already moved out.

Even though few people believed Victoria's testimony, Alabama authorities insisted on continuing to prosecute the case. The defendants would spend a

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total of almost half a century behind bars until the case would finally be closed and all the defendants released.

Ruby Bates was forced to leave town after changing her testimony. She became active in the Communist Party and toured the country as a speaker. At one time she even met with the Vice President of the United States and presented him with a petition asking for the boys' release. Eventually her notoriety died down and she moved to Union

Gap, Washington where she died in 1976.

Jack Tiller never again had any contact with Victoria Price. Despite notes and telephone calls that continued up into the 1950s, Tiller steadfastly refused to talk with her. He remarried in 1938 and made Huntsville his home until he died here in 1966.

Victoria Price, feeling bitter at the way the state had abandoned her after the trials, offered to change her testimony in 1940, but only for a substantial price. The defense attorneys, having heard this once before, wisely refused the offer. After giving contradictory evidence in eight different trials, her credibility had reached an all-time low. At first, Huntsville's citizens tolerated her, but as time passed and the truth began to come out, sen-

timent began to turn against her.

Six months after the last trial, she moved across the state line to Flintville, Tenn. In 1976 after NBC produced a movie about the trial, Victoria Price filed a defamation lawsuit against the network. The case was dismissed.

She died in a Huntsville hospital in 1982.

Old Huntsville

## C. T. Garvin

by Jim Latham

A man went in and said he wanted some of that new corn.

Cressie Garvin asked him the name of it. He said he didn't know but it grew on a very short stalk with 3 big ears.

Cressie told him, "Well if you don't know the name, we have plenty of that!"

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# Medicine Shows and Young Love

By Newman Ward

How many people remember Medicine Shows? We used to get one or two of these each summer. It was our best entertainment and it was free. The shows usually set up a small platform on the back of a truck and most always at the corner of 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Pike Street. The show would begin with some loud music, banjo or phonograph, and play until a crowd started to gather. The actor-artist-peddler would then tell us what was in store. To entertain and warm us up he'd make a short pitch about the magical cures we could buy. Usually the product would be something like *Hadacol*, which was mostly alcohol and guaranteed to cure lumbago, rheumatism, colds, flat feet, and anything else.

Perfume might be for sale, *Witch Hazel*, or maybe a lotion for beauty. I bought two bars of soap that you washed with at night, rubbing it in until it disappeared, then the next morning it was said that the dirt would be pushed out. Maybe I didn't do it right.

Then there would be more entertainment, "Punch and Judy" shows, or maybe accordion playing. If a pretty girl was in the show, a tap dancer, or singer, whatever, it was a guaranteed hit. One time there was a magician with a dog that did tricks, and I got friendly with the dog. The magician had a pretty terrier puppy that he didn't need, and he gave her to me. We named her Trixie and loved her very much.

I'm quite sure that "Snake Oil," a term used to refer to potions sold by pitchmen, came to be associated with medicine

shows. The sellers promise everything, and then move on to new territory, never to be seen again. Oh, but what fun it was.

I remember my first sweethearts, although I don't suppose that they knew that they were. In the second grade, at West Huntsville School, was this pretty little girl, Ethel B. Kircus, always with a smile and was friendly too. If she walked by our house, I would wave to her, and go out to the fence and watch and wave to her for a block or two. Another pretty girl was Imogene High, though I don't think that I ever spoke to her and she must have moved away.

Anyway, it seems that about the 4<sup>th</sup> grade Ethel B. moved away. It turns out she moved to Merrimack. Now "fast forward" about 60 years. I came up from Miami to Huntsville bringing some movie equipment to show dailies' for "Space Camp," a movie being made at Tranquility Base where the astronauts did part of their training. I found Ethel B.'s address, went by to see her, incidentally getting the only hug and kiss on the cheek ever. I asked her what did that B. in her name stand for. She said that Dr.

Brooks was the physician for her birth, and she was named for him. I was told very recently that Ethel had passed away June of last year, and was really sorry to hear that.

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and brother of Bill Brown who carried on the store later. "Big" Frank Brown, no relation, was ahead of us a few grades. He walked strangely, never swinging his arms. Little Frank and I both fell for Geneva Beach, very pretty also, and somehow found out that she went to town on Saturdays to see the Western movies at the Lyric, or Grand Theatres. We two bold Romeos, Little Frank and I would go by Kress store, get a bag of candy, go into the movie, see where Geneva was sitting, and sit in the row behind her, share our candy, maybe speak to her once or twice. Talking did not interfere with the show, as it was all silent movies starring Tom Mix, Ken Maynard, Col. Tim McCoy, etc. Talkies, or sound movies came in around 1928. The show, costing 10 cents, was worth the walk to town.

A carnival once set up on the YMCA grounds for a community fair around 1930 and I made friends with Buddy, an employee. He told me that he got \$21.50 every week. Twenty one meals and fifty cents. I, like most boys, thought about working and traveling with a carnival or circus. But the only one of us I ever knew who did leave with the circus was "Dummy" Robinson, a prize fighter so nicknamed because he was deaf. He became a rigger, erecting the big top and other tents for Ringling Brothers.

Old Huntsville

## News of the Absurd

- A woman called in to the Toxicology department of a local hospital and in a panicked voice described how she had just discovered that her small daughter was eating ants. The nurse assured her that ants were not harmful and there would be no need to bring in the girl. The mother began to calm down but at the end of the conversation happened to mention that she had given her daughter ant poison to eat in order to kill the ants. The nurse ordered the mother to bring in her daughter as soon as possible.

- Some Boeing employees on an airfield decided to steal a life raft from one of the 747's. They were successful in getting it out of the plane and to their home. Soon afterwards they took it for a float on the river, when they noticed a Coast Guard helicopter coming towards them. It turned out that the chopper was homing in on the emergency locator beacon that activated with the raft was inflated. They are no longer employed at Boeing.

- A counterfeiter in Bowling Green, Ky. was arrested when he tried to pass two three dollar bills he had received in change for a bogus twenty.

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# Steptoe Johnson

by Phillip Johnson

Steptoe " Brogtown " Johnson lived just off Seminole Drive and in the very heart of Brogtown. Steptoe had made it all the way to the third grade at West Huntsville high school before dropping out.

Doomed to illiteracy, he was determined to make an impact on his and other lives that he came in contact with. His wife " Flossy " read aloud from the scriptures every night. Steptoe listened very intently to every word being spoken. By his attention and eagerness to learn he memorized much of the Bible.

He loved to play the harmonica. On Saturdays he would take his harmonica and a milking stool down to the courthouse square where all the people were gathered. He would climb up several flights of the courthouse concrete stairs, take out his harmonica, play several tunes while clog dancing. This action would draw a crowd. At this point he would turn his five gallon bucket upside down, step upon it and start preaching.

People were amazed that he could quote the bible without having one in his possession.

Steptoe kept goats in the back yard from which he earned his income by milking and selling the milk. The goats got out of the fence one day and ran across Clinton Avenue and Hall Street to the Southern Railway right of way. Here they nibbled off the greenery. Unfortunately the railway employees had just sprayed for weed control and some of the goats died as a result of this action.

Steptoe was highly upset with the fact that some of the goats were now dead. This was a big part of his income. He hired an attorney, Jeff Smith, and after suing the railroad was awarded enough money to replace his goats.

In his later years Steptoe got a job with "Home Ice and Coal Company" where he worked out his remaining days hauling ice and coal around West Huntsville on an old flatboard truck with sideboards.

When he died he was interred in the " Pauper's Field "

section of of Maple Hill Cemetary. Here, very few markers were ever placed on the gravesites to remember the lives of the people who once were a part of our city.

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# The Washing Machine Fairy

by Bill Wilson

All too often, Yankee visitors to our rural countryside return to their abodes with mistaken impressions of our blessed domain and its sometimes mysterious ways. For example, they may regale their friends with accounts of our country cousins' strange habit of populating their yards with the hulks of deceased appliances such as washing machines, refrigerators, stoves and the like. What they don't know is that when these dutiful servants cease to function, they are not unceremoniously consigned to the dump or the landfill as they might be in Vermont or New York. Instead, they are put out to pasture like a faithful mule too old to plow, but still deserving of reward after so many years of faithful service.

And, even more importantly, what they also don't know is this: on a certain lucky night when the moon is hidden and everyone is asleep, the Washing Machine Fairy steps out from behind an ancient oak with her glowing silver wand. She points it first at the family hound curled up on the porch. As he struggles unsteadily to get up on all-fours, he is immediately shushed and his barker immobilized by a quick wave of her wand. Then she

scans the master's yard carefully. If she finds two or more of any one appliance (provided they don't have the same broken part), she taps them lightly with her shining wand and they all jump together and make one good appliance. The next day, on rising, a lucky householder of no small faith fetches a like-new washing machine or refrigerator back to its former post on the porch or in the kitchen.

Now such a marvel, if they only knew about it, would gladden the heart of any thrifty New Englander given as they are to an ethic of "waste not, want not". Yes, if they only knew about our secret nocturnal visitor, many a staid New England farmstead would blossom with tidy rows of silent white appliances all pa-

As a plane landed and was coming to a stop at Ronald Reagan, a lone voice came over the loudspeaker, "Whoa, big fella, Whoa!"

tiently awaiting the visit of the Washing Machine Fairy.

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# Huntsville Coffee Talk

by Aunt Eunice

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



Hello – I'm back greeting you again after being gone for awhile - I missed you all so much. I spent 12 days in the hospital and about 2 weeks at home after. I'm feeling fine now but still a little weak and slow but so thankful to be back at the restaurant to see you all again. Thanks to God for he has been so wonderful to me and my family who spent much of their time to care for me. Thanks to my wonderful employees who have done so much to try to help me. **Ramona** stayed a week and took care of me at home and **Mary & Ramona** bring me to work everyday now. Thanks to each and every one of you for your prayers, love and concern for me! The many visits, calls, flowers and prayers reached out for miles and you all have been so wonderful – you'll never know how loved you made me feel. I could never begin to mention the people who thought about me and your calls, gifts and thoughtfulness because I might miss someone – but I heard from Washington, Mont-

gomery, Birmingham and all around the Huntsville area. It was amazing. I love you all. Special thanks to the nurses at **Huntsville Hospital** and my **4 doctors** – everyone treated me so well. Huntsville is such a great place to live.

That adorable little boy in the Picture of the Month for April was **Hall Bryant**, of H. C. Blake. The publishers of "Old Huntsville" must have received 3 dozen calls on this picture, but they were all directed to Eunice's restaurant because the only one who knows for sure who the featured picture is me! I'm so sorry because a lady called while I was sick and guessed correctly - I wasn't able to write down her name – so if you're reading this and you were the one who talked to me come in and get your free Country Breakfast! I promise I'll put your name in the June issue!

Our sympathy goes out to our friend **Becky** who has eaten with me for a very long time. She lost her dear mother while I was

away – Becky I'm so sorry and we love you very much.

The Botanical Gardens are the perfect place for an unforgettable wedding and my friend **Leah Heard** and **David May** will be getting married there on May 24<sup>th</sup>. It should be perfect weather for that, and what gorgeous surroundings!

So many of the young folks who have grown up as part of my restaurant family are getting married this year. I'll try to mention 2 or 3 of them each issue until I get them all. **Jonathan Landman** is one of the finest young men I know, he's marrying on May 17 and his beautiful bride-to-be is **Jennifer Romera** of Madison. My good friend **Mike Sublett's** lovely daughter **Jennifer Ann** is marrying on May 24 to **Brian Seth Medlen**. Congratulations and we will tell you about more in upcoming issues. Romance is definitely in the air!

## 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: Business lady around Five Points.



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**Steve and Kathy Hall** had this really pretty granddaughter born last month and they modestly predict that she will be a future Miss America.

Last month **Senator Shelby** and **Bud Cramer** came by to see us. They sure are in the news a lot lately and do great work for our area. It was so good to see you both.

The **Aldersgate Methodist Church** was the site of the Alabama Federation of Music Clubs Junior Convention. Huntsville walked away with four gold cups!

**Velma** at the **Senior Center Gift Shop** tells us that they could really use some volunteers to work for just a couple of hours a day at the gift shop. It's lots of fun because you meet such great people and get to see all the merchandise that comes in – craftwork created by Seniors in our area. If you're interested please call the Senior Center and ask for Velma – she can tell you all about it.

My son **Joe Merrell** from Orlando came and stayed a week with me after I got out of the hospital. My sister **Naomi Johnson** from Bradenton, Florida came for a visit last week – it was so good to be with them.

Did you all read the piece in the Huntsville Times about **Hall Bryant** donating construction of a new rest room to **Harrison Brothers Hardware**? In case you didn't know it, Hall and his company **H. C. Blake** is donating materials and labor to the store in order to make that happen! It's all part of the \$275,000 Historic Landmarks effort to restore the Store that has been operating in Huntsville since 1897. At that time the small bathroom was located out on the back porch of the store! **Lynn Lowery**, director of the **Historic Huntsville Foundation** which owns and operates the store, said that Hall's donation is much appre-

ciated. There is also a \$100,000 matching grant that was received through **Rep. Bud Cramer's** office.

**Mary Bunch** from Rainsville and **Bernie Rader** from Scottsboro, both retired, stopped by to see me for a hot country ham breakfast, and we had a lot of fun with them.

Our dear friend **Jean Reid** has been really sick lately and we miss her from the round table so much. She is such a dear lady and any time you see her she had a big smile on her face – we miss you and love you so much.

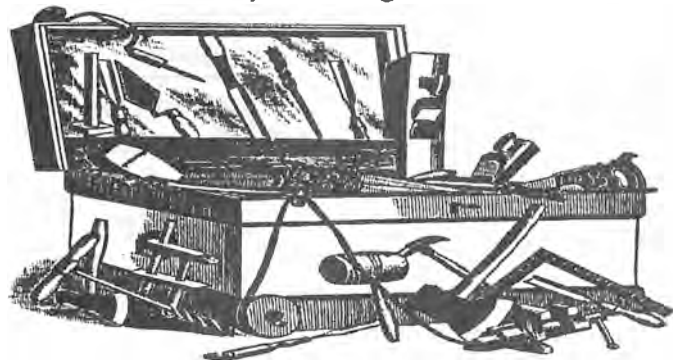
**Loyd and Tray Tomlinson** from the Outback Restaurant came by to see us for breakfast. Loyd will be leaving us around the end of May. We're sure gonna miss you all. **Marcia** you'll have to come back and bring them with you!

We missed **Bryce and Dolly Davis**. They are the fine parents of our astronaut **Jan Davis**. We hear they haven't been feeling very well lately. Hope you get back this month to see us.

Well, that's all for this month. Just remember I love all of you.

*Don J. Seaman*  
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## Spring Comfort Food

### Easy Chicken Casserole

3 lbs. chicken breast, cooked & cubed  
 1 c. chicken broth  
 1 10-oz. can cream of mushroom soup  
 1 4-oz. jar sliced mushrooms  
 1 16-oz. sour cream  
 8 oz. seasoned stuffing cubes  
 ½ stick real butter, melted  
 Garlic powder

In a bowl mix the first 5 ingredients, then place into a greased casserole dish. Pour the stuffing cubes on top and drizzle with the melted butter. Top all with a sprinkle of garlic powder. Bake at 350 degrees for about 40 minutes.

### Old South Crackling Bread

1 ½ c. cornmeal

½ t. salt  
 2 T. all-purpose flour  
 1 egg, beaten  
 3 t. baking powder  
 1 ¼. C. milk  
 1 ½ c. cracklings  
 Vegetable oil

Combine the cornmeal, flour, salt, baking powder, egg and milk. Add the cracklings and mix well. Drop by teaspoonfuls onto a hot, well-oiled griddle and fry til golden brown.

### Vanilla Icebox Pie

4 egg whites  
 1 c. sugar  
 1 t. vanilla  
 1 c. toasted pecans, chopped  
 13 graham crackers, crumbled into small pieces  
 1 can shredded coconut  
 Beat the whites til stiff, add the sugar and vanilla slowly. Add the coconut, pecans, graham cracker crumbs. Pour into a buttered pan and bake for 30

minutes at 350 degrees. Chill prior to serving.

### Brandy Ice Cream

1 quart ice cream, any flavor  
 4 oz. Brandy

Using your blender, blend together the ice cream and brandy and freeze. Blend it again right before you serve, and serve by dipping it into elegant glasses as slush.

### Chocolate Gravy

1 c. sugar  
 3 T. cocoa  
 1 c. milk  
 ½ to 1 stick butter

Mix sugar and cocoa, then add milk and mix well. Put in a deep pan and bring to slow boil over medium heat, being careful not to burn. Add butter and boil til it gets as thick as you want. Slather over fresh biscuits.

You'll get hooked on this!



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## Honey-Butter Spread

1 stick softened butter  
6 oz. Honey

Combine the two ingredients in a small mixing bowl. Whip with hand mixer for about 2 minutes. Serve on hot biscuits or dinner rolls.

## Rosemary Garlic Potatoes

4 lbs. small new potatoes, sliced  
¼ c. fresh rosemary, chopped  
2 t. minced garlic  
¼ c. olive oil  
2 T. lemon juice  
salt to taste  
¼ t. fresh ground black pepper

Heat olive oil in a skillet and sauté the garlic, rosemary and lemon juice for 3 minutes. Remove from heat and put your potatoes in a greased baking dish. Pour the oil mixture over the potatoes, sprinkle with salt and pepper. Bake at 350 degrees for 40 minutes and the potatoes are tender.

## Garlic and Herb Cheese

2-8-oz. Pkgs. Cream cheese, softened  
2 c. butter, softened  
4 garlic cloves, minced  
3 T. chopped fresh herbs (basil, thyme, marjoram, chives)  
Salt and pepper to taste  
Use a food processor or large fork and blend the cheese,

butter and garlic til smooth. Add remaining ingredients and mix well. Store in an airtight container in fridge.

## Apple Crisp

1 qt. Sliced apples (peeled and sweetened to taste)  
2/3 c. brown sugar  
½ c. all purpose flour  
½ c. regular oats  
¾ t. cinnamon  
¾ t. nutmeg  
1/3 stick butter

Pour sweetened apples into a greased pan, 8" square. Mix all the other ingredients together and pour over the apples. Bake for 35 minutes at 375 degrees.

## Chocolate Popcorn

1 ½ c. sugar  
1 T. butter  
1 square unsweetened chocolate

3 qrts. Freshly popped corn  
3 T. water

Boil sugar, butter, chocolate and water til it spins a long thread. Pour the mixture over your freshly popped corn and stir til all kernels are covered.

## Creamy Peanut Pie

1 c. corn syrup  
1 c. sugar  
½ t. vanilla  
3 eggs, slightly beaten  
1/3 c. creamy peanut butter  
unbaked pie shell

Blend all the filling ingredients, pour into unbaked shell and bake at 400 degrees for 15 minutes. Reduce oven heat to 350 and bake for another 30 minutes. The filling should appear slightly less set in the center than around the edges.

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# Huntsville News From 1911

- The Dallas Mill has been closed down all week on account of a breakdown of some part of the engine.

- Mr. Richard Berryhill and Miss Daisy McDaniel were married Tuesday night on Stephens Ave. Rev. R. R. Brasher of 5<sup>th</sup>. St. Baptist Church officiated. We wish them a prosperous wedded life.

- A Gas Range - is a modern necessity operated with less expense than a coal or wood range and then it is so easy, strike a match, turn a valve and your fire is ready for use. No waiting for the top of the range to get hot. No coal to carry, no wood to cut and no ashes to remove. Gas ranges \$15.00, connected free, ready to use. Cash or easy payment plan, at the Huntsville Ala Gas Light and Fuel CO. 218 West Clinton Street

- The Daily Times has positive knowledge that the City has been petitioned respectfully to give the people of North Huntsville and Patton Grove some protection from the serious water overflow in those sections of town. It seems that patience in this case ceases to be a virtue.

- Little Ernest, infant son of Mr. and Mrs. E. Stephens, died

Tuesday and was buried Wednesday.

- This morning another damaging overflow came bringing several hundred dollars worth of damage to angry residents and property owners. The city engineer, if the city has one, and if not a committee of aldermen should give the suffering people a speedy relief. The damage from one overflow like that of this morning it is believed would repair the trouble. Won't you, Mr. Councilmen, do your duty in this regard?

- For rent - For the cooler months, a furnished house with ten rooms, all modern conveniences. Apply to 242 East Holmes St.

- For sale - Pine bird dog, 8 months old. Apply to Tilford McLean, Telephone 39.

- When you get ready to move up to Monte Sano, let us know. Your groceries won't cost you one cent more delivered on Monte Sano than they do delivered to this city. John P. King, Grocery Co.

- To the People of Huntsville, we beg to announce that Hutchens & Murdock has been appointed sole agents for the Block Light in the city of Huntsville and that the light is on exhibition at their offices. The Block Light will give 300 candle power and save half your gas bills. It takes six inch electric lights to give the light of one Block Light. Satisfaction guaranteed or money refunded.

- Alleging that his wife has

## First Baptist Church

### Sunday

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5:00 Discipleship Training  
6:30 Worship

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June 19, 20, 21, 22  
(2:30 Matinee) 26, 27, 28

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treated him with continuous cruelty for many years, even to the extent of making him cook his own meals and then wash the dishes he used, John Nance applied for a divorce in New Decatur. Nance is a railroad engineer and has been married thirty-four years.

He also charged that his wife drove him from home at the point of a pistol and had incited his six children against him and in other ways made life miserable for him.

## Mrs. Gilbert & Helen

by Jim Latham

One of Huntsville's most memorable people was Mrs. Gilbert. She lived on Adams street with her retarded daughter Helen.

Now Mrs. Gilbert was just pure mean. She and Helen would go to church and take newspapers to sit on. Once the sermon started, they would start squirming around to make noise to disrupt the service.

Mrs. Gilbert would always carry an umbrella with which she would constantly hit Helen or anyone else who happened to be nearby.

On one particular day Mrs. Gilbert needed a 3 cent stamp. She called Humphrey's Pharmacy and told them to send her a 3-cent stamp. She was told they could deliver that but would send it along if she made another purchase. She told them to send along a box of Whitman's chocolate with the stamp. When the delivery boy arrived, she told him, "Here's 3 cents for the stamps. Take back your old candy - I don't want it!"

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# Early History Of Huntsville

"Conditions Toward The End Of The War"

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

As the power and strength of the Confederacy waned, disaffection among a certain element in this part of the State became marked, and manifested itself from time to time in various ways. This hostility toward the Confederacy did not go unapplauded or unaided by the federal government. The fomentation of internal strife and discord was by no means a small part of the duties to be performed by the officer in command of a Union army post in the South.

Their efforts were augmented by the energies of the "Arch Traitor," Clemens, and the "Crazy Man," Humphreys and Judge Lane, who figured as advisers to their friends and former fellow citizens in recom-

mending submission. During the early part of 1864 Union meetings were being held in those parts of North Alabama subjugated by federal troops. These meetings were encouraged and protected by the Union officers in command. On March 5th of this year a thinly attended reconstruction meeting was held in Huntsville, at which Clemens presided. Orthodox, anti-Confederate and strong Union speeches were made by both the "Arch Traitor" and the "Crazy Man." The latter of whom submitted some elaborate plans for immediate return to the Union, calling upon the governor to hold a convention to consider a return to the Union.

Early in 1865 peace meetings were held throughout Alabama,

Georgia and Mississippi. Commissioners were sent to Washington and Tories and deserters organized. This peace party expected to gain the August elections and elect as governor J. C. Bradley, of Huntsville." The local chapter of this peace society was known as the "Union or Loyal League."

The character of warfare, conducted in these parts, grew infinitely worse and less considerate of noncombatants, as the endurance of the South and the superior fighting qualities of the Confederates gave way respectively to superior resources and numbers. In some instances, notably the treatment of Captain F. B. Gurley, of this county, the ordinary rules of comity and warfare were not recognized.

No men, except the aged and infirm were left in the country. The population was composed chiefly of women and children. The people suffered fearfully, and many of them had to leave the country in order to live.

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The federals made it a rule to hold a community responsible for all attacks upon Union troops by the Confederate soldiers. As for instance, and by no means an uncommon one, in 1864 General M. L. Smith ordered the arrest of "five of the best rebels," in the vicinity of a Confederate attack on one of the companies, even going so far as to arrest five more near the place where a Union sympathizer had been assaulted.

The Freedman's Bureau, ostensibly a labor and employment bureau, was established at Huntsville some time during the early part of 1865. At first these bureaus were conducted by the federal military authorities, but after the war their management was entrusted to "loyal Union men," "Carpetbaggers." These institutions, if properly conducted, might have been of inestimable worth to the nation as a whole, serving in a large measure to readjust the shattered economic conditions at the South. But such was not their purpose, and as a consequence their presence threatened the very existence of civilization of the South. These, and many other such influences, created a pressing necessity for some sort of social regulator. And out of these conditions logically resulted the "Invisible Empire" whose mandates were executed by the Ku-Klux-Klan.

The veteran who wore the

gray, after Lee's surrender, returned to his former home, neither ashamed nor afraid for the course so lately and vigorously pursued. He accepted the fortunes of war with heroic resignation and yielded his weapons of destruction without protest or shame, and returned to the pursuits of civil life with that same determination and indomitable will and energy which had made of him such a formidable foe. He was in no wise daunted or abashed to find, upon his return, all his former slaves supported and protected, and incited to insulting behavior by the bureau; his plantation grievously suffering from protracted neglect, but worst of all, his house burned and no hand to assist in the erection of another. Stripped of every vestige of property and personal effects.

The former slaves, dazed and bewildered as they were by sudden emancipation from work and the necessity therefor as a means of support, deserted the plantation and flocked to the bureau or

refugee camps; where they received, without charge, from the government, food, clothing, shelter and medical attention-from

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which the mortality was great. Thus supported, the negro became a prey to all sorts of vagaries. They were lead to believe that when the war was over each would receive, at the hands of the federal government "forty acres and a mule," the property of the former master. Even to this day, there may, in rare instances, be found an old ex-slave who is still holding to the dream that this dispensation is yet to come.

There was usually great dispute between the slaves as to who was to get the forty acres upon which was situated the "big house," the plantation home of the former master.

So firmly had these fancies fastened themselves upon the subject, that even the bureau and military authorities became alarmed. To forestall the further spread of such demoralizing tendencies, the federal authorities, in 1865, issued an order requiring all negroes at Huntsville to go to work, or to be forced to

do so by the troops.

In justice to the ex-slave, be it said, this dilemma was probably not wholly his own blame; for the bureau controlled every phase of life and activity in the community, and complete charge was taken of the negroes. The activities of the bureau, instead of being an aid to useful employment of the ex-slave's time, were its worst hindrance, as we shall see.

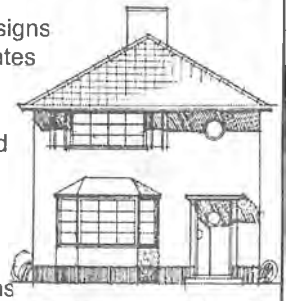
Primarily, the conditions of labor under the old relation of "master and slave" did not exist. A new order of things was to be faced. Its solution was by no means an easy problem; for during the four years of war practically all commercial and agricultural activities had been suspended at the South. The men were off on the field of battle. The financial resources of the community were exhausted. Federal currency was unknown, or nearly so. Confederate currency was little more than a mythical

term to most of the inhabitants, and it was not legal tender in those sections controlled by Union forces, as was Huntsville.

Labor could only be employed under the supervision of the bureau. Wage scales were established and enforced by the

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federal authorities. Such a scale was put in force at Huntsville in 1864 by the "Freedman's Home Colony":

"No. 1 Hands, male 18-40 years of age, min. wage per month \$25.00. No. 2 Hands, male 14-18 years of age, min. wage per month \$20.00. No 3 Hands, male 12-14 years of age, min. wage per month \$15.00. Corresponding classes of women \$18.00, \$14.00 and \$10.00 per month, respectively.

In addition to these minimum wages to be paid by the planter, he was required to take care of the young children of the family hired by him; to furnish without charge a separate house for each family, with an acre of ground for a garden, and without charge, medical attention for the entire family, and schooling for the children; to sell food and clothing to the employee at cost, and lastly, to pay for full time unless the laborer was sick or refused to work.

In view of the depleted economic and financial condition of the South, to hold that the ex-slave could only be employed on such terms and at such exorbitant wages to be paid in United States currency, was grossly unfair to both employer and employee. Such restrictions rendered employment practically prohibitive. So we are not surprised to learn that in 1864 only two hundred and five of all the ex-slave population of the county had obtained employment.

These labor contracts had to

be in writing and receive the sanction of the bureau or military authorities, and witnessed by a "friend of the freedman." Either party breaking the contract was subject to trial by the provost-marshal or a military commission. The property of the employer was liable to seizure for wages.

Many instances might be cited, but for present purposes, one such happening at Huntsville will suffice:

General Thomas ordered a military commission to arrogate

to itself authority to settle a dispute over the home of a widowed white lady, as between her and her former slave, with the result that she was turned out, and the negro given possession of the property.

So long as these institutions were administered by the military authorities no charge was made the freedman for preparing the labor contracts, and the freedman thought the bureau his best friend. Later, at the close of the war, the bureaus were turned over to the civil authorities and

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"carpetbaggers" were put in charge. Then a fee of \$2.00 was charged the negro for each contract. This produced among them a revulsion of feeling. They became suspicious and distrustful of the bureau.

So strong and vindictive did this hate of the "carpetbag" agents of the bureau become among the negroes in Madison county, that on March 12, 1866, some negroes of Huntsville and vicinity, tarred and feathered one of the bureau agents who had been charging them \$1.50 for each contract." The bureau authorities even went so far as to try title to and settle disputes over property, between slaves and their former masters.

On the slightest pretext the bureau authorities intervened. Many are the instances of persecution and injustice heaped upon the Southern whites by these alien and rapacious agents. Their prejudices were strongly against the whites and in favor of the freedmen. There was, however, no purpose of bettering the conditions, but solely to punish the whites.

It was of common occurrence that prominent citizens, were arrested, and placed in chains. The former slaves were protected and incited to heap opprobrium on their former masters. Even the law itself was not permitted to take its course, as for instance: "In 1866, two constables arrested a negro charged with house burning in Tuscumbia, Alabama. Col. D. C. Rugg, the bureau agent at Huntsville, raised a force of forty negroes and went to the rescue of the criminal." Coming up with the officers as they were about to board the train with the criminal, he said, "If you attempt to put that man on the train, blood will be shed. I am acting under the orders of the Military Department. These men are not going to let you take that prisoner away, and blood will be shed if you attempt it." All this, in order that the culprit might be taken

before the bureau agent and acquitted after a mock trial.

In conjunction with the Freedman's Bureau, schools for freedmen were operated. Shortly before the close of the war three of these schools were established at the refugee camps in the county. Two of them were in Huntsville; one

being on Ex-Governor Chapman's plantation, which was confiscated to the use of negro troops early in 1862, as above mentioned. After the war, schools for the freedmen became very numerous. Another was opened at Huntsville by the "Pittsburgh Freedmen's Aid Commission." All these schools

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were taught by Northern whites. From this time forward, all sorts and kinds of missionary, educational and benevolent societies and commissions, financed at the North, and projected and authorized by Congress, began to operate throughout the South. There was the wildest desire among the blacks, both old and young, to learn to read and write. The older ones wanted to learn to read the Bible.

In November, 1866, Brevet-Colonel J. B. Collis, of the Volunteer Reserve Corps, was put in command of the bureau at Huntsville. Under his leadership the bureau branched out into politics, local and State, and was organized into some sort of a political "league." The membership consisted chiefly of negroes. Its purpose was to foist into position and power the "carpetbaggers," "deserters," and "scalawags," and scum of the earth generally, with which Huntsville was infested. The leagues held secret meetings, and pledged themselves and their membership to mutual protection. The negroes were especially suspi-

cious and distrustful of Southern whites who had become "deserters and scalawags." Their respect for these moral perverts was no greater than that held for them by the men who wore the gray. One notable instance of this distrust is to be found, when the league at Huntsville refused admittance to one of its meetings in the court house, to a notorious "scalawag" of this community, who had formerly been a respected member of society. Little wonder that even the negroes were unwilling to align themselves with him, when we remember that he had represented Madison county in the Secession Convention of 1861, and was chosen to succeed Dr. Thomas Fearn in the Confederate Provisional Congress, and had commanded a battalion in the war for a short while; only for a short while, however, as his loyalty to his State and his people was of equally short duration. He went over to the enemy and after the war, embraced with alacrity the "carpetbag" government and its principles and returned among his people to aid in the oppres-

sions of reconstruction, and garner his share of its rich harvest.

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# Stuck In The Mud

by Walt Terry

Back in Huntsville's "Dark Ages," when I was trying to grow up, what is now the well travelled California Street, the part between Newman Ave. and Big Cove Road was little more than a cow pasture lane.

After heavy rains it became a red-mud quagmire. Anyone who has not experienced such a road does not have a working concept of what stickiness is.

Since there was no bridge across Fagins Creek, my parents would skirt around the road by way of Whitesburg Pike to buy buttermilk at a house that still stands on the north-east corner of California and Big Cove Roads.

For us kids, the road did provide one of the bicycle accesses to Fagins Creek where a boy could skinny-dip bothered only by the crawdads and polywogs.

Lawrence Cooper and I were on such a mission when we were caught in a torrential rain, drenched in our clothes and mired in the resulting mud. The passage of bicycles in the muck became impossible.

We wound up toting our "wheels" on our backs, our feet resembling uprooted trees.

It's amazing some of the memories we cherish

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by Jim Latham

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# The Murder of John Byrd

by Shannon Dale Byrd

John William Byrd was described as a cantankerous man, whom his son, Eunice, described as having "cursed with almost every breath", was no stranger to trouble. He had already been involved in some sort of trouble with the law while living in Georgia, which was believed to have involved a black man. Apparently a man of fierce temper, John's short fuse would soon cost him his life.

On July 28, 1902 John sent Eunice and Wiley to a community well to water their pony and bring home a bucket of water. Eunice, 13, and Wiley, 8, did as their father had told them, but when they arrived at the well, two men named Robert Johnson and Fred Stevens, told the boys that they could couldn't have any water and to go home and tell their father so. Tension had already begun to mount between the Byrd's and these two brothers-in-law. It seem that their cattle had frequented the Byrds' crops, but this would be the straw to break the camel's back.

After the boys returned home and told their father what Johnson and Stevens had said, John grabbed a double barrel shot gun and a bucket, and started out to get his water. Maggie, the children, George, and several others followed John to the well. Perhaps they were pleading with John to settle down and let the situation go, or perhaps they were encouraging John to teach the men a lesson. As John approached Johnson's home, the two men ambushed him from behind open planks of the house. The following is an excerpt from the July 4, 1902, issue of the Huntsville Herald. It

tells the story as the residents of Huntsville first learned of it on July 4, 1902.

**"JOHN BYRD MURDERED"**  
**"Tragedy Near Monrovia Last Saturday."**

**"Robt. Johnson and Fred Stevens Charged of Murder Tried before Judge Stewart"**

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

It seems that Byrd has for sometime past been getting water from a well on Johnson's place and last Saturday afternoon when Byrd's boy went for the water, Johnson told him that he could get no more water as the well was getting low and liable at any time to dry. The boy returned home and told his father what Johnson had said to

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him. Byrd then got a bucket and a double barreled shot gut and said that he would go and get the water anyhow as he must have it. He was accompanied by his wife, son, father, and two or three others.

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

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

Their preliminary hearing was held by Probate Judge Stewart Monday afternoon and Judge Stewart bound the defendants over to await the action of grand jury. Their bonds were

fixed at \$1,000 and were made easily.

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

When John fell to the ground after being shot, his oldest son, Eunice, rushed to his side in time to hear his last words. Although he had been remembered as a man who cursed with every breath, as John drew his last breath, he murmured, "Oh, Lord".

John was buried in the Mount Zion Baptist Church cemetery; however, his grave was not marked and cannot be located. His assailants were never prosecuted and ironically, soon died themselves, being buried near John's own grave at Mt. Zion.

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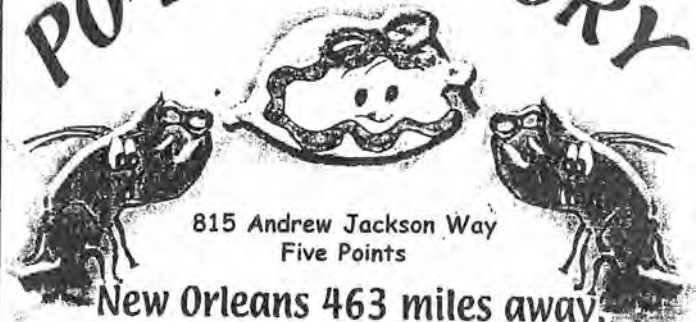
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Yet, people then, as today, had dreams and ambitions. The dream that once existed on these now quiet trails on the western slope of Monte Sano Mountain took the form of a railroad—the Monte Sano Railway.

The year was 1888 and with the ever growing popularity of the grand hotel on top of the mountain, it became clear that better transportation up the mountain was needed.

The Huntsville Belt Line and Monte Sano Railway Co. employed engineer Arthur Owen Wilson to construct the railroad to the hotel. The line started from the Union Depot and ran south along Jefferson Street. At Clinton, it turned east towards the mountain and eventually down into Fagin's Hollow, where it began a circuitous route, gaining altitude all the time. Winding and circling to the rim of the mountain, the route rose so steeply that the grade seemed impossible for an engine to ascend.

The remainder of the way lay directly across the top of the plateau to the back yard of the hotel. Half an hour was required for the entire journey when the line was finished.

In the construction of the Monte Sano Railway, more than 300 persons were employed on

a regular basis. The weekly payroll was approximately \$10,000. Mr. Wilson, himself, designed the three coaches that comprised the train and the St. Charles Car Co. manufactured them. The engine was of standard gauge, although smaller than those used on the trunk line. The size of the engine was the reason the line was called the "dummy line," as the undersized locomotive resembled a trolley car. Of course, some Huntsville wags called it the dummy line because "only a dummy would ride that steep and perilous route to or from the mountain!"

Sure enough, not long after the railway opened, there occurred an incident that seriously damaged the popularity of the railway. Returning from the hotel, the train's sand-pipes clogged as the engineer tried to check the speed of the locomotive down a steep incline. The train went out of control and left the tracks. Happily, no one was injured, but people were now somewhat nervous about taking this precarious path to and from the mountain.

Luckily, this accident had no lasting affect on consumer confidence and the Monte Sano Railway was successful in bringing visitors to the mountain, and business to the hotel continued to flourish.

Unfortunately, by 1895 the hotel was suffering financial

problems and the railroad had to be shut down. Tracks were torn up and sold as scrap to pay off debts.

Now, with the passage of time the old railroad bed and stone foundations of the trestles are all that remain. Older residents of Huntsville say that as late as the 1950s there were still railroad ties stacked up near the area known as the "button hole."

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# News From The Year 1930

## News From Huntsville and Around The World

### First To Make Paris - New York Flight

Curtis Field, Long Island - Captain Coste and crew completed tonight the first direct flight from Paris to New York when they landed at the Curtis airport at 7:12 after a flight of 37 hours, 18 minutes and 30 seconds. They covered about 4,100 miles and when they landed had 100 gallons of gasoline left in the tanks, sufficient for another three hours of flight.

The achievement marked the first non-stop crossing from Europe to the American metropolis.

Ten thousand throats yelled a wild greeting to the two French masters of the air, as their air plane, the Scarlet Question Mark, came down smoothly and gracefully on the east side of the field and taxied rapidly toward the hangers on the west side. On hand to greet the aviators was Colonel Lindberg whose visit to

France has now been returned. Soon after the fliers landed they were informed that Colonel W.E. Easterwoods had offered \$10,000 to the men if they would fly their airship to Texas.

### Giant Department Store Coming To Huntsville

**Huntsville** - In a startling announcement today, W.F. Struve announced he was signing a fifty year lease with S.H. Kress & Company for property downtown on Washington Street.

The store is expected to carry a wide range of merchandise at most reasonable prices. Many of the smaller merchants were upset at the giant department store's decision to locate in Huntsville.

It is feared by many that the smaller stores will not be able to compete and will be forced to close as a result

### G.R. Peters Survives Fall From Courthouse

News was received yesterday of the miraculous survival of G.R. Peters who fell from atop the Madison County Courthouse and walked away unharmed. Peters was repairing a seam in the roof when he lost his footing and slid down the roof and to the ground below. A large indentation was left in the soil where Peters made contact.

Peters is currently unemployed and seeking another position.



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# H.E Ross Found Brutally Murdered

## No Suspects Or Motives In The Latest Unsolved Murder

**Huntsville** - Tensions have reached an all time high, as citizens join the authorities in searching for the killer of H.E. Ross, a well known businessman and civic leader.

Police have been deluged by well meaning tipsters offering leads to the brutal murder. The Chief of Police wants the community to know that every lead will be pursued and no stone will be left un-turned until the murderer is behind bars.

The slaying, and the controversy surrounding it, has caused Huntsville to become a virtual armed fortress as citizens refuse to leave their homes after dark. Yesterday an armed mob confronted authorities at the courthouse demanding more be done

to apprehend the killer. This and other incidents have caused the National Guard to be placed on alert.


## Ku Klux Parade In Huntsville

### 150 Cars filled With Robed Klansmen Parade Through The Streets Of Huntsville

**Huntsville** - The streets of downtown were filled with Klansmen in full regalia as 150 cars, loaded with some 500 Klan members slowly circled the business district.

Perfect order was maintained at all times by hooded Klansmen posted on street corners and directing the traffic by means of a high pitched whistle. Afterwards, over 1000 people gathered at Kildare to hear the Imperial Wizard, Dr. Hiram W. Evans, lecture on White Protestantism.

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# News From The Year 1911

- News reached the city today of the death of Rev. C. B. Sanders, the "sleeping preacher," a book on whose life was written by, and received wide circulation at, the hands of Rev. G. W. Mitchell. Rev. Sanders died last evening at Stevenson, Ala. He was in his 90<sup>th</sup> year. The deceased is well remembered here by many of our older citizens, he having filled a number of pulpits in this county.

- News reached the city today of a horrible killing at New Hope yesterday morning at 7 o'clock in which John Logan lost his life at the hand of Jim Hunt and his son, Gardiner, both of whom are now in jail. The men disputed over the division of some land. A desperate quarrel followed in which Logan, it is said, was shot to this death with a pistol in the hands of one of the Hunts. Jim Hunt surrendered and his son was captured by Deputy Childers.

- The Tennessee River here now is more than three miles wide. The water was stationary, but heavy rains were reported to have fallen above here. These are expected to cause an even greater rise. The weather here is in a very unsettled condition, with strong indications of more rain.

The present flood will delay farming in the Tennessee River bottoms more than a month and will cause great losses to the farmers by their fences washing away and some of their small out buildings. Along the river several large barns have been washed away and a few dwelling houses have also gone.

- The storm of wind and rain on the morning of April 4<sup>th</sup> wrought considerable havoc and enacted some freaks worth mentioning in this part of the county. Mr. James White, living east of Hazle Green, came to the village that morning on his mule, tying the animal under the old scale shed back of Mr. Lowe's store. The shed blew down, the animal being crowded up close to the store building, was thereby

saved from serious injury. Arriving home later, he found his garden fence all blown down and his top buggy blown out of his shed through the wire fence into the road and the top badly demolished.

- Mr. Will Leonard had garden and field fence damage and a badly demolished barn yard gate to repair and he was not out to work previous to this.

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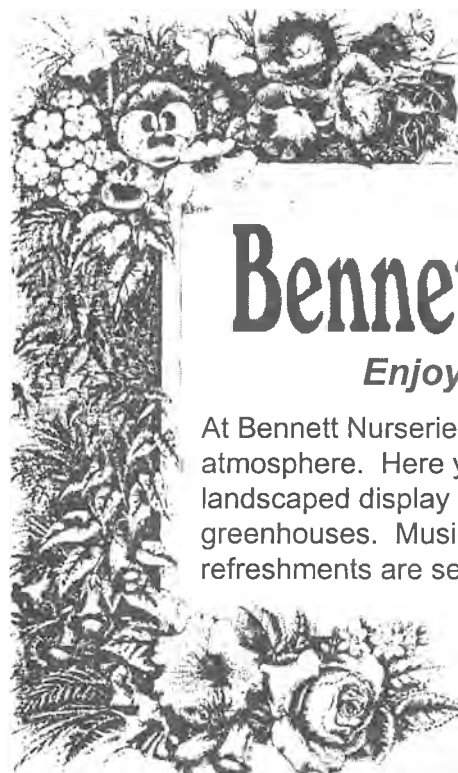
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# Old Settler Dies At Woodville

From 1928 newspaper

One of our most remarkable and most respected citizens of North Alabama died recently. Thomas Sims was laid to rest November 7th, in the sinks at the Ashburn Cemetery beside his last wife, who preceeded him but a few years. He was born August 3 - 92, 93 or 94 years ago, one mile west of Bucksnot on Gunter's Mountain before Marshall County was created, and while the north side of Marshall County was part of Jackson County. At his birth, his mother, Rhoda (House)Sims was

attended by a negro woman as mid-wife.

Mr. Sims did not know the year in which he was born, and there is some disagreement among the people as to the exact year. He was born the same night John Ricketts was born. (If any who sees this will kindly give me the exact date Mr Ricketts was born, I shall be glad.)

Mr. Sims was a bright-eyed boy when his father, William Sims, helped collect and carry the Cherokee Indians west of the Mississippi River in 1836-38.

He was not a success in a financial way as most people count success; though his word was equal to his bond in any business transaction.

In regard to his religion, he believed he was prepared to meet Jesus in the great judgment, though he was not a church member. He was the most universally respected man I ever

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knew. If he had an enemy I have never found him. He was a very intimate friend of my father and our family for three-quarters of a century. He never had a lawsuit or used a pair of glasses to read. There never lived in this part of the state a greater hunter or a better marksman, he has killed as many as three deer, or ten or eleven turkeys in one day. Of course game was plentiful then. Once he bought thirty cents worth of ammunition and with this shot 29 shots and killed 28 turkeys.

In those days when shooting matches were common, he was often ruled out. On one occasion, just south of Woodville, at one of these shooting matches in which such great marksmen as Bunt Peters and Frank Cotton engaged, Mr. Sims shot three times for James Whitaker and got the first three choices of the beef.

He like other young men of his day, kept a good horse and saddle, and was a good rider, as was shown by riding from Nashville, Tennessee to Paint Rock Valley in two days, but on account of an accident, he had not ridden a horse in many years.

He was the champion walker of this section of the country-walking sixteen miles one day in January of this year. I have known him often to walk ten miles and not sit down to rest at the end of the journey. He was

an expert with the ax. When the old Memphis and Charleston railroad was built through Jackson County in 1853-54, he helped get the sills for the bridge across Paint Rock River. Irving Kerr and he sawed with a whip-saw thirty thousand feet of cedar lumber 7 feet long and 4 inches broad, to make the first tank-tubes used on this railroad.

In the Civil War he was drafted in the Condederate Cavalry in 1862 and served under Capt. Henry Smith, and while in this service rode a horse across the Tennessee River five times; twice in West Tennessee and three times in Alabama.

In July, 1864, he joined Captain John B Kennemer's Union Scouts and Guides and was for several years the sole surviving member of this company. His life was spent within the territory that was once Decatur County, except two years just after the Civil War spent in Indiana, where his first wife, Matilda Mays, died and was buried. He then returned with his three children to Alabama, and married Sarah A. Davis, with whom he lived 57 years till her death.

There are many other things I could tell of this remarkable man, but I reluctantly close by saying, his life should be an inspiration and benediction to his children and grandchildren and all who knew him to live a clean and temperate life.



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# Mr. Jodie Rogers

By Austin Miller

Jodie A. Rogers was born in 1876; his parents were slaves. Jodie came up in the South when black people had few rights. To survive, he had to be humble and kow-tow to the whims and wishes of white people regardless of their age or station in life. He bragged on everything we did no matter how unworthy of praise. He addressed me as Mr. Austin and said yes sir and no sir to me even before I started to school.

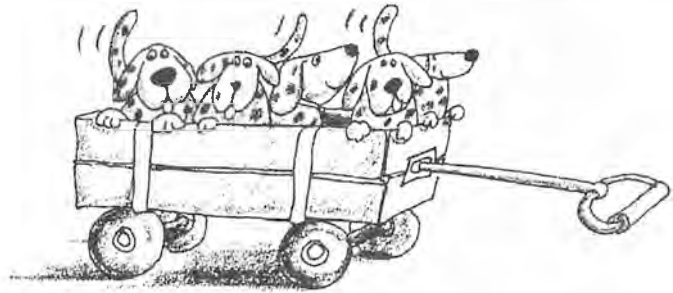
The first time I remember Jodie, at about age five, he and Daddy were running Mr. Wess Taylor's Bows out of their partnership watermelon patch. The patch located on the hill over looking land that we rented from Howard Tipton to grow cotton is now a housing development. I can still recall Jodie running after the cows, waving his arms and yelling, "HU—UH—IEE get on out of here cow." This must have been an omen because in later years Jodie and I became friends and spent much time talking about watermelons and watermelon patches.

Jodie lived in a one room shack on about three acres (the shack still stands) at the intersection of Dug Hill Road and Wess Taylor Road. He raised cotton on his three acres; Daddy turned the land and did his planting every spring. Jodie in turn repaid Daddy by helping us chop cotton. When I got old enough the turning and planting became my responsibility.

He owned a 32-caliber pistol

and two bullets for it that were no telling how old. He always talked about whizzing the bullets past somebody's heart if he caught them stealing his watermelons. We spent a lot of long hot summer days together chopping cotton. To help pass the time, I would tell him that he was the best watermelon grower around Ryland. Actually, he was the worst; all he could ever manage on his own was shriveled vines with a few fist busters about the size of basketballs. The best was another black man

named Bus Ford. Bus planted his patch, about three fourths of an acre, in a different secluded spot each year. When it was time for watermelons to start getting ripe, I would search until I found where it was located. Finding it was a delight. There was magic about seeing various varieties of big watermelons prominently visible in a lush carpet of thick green vines. I can still picture the beauty of the patch with its generous scattering of large round dark green Stone Mountains, round white-stripped Dixie Queens, oblong greenstripped Georgia Rattles Snakes and light gray/green Charleston Grays. In late July or early August when the oldest melons stated to ripen



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and the runners were still growing, you knew that you were viewing perfection cultivated by a master. As tasty as they were, I never took a single one or told anyone where the patch was hidden. I knew that if I asked, he would give me all the watermelons I wanted.

It always made Jodie beam when I bragged about him being the best. I don't know if he believed me but I do know he liked to hear me say it and I think saying it was a good thing.

Although Jodie never went to school a day in his life, he learned to read and write. He was a voracious reader and was more articulate than some college graduates I have known. He was a 32nd degree mason, which was a high honor among blacks as well as whites. He not only reached the top order but also held a position in the national organization. The benefit was that he got to travel by bus to meetings throughout the southeast. He often told me stories about his travels and the things he did at the meetings. It helped make the long cotton rows seem a little shorter.

He was married as a young man. I don't know what happened to his wife but I do know he had a daughter who lived up north and sent him presents at Christmas. When he worked for us, he ate with us but not at the table.

Mama, following the mores of the time, fixed his plate and let him eat alone outside under the old Elm tree by the well.

In the fall he picked his cotton and stored it in a little shed by his house until he got it all picked. It was my job to take him to the gin. I would usually come early on Saturday morning and help him move it from the shed

to our trailer. This normally took us a couple of hours. When we finished I would drive him and his cotton to the gin. One year, when I was about 16, he didn't get it all picked until late November. It was so late in the season that the Gin at Ryland had closed. This meant our only option was to take it to Maysville, about three miles away. We must



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have been a sight to behold. I pulled the trailer with Daddy's Super C Farmall (it is the one we still own) with an 80 year old black man and my eleven year old brother Berns riding on top of the cotton. At one point, we had several cars backed up behind our trailer.

When we got to the gin and pulled under the suck a fellow came out and said, "we are not running today, we only gin on Thursday." I knew the man by reputation. He was a notorious ruffian and thug who lived in Maysville. He routinely drove drunk, had many fights (fists and knives) and was once involved in a gun battle in broad daylight in downtown Maysville. I explained that we had come all the way from Ryland and needed to get the cotton ginned if at all possible. He responded by saying, "I didn't give a God damn, if you come from Mars". I told him we couldn't take it back because we didn't have any place to put it and it would surely get wet before we could bring it back again. I also told him that Daddy needed the trailer to gather corn

next week. He was not persuaded and three or four more of Maysville's finest soon gathered to see what was happening.

The gin owner, whose name was Harry Nance, came out of his office and asked, "what is the trouble?" The gin operator said, "he wants us to gin this nigger's cotton and I have told him twice we are closed." Mr. Nance, said, "boy, what is your name?" I told him, Austin Miller. He then asked, "are you Joe Miller's boy?" When I said yes, he turned to the operator and said, "gin his cotton!"

He didn't say a word at first, but when Mr. Nance was out of hearing range, he lit into a cussing fit that would make any sailor proud. It crossed my mind that he might treat Jodie out of spite. I knew there were several ways for a ginner to short farmers. A dishonest one could close off a head and divert some of the cotton to a side bin or not dump all the cotton in the press before it was packed into a bale. The

easiest way to cheat was related to the sample. When the bale was ginned and baled, the press man took a cotton knife and cut a long gash through the burlap wrapping. He then pulled out a handful of the ginned cotton, tagged it to identify the bale number and

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farmer's name. It was later sent to Huntsville for grading. If the gin sent the wrong sample of less quality, the farmer got paid less per pound. It occurred to me that, out of spite, he might try to cheat Jodie. However, I believe he got cheated because the bale weighed way over 500 pounds and I watched carefully to make sure the right sample was taken to the office. I was glad to get out of Maysville that day.

When I started to college a few years later I worked at the A&P store in Huntsville. I left home at 6:30AM in the morning, commuted to Athens College, had classes until 12 noon, commuted back to Huntsville in time to be at work at 1PM, got off work at 6:30PM and had until bedtime to study. The fact is, after a twelve-hour day, I was usually too tired to do much serious studying. This was my daily routine except for Saturday when I worked from 8AM until 7PM. Sunday was my off day but I usu-

ally had to study. It took all my pay (about \$30 a week) for tuition and other expenses related to school. I had no money left for entertainment or extras.

Jodie soon learned that I was working at A&P. On his first visit, he went throughout the store telling the manager, the other employees and the customers what a fine person Mr. Austin was and how lucky they were to have me as a worker. He periodically did this as long as I worked at the store. He soon became a fixture, associated with me by co workers and customers alike. He always sat on the ledge below the windows under the awning that went across the front of the store. He often stayed in Huntsville and would be there for hours during the day and be gone when I got off from work. Sometime, he would show up just before I got off from work to catch a ride to Ryland. He would regularly stop customers on their way in to the store and brag

about me; other times he would walk around in the store telling whomever would listen that Mr.

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Austin was a mighty fine fellow. Nobody seemed to mind and I am not aware that anybody ever complained. It was for certain a kinder gentler time.

One morning in January 1966, there was a foot of snow on the ground in Ryland and the temperature dropped below zero. I was at Fort Bragg but I was told that when Daddy realized how cold it was he looked out the back door toward Jodie's house and said I'll bet Jodie Rogers froze to death last night. They found him huddled inside his fireplace in a failed attempt to keep warm. He was 90 years old. It saddened me greatly when the letter came telling me that he was dead.

It was my good fortune to know Jodie Rogers. He told me once that I was his friend and he was like an old Indian in that he was loyal to his friends through thick and thin to the death. I am probably one of the few people alive today who had the privilege of knowing and being friends with a black man who was the son of slaves and lived his entire life under the rules of an old south society that is gone forever. Considering the times when he lived, he was remarkable in that he was a black man who could read and write, owned property and traveled to cities all around the southeast as a leader of his Masonic lodge. He did this at a time when travel outside Madison county or even Ryland was a novelty.

I often wonder what he could have accomplished if he had been born two generations later.

Old Huntsville

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# Letters From A Soldier

June 4th, 1862  
Huntsville, Alabama  
Miss M. J. Kirkpatrick:

I was glad to get your letter and to hear from home, the first time for a long, long, time. I have had good health, generally speaking.

I like soldiering very well yet. We had a very good march from Fayetteville to here (Huntsville). We are encamped about a half mile from town. This is the prettiest town I ever saw. It is as big as Evansville.

Our company and two more went down the Tennessee River, and we had some fun. We crossed the river and went five miles on the Cedar Mountain to hunt the Secesh. We could not find any though so we got some hams and shoulders of meat and chickens and came back.

We stayed there three days. There has been a fight, where we crossed the river. We are back at

camp, now. I think we get paid off tomorrow, and I expect to send a little money home. I will send home all that I can spare.

We can't get provisions very easy now. We have to haul it sixty miles.

We have not been in a fight lately. I was surely sorry to hear that Bob was wounded and had to come home. Tell Bob that I wish he had a new eye and that gun of his and that he was in his old regiment!

Then that would help to put the war right through. My respects to one and all. So no more now. I remain your brother until death.

August 11, 1862

Dear Sister,

I am well. I was glad to get your letter and to hear from home. I was on prevost guard yesterday. I tell you we have had a hard time.

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We have been living on half rations for about a month, but that do not make me tired of soldering.

We have been living on corn and chickens and peaches all the time and apples are plentiful. We don't have to work, for things are different and negroes do the work and we are getting to eat.

The boys would like to have a discharge to get home to see their mammies. I would to, if I knew it would crush the rebellion. I am a better soldier than you perhaps think. You may think I am in the guard house every day, but that is not so.

It is so awful hot here that you can mix up flour and lay it in the sun and it will bake quicker than if you put it into the oven. We don't need fire any more, we cook all by the sun.

Tell all the folks in the country I want to see them and talk to them about this war, and get them to enlist, for this is worst time in the world.

Well now, Martha give my best respects to all the girls and boys and tell them I am the same old George and always intend to be.

I remain your affectionate brother, until death.

June, 1863

Dear Sister,

I like this place very much. Since I wrote you, our company has been out on picket ten day, just got in, and are going in the morning.

We received our pay yesterday. Stone and I have been partners since we joined at Camp Vanderburg. He wants to buy him a new watch and I think I will lend some money to him.

There is not much stirring here just now. I kept my coat and everything I had, and I am going to send my dress coat home, and also a pair of trousers. I want you to lay them away in the drawer and have them for me, and I will get my likeness taken, and send to you.

I have no time to write for we are under arms and have been for twenty-four hours. We are called minute men, and we have to be ready at a moment's notice, night and day to go anywhere we are called. We had to sleep last night with our accoutrements on, and knapsacks rolled up.

So no more at present, from your brother until death,  
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# Old Huntsville Legends

by Colt McGaha

When Huntsville was settled by John Hunt in 1804 the town already had its legends. One of the first was about Monte Sano Mountain. One legend claims Monte was the son of a pioneer settler and had fallen as in love with an Indian princess. The two lovers' meeting place was at Inspiration Point.

Sadly, Monte was forced to tell his sweetheart that they could not marry because of opposition of both of their fathers. "Oh Monte, say no", she cried. Legend says they both jumped to their deaths so they could be re-

united in a different life.

Another legend claimed a young Indian girl named Monte was in love with a young brave. But another suitor, a white man, was also smitten by her. When the white man met Monte in the woods one day he asked for her hand in marriage. But the Indian brave was hiding behind a rock pleading softly, "Monte say no."

And it is also said that a physician named Dr. Thomas Fearn gave the mountain its name. In Italian it means mountain of health. Or at least that's what some people claim..

There is another interesting site on the mountain; a well off the east side of Panorama in the state park. It's over 8.4 meters in diameter, nearly 28 ft. One story about the well was that a man leaned over to look inside and his hat fell off. One week later his hat was reported floating in Big Spring Park. Another is about someone lowering a duck into the well and sure enough, a week later the duck was seen floating in Big Spring.

Now, as we come down the mountain, there are a few darker stories. Let's go to the Maple Hill Cemetery. Leroy Pope deeded the

city the land for the cemetery in 1822. It became Maple Hill Cemetery in 1901. In The 1930's gypsies gathered and held their own ceremony that consisted of long dark nights of chants to bury their queen who had been leading them through the town when she mysteriously died. The site of the grave is still unknown.

Other mystifying tales include the Union General, who is supposedly buried among 200 unmarked Confederate graves.

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Another is the Robinson mausoleum where John Lee Robinson is buried.

Probably the most well known is about a woman that was accidentally poisoned by her mammy and buried in a rocking chair. In the early 1830's, the Bibb Brothers, sons of the second Governor, fell in love with two cousins, Mary Smith Chambers and Mary Parrots Betts. They planned to have a double wedding as soon as the wedding dresses arrived from Paris where they were being made. Months passed and each day the women awaited their package. Finally a package arrived, but it only had one dress. The women decided that Mary Chambers would marry first. As the wedding day approached the girl's mammy became worried about the girls

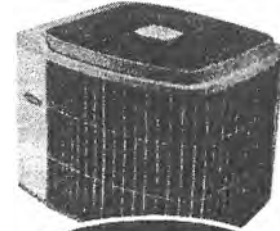
complexion and decided the girls needed some salts to restore their color.

Mary Chambers took the first spoonful and almost immediately collapsed on the floor. Instead of salt she had swallowed oxalic acid. Although they knew there was no hope of recovery it was decided that the wedding would go on. Three months later to the day, Mary Chambers Bibb died. It is claimed that she died while sitting in her favorite rocking chair so it was decided to bury her and the rocking chair together in what was the city's first mausoleum. Some people say that at certain times you can hear her rocking in her chair, or at least that's what they claim.

Another place with odd or mysterious occurrences is located just behind the cemetery.

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It's called Dead Children's Playground. At night, the swings will sway by themselves and the voices of young children can be heard. Some cases report images of the children in the swings. And although there is not enough evidence to verify or locate this one there is a story that says a man was catapulted into the air by some supernatural force.

Interested in caves? Well our next site is a cave, actually three caves. The caves are part of a quarry, dug out in the 1930's when the limestone was used for bridges, homes, and gravel roads. It is usually referred to as the three caves but is actually Fagan Springs. They were shut down in the 1940's and 50's, the time of the cold war. They were designated a fallout shelter which could hold as many as 18,000 people. Then, in 1978 a production company called Cinecorp came to Huntsville to film a movie. The producer, John Hyde, chose the three caves to shoot the movie called The Ravagers, starring Richard Harris and Art Carney. Many locals

would also appear in the movie including two main female roles. The film was about a group of people called flockers, who had survived an atomic holocaust 40 years earlier.

Later the cave was pretty much abandoned. Drinking, drug abuse and vandalism were frequent activities at the caves. Then groups of people started going near the caves for satanic rituals. Pentagrams and other markings of the occult were painted on the walls. The Huntsville police quickly put a stop to those activities.

Our next Huntsville legend is about Sally Carter, a young girl who died in 1837 while visiting her sister, Mary Carter Ewing, the wife of a wealthy land owner. The plantation that Mr. and Mrs. Stephan Ewing owned is on the corner of Whitesburg and Drake. They named it Cedarhurst because of the beautiful green cedars that lined the driveway.

When Sally became sick and died, the family buried her in the cemetery on the plantation. Shortly afterward the Ewing's' three daughters caught whooping cough, and died. They too were buried in the cemetery. Mary joined her sister and daughters in 1865. The next 50 years saw a number of owners.

However the first report of Sally was when the Davises lived here. A young woman was in a bedroom upstairs when she heard ghostly footsteps walking up the stairs. Frightened, she stood still until finally her nerve broke and she frantically ran downstairs. Mrs. Davis saw the frightened girl and asked what was wrong. When she told her what had happened, Mrs. Davis responded, "It was only Sally".

The young lady didn't report

*continued on page 60*

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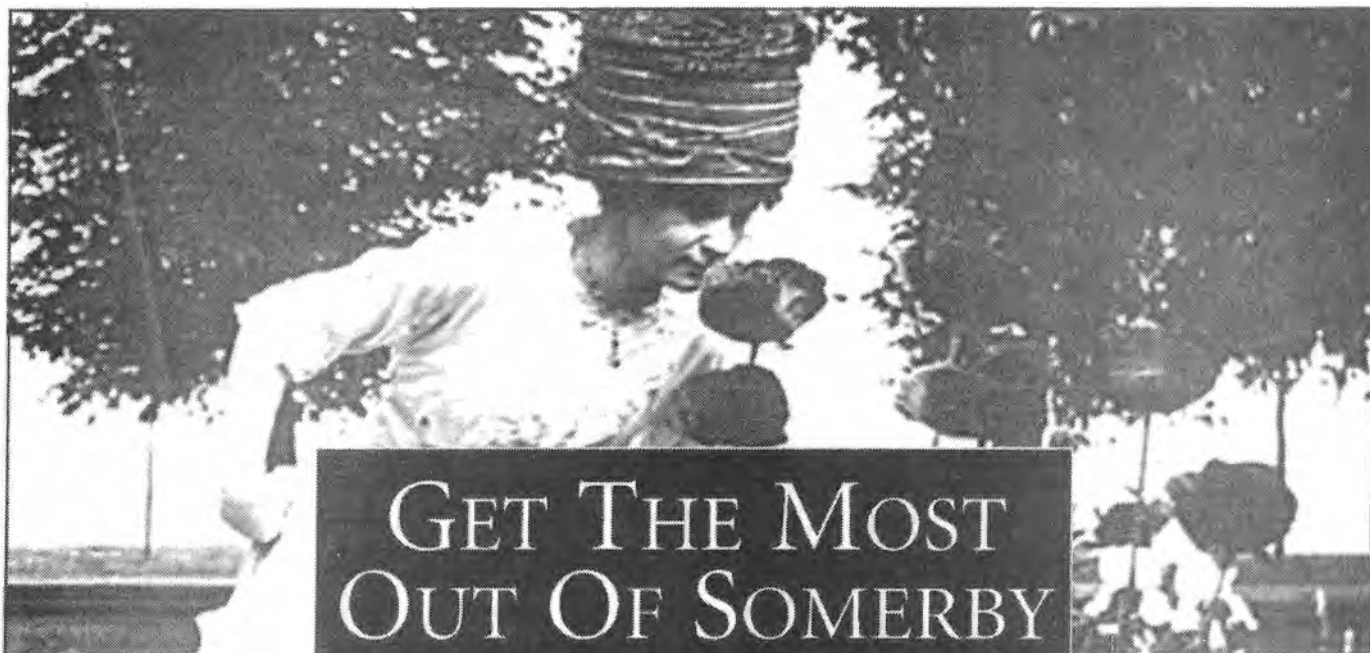



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# When People Danced In A Cave

Just a few miles up Pulaski Pike, well within the city limits, is a cave that was once heralded as the most popular nightclub in this area.

The early history of Shelta Cave is lost in the shroud of history, but some of the earliest stories tell of Confederate soldiers hiding in the cave to escape searching Union soldiers. One rumor that persists to this day concerns a bloody hand-to-hand battle supposedly fought in the depths of the cavern on the shores of a vast underground lake.

Like any other large cave, it has legends woven around it concerning buried treasure, ghosts, and eerie noises. These remained just legends with no basis in fact until 1888 when a Mr. Bolen James sold the land to a Mr. Henry Fuller.

Not much is known about the early life of Mr. Fuller, but judging from his actions he must have been a born entrepreneur.

Immediately after taking possession of the cave, he hired a team of carpenters to install steps down into the main chamber. Next he assembled a crew of craftsmen to install a dance

floor in one of the great rooms with large stand-up bars at each end. He made no secret of the fact that he intended to open the grandest, fanciest, and most unusual dance hall in Alabama.

Huntsville had seen its share of weird, wacky ideas, but a dance hall in a cave? Even by Huntsville's standards that was too much. Townspeople began to call the yet uncompleted dance hall "Fuller's Folly."

As is true in many a new business, Fuller soon found himself facing a slight problem—too many ideas and not enough money. Reluctantly he let himself be talked into forming a corporation called, appropriately enough, Shelta Cave Corp. With this new influx of money from investors came new opportunities and it wasn't long before Fuller heard of a new attraction in Nashville that he thought would be perfect for the business.

There had been much talk in Huntsville about a new invention called "electric lights." But while most people dismissed it as just another crazy idea, Fuller was determined to light his dance floor with the "marvel of modern

technology." Within days of Fuller's visit to Nashville, workmen arrived to begin stringing wire throughout the cave.

Although few people realize it today, when Fuller pulled the switch on his new lighting system, he earned himself (and the dance hall) a place in Huntsville's history as having the first electric light bulbs in Madison County.

Even this was not enough for Fuller, for as he cast his eyes upon the vast underground lake he began to see another possibility for potential profits. Within the week neighbors watched in amazement as workmen unloaded three large boats from a wagon and awkwardly maneuvered them down the steps.

The citizens of Huntsville must have had a good chuckle when he announced his intentions of providing "Underground Boat Rides." And, as if that was

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not enough, he purchased hundreds of Japanese lanterns to hang overhead!

Finally the day of the "Grand Opening" arrived, and true to Fuller's predictions, crowds thronged the cave to see the marvel of electric lighting, ride the boats and dance to the sound of a newly hired band. With the admission price of one dollar, Fuller should have been able to make a profit, but unfortunately, he was too deeply in debt. Also, the townspeople, after making one or two visits to the entertainment mecca, quickly lost interest.

Desperate for money, Fuller began to travel throughout the South promoting Huntsville and Shelta Cave as a convention center. Evidently he had some success, as the *Huntsville Mercury* in 1889 ran an article about a gathering of the press association:

"The entertainment of the Press Association by the citizens of Huntsville closed today with a grand barbecue in Shelta Cav-

erns and nearly one hundred delegates and their ladies were in attendance. The affair was gotten up in a delightful manner and the beauties of the place were fully investigated by the astonished guests."

According to rumor, Fuller, or one of his cohorts, in another effort to stimulate business, (and keep down overhead) actually operated a moonshine still in one of the dark comers of the cave. Years later when it was discovered that Shelta Cave was the home of a rare species of blind shrimp, one local wag laughed and said, "Hell, that lickker

made a lot of people almost blind, I reckon some of it could have spilled into the lake!"

Another story of the day concerns a duel fought over a lady's honor at the edge of the dance floor. The gentlemen, each slightly intoxicated, were pursuing the same girl at the same time when they happened to accidentally meet at the dance. Harsh words were exchanged and to everyone's horror, they pulled pistols from underneath their coats. Both fired, and both missed. Fortunately they let themselves be led away before real harm could be done.

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The only casualty of the duel was a member of the band who was slightly injured by a falling stalactite.

As almost any nightclub owner can tell you, crowds are fickle, and within a few years the dance hall was again facing financial ruin. This time, even Fuller's salesmanship could not save it. On June 28, 1897, the cave was sold at a sheriff's sale on the steps of the courthouse to settle a judgement.

Although there is no documentation to support it, natives of Huntsville, who remember the 1920s and 1930s, swear that there was once a speakeasy located in the cave. Other sources claim that moonshine was produced in the cave at intervals all the way up to World War II. Another persistent rumor claims the cave was used as a liquor and beer warehouse during prohibition.

In 1968, after being neglected for years, the cave was purchased by the National Speleological Society. An iron gate has been placed over the entrance to prevent accidents.

**There are 3 billion women who don't look like supermodels and only eight who do.**

### Eggplant Fritters

1 medium eggplant boiled and mashed fine  
 1 tablespoon butter  
 1/4 cup milk  
 1 cup bread crumbs  
 1 onion  
 2 eggs  
 salt and pepper to taste  
 Mix all ingredients together, cover top with the bread crumbs and bake in moderate oven 30 to 40 minutes.

## Woman Starves To Death As She Sleeps

From 1904 newspaper

Mrs. Sallie Rutherford, of Lacey's Spring, was stricken with what was labeled as "Inflammation." She fell into a coma immediately to the dismay of her entire family and her jaws were so tightly locked in place that no food, liquid, or solid could be administered to her.

Known as "The Sleeping Woman", her case attracted national attention and physicians from all over the country visited her. After 57 days with no food or water, Mrs. Rutherford awoke and quietly asked for something to drink.

Alas, she was unable to digest any food or drink and after lingering on for a few more days, she died of starvation.

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# An Old Man's Revenge

I, John Thomason, knowing that my remaining days are few, take pen in hand to render my last will and testament.

I ask that Horace Cauthron, my good friend of thirty-two years, be the executor of my wishes. He is to be paid the normal fees as is customary for such situations,

He is to pay all debts owed by me from funds on deposit with the Bank of Scottsboro.

To my wife, Mary, who has remained steadfast at my side for sixty-three years I leave a lifetime of memories and love along with my sorrow at the many times I have caused her anguish.

It is my hope that the good days will heavily outweigh the bad days.

In addition, I leave her our home and farm, with all its furnishings, implements and livestock that she might live her remaining days in a comfortable manner in which she deserves.

In addition, I leave her all my stocks and bonds currently on deposit with the Chattanooga Trust Bank, in addition to any other monies due my estate, that she may continue to derive income from such.

For my oldest son, John, I leave the amount of ten thousand dollars to be paid up on the tenth anniversary of my death, or on the occasion of his mother's death, on the condition he visits her every week and continues to maintain the relationship of a loving son.

If he fails to do so, the money shall be given to a church of the executors choosing.

For my son, Perry, who has caused his mother and I so much grief for so many years, I leave the amount of three thousand dollars which is in a metal box, buried on the farm in a location

known only to me.

If he can find the money it is his to keep.

It is my hope that after weeks of grubbing in the dirt he will realize the folly of chasing dreams.

In addition, a sum of seven thousand dollars shall be paid to him only after the completion of ten years full-time employment, in a manner consistent with the morals of the commu-

nity.

If he fails to do so, the money shall be given to a church of the executors choosing.

John Thomason  
July 4, 1923



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# Household Tips From Liz



Place jars of sticky food (honey, molasses) on plastic lids in your pantry to avoid sticky messes.

To get odors out of plastic containers, just crumple up some newspaper and put it inside the container, add top and let stay that way overnight.

A paint scraper works well in removing baked on or cemented goo from countertops, stovetops, floors, etc.

Keep a pair of scissors in your gadget drawer along with a box cutter for quick opening of packages, boxes, etc.

Hold a scouring pad underneath a sponge when scrubbing. This gives you a better grip and will protect your hands.

Red and green peppers and

onions can be chopped and frozen for use in dishes later.

Try frying them in some butter/salt/pepper, freeze, then use small portions for your scrambled eggs!

Before you juice that lemon or lime, wash well and grate off the top layer of rind for use as zest later (can be frozen). Then just store your fruit for use later.

To make a quick garlic butter, squeeze a clove of garlic through a garlic press with a small amount of butter for perfect garlic butter for toast, veggies, fish - whatever!

Want some whipped cream and don't have a mixer? Put your whipping cream in a bowl with a tight lid (like Tupperware) and shake vigorously.

Before you throw away those plastic mustard containers, add a tablespoon or two of olive oil, white or red vinegar, salt and pepper and shake. You'll have a great salad dressing mustard vinaigrette!

Caring for your your drain and other kitchen boards - to

make them shine like the shields of white knights, mix salt with borax and scrub with a chunk of pumice stone.

## What's That Stuff???

One of the biggest questions we get continuously is "what is that black stuff growing on my roof?". Here in the Huntsville area it is usually fungus, sometimes it is our famous black moss, but most cases it is just plain old mold.

It is important that this be cleaned for several reasons.

1. Mold has to eat something. In this case the food source is your roof. The more it eats the faster you have to replace your roof.

2. Mold holds water. This creates water damage, extra weight on your roof, and the black color will increase your cooling cost during the summer months.

3. Finally, some molds are allergens. People with allergies find they breathe easier after cleaning their roofs. Especially if they have a deck or pool on the north side of their home where this type of mold grows.

EnviroSafe uses an enzyme-based cleaner that helps restore the roof and does not harm your plants or property. We also use low pressure in the rinse cycle, so as to further protect your roof.

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# Rediscovering A Once Essential Language

by Frankie L. Preston

Recently my twelve-year old son and I were riding near my first home still located at 806 McKinley Avenue. We referred to our neighborhood as "Dallas" or "Dallas Village" named after Dallas Mills - a once prosperous cotton textile mill. The houses, all built in similar manner with wooden drop siding and slate roofing, were a mixture of single unit and duplex dwellings. These residences were originally constructed without indoor toilet-bathing facilities, heated by coal, and naturally cooled by opening wooden-framed screened windows and doors. "Dallas" was separated from "Lincoln Village," only by highly banked railroad tracks. Lincoln Mills was a similarly situated community with houses styled about like those in Dallas. They too were initially built for textile cotton mill workers and their families. These adjoining locales were arranged so workers could walk to and from work, and most had no need for automobiles.

Noticing the close proximity of housing and the small lots on which they were positioned, my son asked a perfectly good 12 year-old question: "Where did you play?" I spontaneously answered by telling him about riding bicycles on side-walks and "back alleys", making forts in "coalhouses," fishing at the "mill-pond", attempting to be "king of the hill" in competition with the Lincoln Kids, and forever exploring the "big-ditch." Upon providing this answer I realized I was using an antiquated language that only a cotton mill villager could comprehend.

"What's a back alley?" he queried, and immediately I directed our Land Rover onto a side street, saying: "I'll show you." This was a quick solution. Most homes south of Oakwood Avenue, north of Pratt Avenue, East of Maysville Road and West of what was Dallas Street, now I-565, maintain some semblance of "back-alleys." I said: "these are called back alleys because they are small roads located at the back of the houses and lots making up a "block." Thinking we were beyond the "what then" prefaced questions more typical of younger children, he further quizzed me: "What's a block?"

Going into my memory banks, I quickly counted to myself identifying the number of

houses located on a block before saying: " a block is made up of twelve houses surrounded by paved roads." "Six face the north; six face the south; and the back-sides of these twelve homes are separated by a back alley." Of course he would naturally request that I explain: "why did you need back alleys?"

Anticipating his next question before I added: "You need back alleys to get to the coalhouses," I began my search for an intact coalhouse. Locating one with the two sliding doors, one near the flooring and the other about chest high was challenging, since many are obsolete. Hotdog! Finally we found one, and then I explained that coal houses are named as such because people living in Dallas needed coal for heating, and the chest high door could be slid open for a wagon or truck driver to scoop coal into a coal bin where it could be kept dry until



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transported by a coal scuttle (we have a coal scuttle so he knew what this was) into the house for burning. The lower door I described was for: taking out a five-gallon bucket where people went to the bathroom. Oh boy, this prompted a laughing seizure and more questions.

By the time I was born in 1956 our home had indoor toilet and bathing facilities, a gas floor furnace, and a window-unit "air-conditioner" (cooling device), a "washing machine" (clothes washer) and only by stories told me, I shared with my son that the lower coalhouse door was opened to access a bucket and the contents were reportedly deposited in a vehicle known as the "honey wagon." Foregoing disclosure about notorious local legends of the "honey wagon" I simply enjoyed Matthew's second laughing seizure. After establishing that he had heard Mim-mau' say "toilet paper" I explained that there was a time when people used newspaper, magazine and catalogue pages to clean themselves after using the restroom. "Oooh...how disgusting", he commented.

We traveled to the intersection of Russell Street and Oakwood Avenue, where the "big ditch" once ran. I traced for him the path (now underground) of this tributary, and how this big ditch ran into the "Pin-Hook Creek" which eventually deposits into the Tennessee River. One

of the first underground enclosures ran from McKinley Avenue two "blocks" south nearest to Halsey Avenue and Andrew Jackson Way (commonly referenced by villagers as "Fifth Street"- it's former designation) just beneath Aunt Eunice's parking lot. Rock hunting, running into a 300 foot stretch of darkness known to house cotton-mouth snakes, broken glass, rusted cans, various deposits of trash, and a mosquito breeding ground during strategic war gaming, and taking falls into temporary standing waters from a tree-swing rope became an irresistible temptation for local boys, not to mention a reason for taking regular tetanus "shots" (immunization) provided at the health department.

I couldn't show Matt the "millpond". It has been covered since Dallas Mills burned and

remains were removed, so I showed him the lot where the

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massive bricked building once stood. The millpond located between the Mill, a section of the big ditch and fire station number one (now retired) was a depository for mill waste. It was an oval shaped and concrete lined pond approximately 100 feet by 60 feet. We knew what it was used for and never knew how deep it was because nobody ever wanted to jump in the millpond. There was a brittle creosote pier onto which one could carefully maneuver (after crawling through a broken chain-linked fence) and "drop a line." One piece of bacon, a Zebco 101 reel and rod, and a buddy or two could catch a couple hundred "throw back" bream as fast as you could bait-up. We didn't dare take one home because these fish were tainted.

The Lincoln boys were known to drop a line in the millpond too sneaking into the fence from the west. Sometimes the Dallas boys would catch them down on the pond and would naturally start throwing rocks from the eastside of the fence. To be sure of uninterrupted fishing, someone from Dallas or Lincoln would post themselves atop the railroad tracks (king of the hill) to warn their buddies if the other side was coming.

We took turns fishing and watching from the tracks. Other than the Dallas watchmen (probably the boys of Lincoln too) arranging a few pennies for smashing by passing by trains, amazingly, no damage was done. Ironically Dallas and Lincoln folks were often related, children attended the same schools, and families attended the same church. In retrospect, I believe we were naturally territorial but always aware of the grave consequences of harming others or defacing or destroying property not ours.

Time and culture affects lan-

guage. My simple and valued rendezvous with my son both riding in a Land Rover on a Sunday afternoon reminded me how different my life has become. I wonder what might happen if I wrote my children (ages 14, 12, and 6) a note that said:

"Rise and shine, put on your Sunday shoes, your gallowses are on the clothes hne. Grub is on the hot water heater, and cold drinks are in the icebox. Put the dog under the house and turn off

the hose pipe after you give them a drink. Unplug the picture tube from the drop cord. Turn the heat up. Get your book satchel, latch the screen door, and ride your wheel to school. I'll be home before you get out.

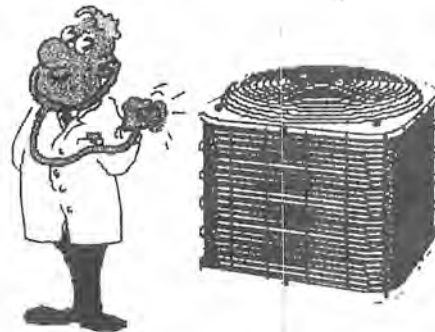
They might become mental, start having fits, or taken to sinking spells.

Everyone has a photographic memory - some just don't have the film.

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# Legends

cont. from page 50

the incident until 50 years later. In 1919 J.D. Thornton bought the plantation. Not long after Mrs. Thornton's seventeen year old cousin, Charles Roland was there. He slept on a cot outside the bedroom where Sally died. During the night a terrible storm came, fierce lightning and thunder, and terrible winds that tore through the trees. Although the storm was gone by breakfast, so was Charles. When Mrs. Thornton found him, he was shaking all over. He said he had seen a ghost. It came during the night in the form of a beautiful teenage girl. The girl claimed to be Sally. She said that the storm had blown down her gravestone and asked if Charles would put it back. After breakfast the family walked to the graveyard, and sure enough the tombstone lay on the ground.

For some reason no one ever put the stone upright. Perhaps that is why, to this day, strange things take place. Visitors admit hearing sounds like walking, doors opening and closing and other noises. Another person who stayed in the house reported ashtrays being tossed and doors locking and unlocking.

In the early 1980's the graves were be moved to make room for a new development. According to reports made by workers, Mary Carter Ewing was found with little problems, however after nearly digging up the whole yard.

Sally was never found. The new burial spots were not to be revealed, but maybe Sally didn't want to move. Since then Sallies room has been redecorated, and then demolished with no explanation. Or, at least that's what they say.

Now another, lesser known spirit is that of Dr. Banister, a prominent Huntsville citizen who

died in 1901 but has been known to make his presence known. As a well known Reverend, he taught many catechism classes here. He was also known to be extremely fond of a fine cigar.

After his death the new owners began to experience mysterious occurrences. One night, while preparing to entertain a group of friends, the owner's wife

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began putting out ashtrays. When she came back to a room, about twenty minutes later, she saw a three inch long cigar ash next to an empty ashtray. Then as they retired for bed, they thought they heard a man coughing. As they cautiously came down stairs, they discovered the living room was full of cigar smoke. The ghost of Dr. John Monro Bannister is also known for making clocks go crazy, and knocking pictures off the walls. The new owners claimed he was easy to live with, but sometimes they would have to be stern with him.

Or at least, that's what they say.

## UNUSUAL SUPERSTITIONS

- Don't throw your hair clippings out of an open window - that signifies bad luck to the thrower.
- If you kill frogs, your cows will "go dry"
- Tickling a baby will cause it to stutter
- To thank a person for combing your hair is bad luck
- To allow a child to look into a mirror before it is a month old will cause it trouble in teething
- A child will have the nature and disposition similar to that of the person who first takes it out of doors.
- If a person comes into your presence while you are saying bad things about him, and he puts his hands anywhere on you, you will die.
- Plant all seeds, make soap and kill meat on the increase of the moon. If done on the decrease, the seeds will not grow, the soap will not lather and the meat will shrink.
- If on a cloudy morning blue sky is seen sufficient it make a pair of pants, the sun will come out.
- Wasps coming out thick, in the fall, is a sign that winter is about to set in.
- Misfortune will come to you if you sell or pawn a wedding gift. Above all, never hock your wedding ring.
- If you work on the day of your wedding you will have to work always.
- It is very bad luck to sweep your house on Friday night.
- If rats cut your clothes, do not allow your kinfolks to mend them.
- When you hear the first dove of the spring, take off your right shoe and you will find a strand of the man's hair you are to marry.

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# A Suspect Doctor

From 1898 newspaper

Dr. Charles Donaldson, a patent medicine fakir by profession, and who claims to be a painter by trade, is in jail here charged with the murder of the wife of J.D. Key. Last Thursday, he gave Mrs. Key a dose of medicine and in less than two hours the lady was dead. Color is given to this case by the fact that previously he gave it to a child, who at once sank into a stupor and it took the combination of physicians and a nurse to revive it.

Donaldson claims the medicine administered is made from herbs and he has been making it and selling it for twenty years, having disposed of much of it in East Alabama. A quantity of his medicine has been sent to the state chemist and the "herb doctor" will remain in jail awaiting developments.

Donaldson is about 50 years of age, and is accompanied by a lady of about 18 years of age, whom he claims is his wife. He says he married the former Miss Miller, about eight months ago in Goodwater, Ala., and that she has a father who is a carpenter and a brother, who is a painter living there. "Dr." Donaldson had visited Goodwater in March, 1897. He was engaged in painting and peddling a liniment and smelling bottle of his own manufacture. No one knew from where he came, and, while possessing of mystery, he was, while in

Goodwater, quiet and law abiding.

When the pair first arrived here, they had spent a night in a thicket on the edge of town and said they were enroute to Florence. The universal verdict is that something strange is connected with the couple.

## Potatoe Cake

### Recipe From 1840

6 c. hot mashed potatoes 1/2 c. butter  
 1/4 c. sugar  
 Grated rind and juice of a lemon 1/2 t. salt  
 1/3 c. soft breadcrumbs 8 eggs, beaten  
 1/2 t. vanilla extract  
 1/8 t. each: ground nutmeg, ground cinnamon, ground allspice, ground cloves  
 Combine first 5 ingredients -

stir til butter melts. Set aside to cool at room temperatures. Coat sides and bottom of a heavily greased 2-quart baking dish with breadcrumbs, set aside. Add the eggs to the potato mixture and mix til combined. Stir in remaining ingredients, mix well. Pour the mixture into prepared dish and bake at 350 for 45 minutes or lightly browned. Serve immediately.

  
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