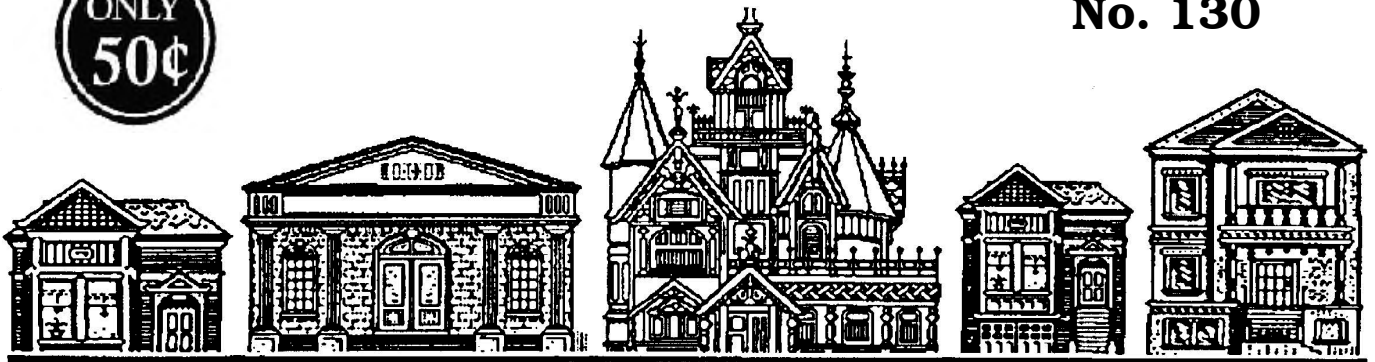


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Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY



The Delmore Brothers

Nashville was the center of the music universe, but even that city had never heard music like the Delmore Brothers'. When the song was finished the studio remained deathly quiet, with no one saying a word and the brothers standing there, awkwardly waiting for someone to tell them what to do next.

Finally the silence was broken by Harry Stone, "Boys, welcome to the Grand Ole Opry!"

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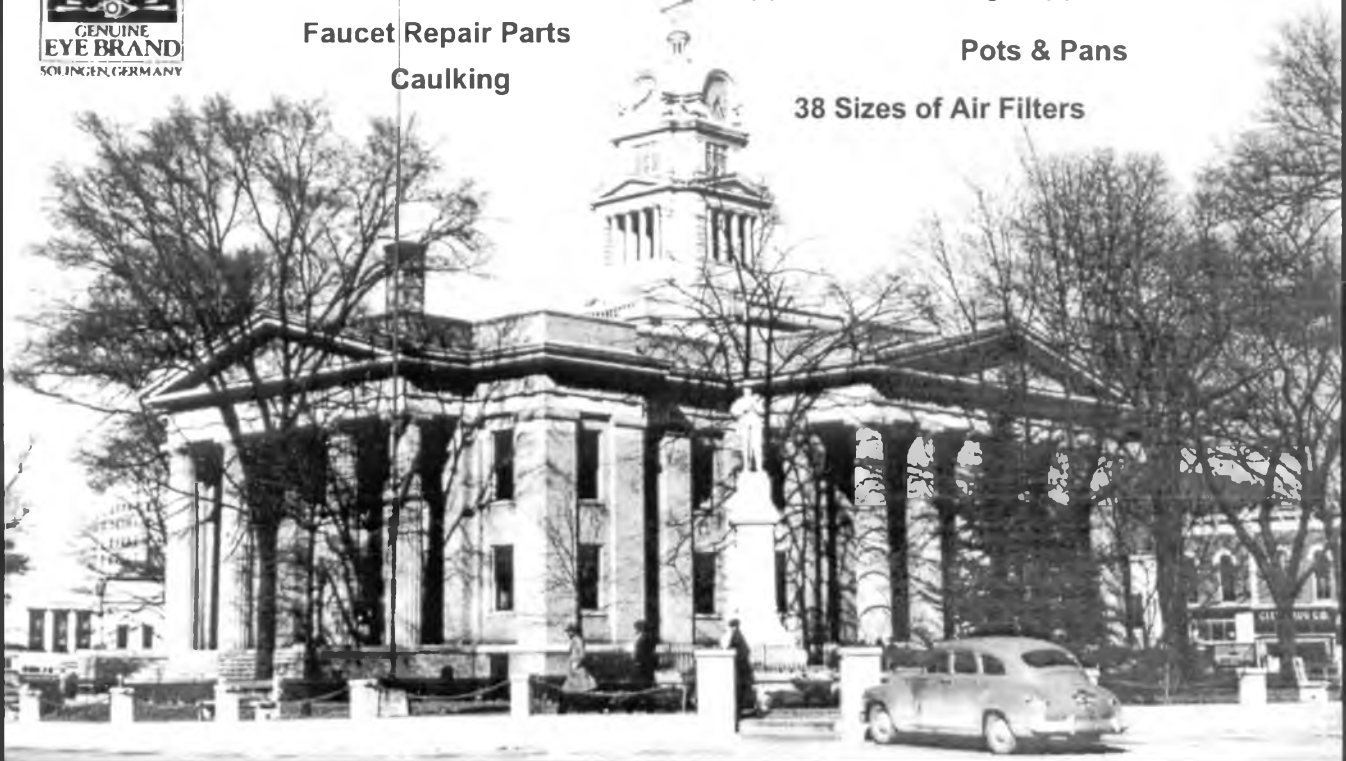


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The Delmore Brothers

There was no reason for anyone to pay any attention to the mailman walking his route down Clinton Avenue and back up Randolph. He was just another mailman, walking his route and doing his job. The only difference might have occurred on a hot summer day; the kind of day where people left their windows open and you could hear the sound of the radio coming from somewhere inside.

You might have seen the mailman approach the house and pause for a minute as he recognized the music coming from within. Perhaps it was a song by Rosemary Clooney; an ever popular piece of music entitled "Beautiful Brown Eyes."

Perhaps a tear would have come to his eyes as he listened to the timeless melody and let his mind wander back years ago when he wore sequined stage clothes in place of a mailman's uniform. Instead of delivering the mail, he had received thousands of letters and postcards from adoring fans who grew up listening to his music.

And perhaps, when the last sounds of the music finally died away, the mailman would turn to leave, a gentle smile playing around the corners of his eyes. "Beautiful Brown Eyes" - it was his music - his words - and people still remembered.

Alton Delmore, born on Christmas day in 1908, was the oldest of ten children born to poor tenant farmers who struggled to earn a living on worn out red dirt farms in Limestone County. Like so many other people of that era the family found refuge in a musical culture unique to the hard times, and hard work, associated with the cotton fields of the South.

Many of his family members played musical instruments and wrote songs that were performed at family reunions and church services. His Uncle Will was a music teacher who taught Alton to read notes and how to blend voice and music into a soulful and haunting harmony. Will saw a natural talent in the young boy and encouraged him to put his music on paper. When Alton was thirteen he wrote, along with his mother, his first song, a gospel song, entitled "Bound For The Shore."

This was the first of over 1000 songs he was to write during his life.

His younger brother, Rabon, who, by the time he was nine years old, was already an accom-



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plished fiddle and guitar player, followed in his footsteps. In 1926, when Alton was 18 and Rabon 9, the brothers entered a competition at a local high school. During the first half of their song they were virtually ignored by the loud and raucous crowd but then the room grew quiet as the brothers' voices blended into a perfect harmony, penetrating every nook and cranny of the auditorium.

The brothers won second prize and a duet that would later become famous to radio audiences throughout the country was born - the Delmore Brothers.

From an early age Alton and Rabon were encouraged by their family to seek a career in music. The boys would often work in the cotton fields all day and then travel to a nearby town to enter another competition that night. The prizes weren't much - five dollars here and maybe a tank of gas at another - but it was enough to keep the dream alive in the brothers' minds.

Being dirt poor, the brothers often had to improvise. Their mother sewed cases for their guitars from old cotton sacks and the brothers painted their names on them with pokeberry juice. Often times there was no money for gas to travel to local competitions and the boys would be forced to hitch rides. Alton later told of hitching a ride one

evening to a town about twenty miles distant. Sometime during the evening the man they were riding with left, and the boys were forced to walk home, arriving just in time for another day in the cotton fields.

Their first break came at the Fiddlers' Convention in Athens where they performed one of their original songs, "Brown's Ferry Blues." With the first place win, their names appeared in the paper and they were invited to Atlanta, Georgia to audition for Columbia Records.

For two boys who carried their guitars in cases made of cotton sacks, the whole experience was bewildering. They had no concept of contracts, managers or royalties. They simply wanted to perform their songs the way they wanted to.

Alton later confided that he asked what that "little can on the end of that pole was." It was the first time the brothers had ever seen a microphone.

They recorded two of their original songs, "I've Got the Kansas City Blues" and "Alabama Lullaby," which became their theme song. They were riding high but the timing was poor, a condition that marked their entire music careers. Columbia was having financial problems due to the Depression and was unable to distribute the records. In the end the company sold only 500 copies.

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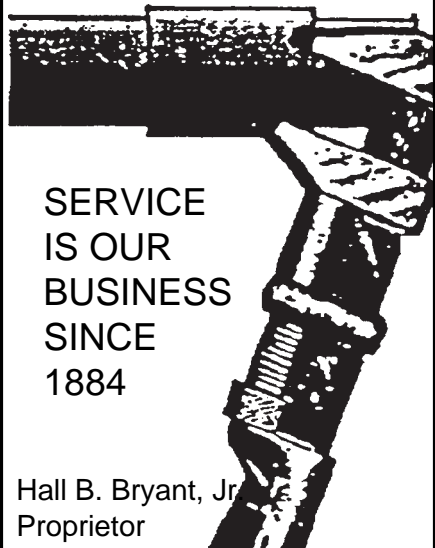


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Although they made no money from the record, it caused the music industry in Nashville to take notice. In 1932 they were asked to audition with WSM Radio in Nashville for the Grand Ole Opry.

The audition got off to a bad start when they arrived a day late; they had had to borrow a car and gas money to make the short drive to Nashville. In addition, the song they performed was a worn out and poor version of a song that had been played by almost every artist on the Grand Ole Opry at some time or the other. The brothers were also petrified at the thought of actually playing the Opry.

Harry Stone, the Opry manager, took the brothers aside, telling them to relax and "just play your own music the same way you would if were back home." Minutes later they were back before the microphone doing "The Brown's Ferry Blues."

Nashville was the center of the music universe but even that city had never heard music like the Delmore Brothers'. When the song was finished the studio remained deathly quite, with no one saying a word and the brothers standing there awkwardly waiting for someone to tell them what to do next.

Finally the silence was broken by Harry Stone, "Boys, welcome to the Grand Ole Opry!"

After years of struggling, the Delmore Brothers became famous almost overnight. Their regular weekly spot on the Opry made them famous and they received more fan mail than most regulars who had been appearing for years. They were the super stars at a time when people were glued to the radio every Saturday night.

Unfortunately, fame does not always translate to riches. By one account, the brothers were only paid twenty-five dollars a week by the Opry who told them, "Boys, we'll make you famous, but you have to make your own money."

The following years became a succession of one-night stands, in towns all across the South and up and down the east coast. Oftentimes they would perform and then have to drive all night to the next show, or back to Nashville in time for the Opry.

Alton later credited this time as being their most creative period. With Alton driving, and Rabon unable to drive, the broth-

ers spent countless hours shuttling between shows and brainstorming about new songs. In several instances they actually performed the new songs the same night.

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During this period the Delmores signed with Victor Records, with whom they would eventually cut more than eighty songs including "Gonna Lay Down My Old Guitar," "Big River Blues" and "Blue Railroad Train," a tribute to Jimmie Rodgers, and the legendary "Brown's Ferry Blues."

In 1938 the brothers left the Grand Old Opry. There had been too many internal arguments among management over the Delmore Brothers and their compensation. Finally, as one person declared, "the boys just decided it wasn't worth it anymore. They weren't making any money but the Opry kept wanting more of their time."

Undoubtedly, the fact that both brothers had gotten married and were starting families had a major impact on their decision. Although they were famous beyond their wildest dreams, they were still broke. Alton himself later admitted that he didn't have the business sense needed to deal with the many complicated business matters they encountered. They would often drive all day and night to perform, only to find out that the promoter had left with the money after the performance. Many records, despite how successful they became, always ended up losing money according to the record companies. Even more

disheartening for Alton was turning the radio on and hearing one of his songs being played by someone who had stolen it.

One of his songs, "Beautiful Brown Eyes," should have earned Alton huge sums of money, but he never filed a copyright. When someone else claimed to be the author, Alton with no money for a lengthy court battle, sold his rights for \$1500.

After leaving the Opry, the brothers spent years working the radio stations all across the country ranging from Del Rio, Texas to Baltimore, Maryland. Unfortunately, while radio promoters wanted to lure major stars to their stations, the management would soon tire of writing checks to the same performer every week. In all, the Delmores performed shows in 38 states and were regulars on 14 radio stations during this period.

Striking out on their own, they formed a gospel quartet called the Brown's Ferry Four which included Merle Travis, Grandpa Jones and Red Foley. One of the Delmore's most endearing gospel songs, "There's A Page In the Bible", was written at this time. They recorded for the King label that they helped

founded in 1944 with entrepreneur Syd Nathan.

During the 40's they began to expand the music to include full-band backups, with bass mandolin, steel guitar and harmonicas among other instruments. Alton usually sang lead but they

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would often switch harmony, sometimes within the same song. These bluesy songs appealed to many because they could relate to the down-to-earth topics that real people found commonplace, like the sorrow of love lost and good-natured humor for everyday living. The rhythm of many of these songs became the foundation for the future "rock-n-roll" sound and American "pop" that prevails today.

In 1947 the brothers moved to Memphis at a time when "Rock-a-billy" was just beginning. They quickly adapted to the new scene and wrote some of their most memorable songs such as "Freight Train Boogie," "Midnight Special," and the classic "Blues Stay Away From Me."

Still, financial success continued to elude the brothers. The royalties for their songs, when they got paid, amounted to very little and they were forced to continue touring. Perhaps it was the financial disappointment, or maybe the constant stress of never-ending performances, but for whatever the reason, both brothers began to drink heavily.

"It was impossible to get a good conversation going - everyone was talking too much."

Yogi Berra

By 1951 they were living in Houston, Texas where Rabon had taken a job as a bartender and Alton was still trying to collect some of the money owed for his songs.

The fortunes of the Delmore Brothers hit rock bottom in that same year. Totally broke, with not even enough money to buy groceries, Alton sat down with his family for a Thanksgiving dinner of apples and mayonnaise. A radio was playing in the background, tuned to the "Hit Parade," the country's top radio show. When it was announced that "Beautiful Brown Eyes" had made it onto the top ten chart, Alton laid his head on the table and cried. "I've got one of the top songs in the country and can't even afford to buy my family Thanksgiving dinner."

A year later Rabon Delmore died of lung cancer followed soon afterwards by the death of Alton's daughter. That event, in combination with a heart attack, closed the door on Alton's lifelong career in music. "He tried a couple of times to play again," recalled an acquaintance, "but his soul just wasn't in it. He'd spent his whole life with his brother at his side and just didn't want to do it by himself anymore."

They say that a person can never go home, but very often,

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in times of crisis, a person will seek the comforting embrace of something familiar. For Alton Delmore that something was the hills of North Alabama that he remembered from his youth.

After moving to Huntsville he worked at a variety of odd jobs until a friend helped him get a job with the post office. For the first time in his life his days took on a regular routine; get up before daylight, work all day and go home. It was a far cry from the days of driving all night and sleeping in flea bag hotels.

"But he seemed happy." remembered Vance Morris years later. "Sometimes some of the local boys would get together for a jam session and Alton would sit in. He just seemed happy that someone wanted to hear his music."

In June, 1964 Alton Delmore died from liver disease, possibly a result of many lonely days on the road with too many whiskey bottles to keep him company. "They said it was his liver," said one person, "but I think it was just a broken heart."

Many artists have been influenced by the special creative

sound that the Delmore Brothers introduced and it has been said that they were ahead of their time. Their style of music influenced many who came later. Some of the artists that have either recorded the brothers' songs, or used their musical combinations are: Tennessee Ernie Ford, Bob Dylan, the Everly Brothers, the Owen Bradley Quintet, Glen Campbell, Chet Atkins, Jimmy Wakely, Roy Acuff, Rosemary Clooney and Bing Crosby.

Considered country music's first true duet, the Delmore Brothers were elected into the Nashville Songwriters' Hall of Fame in 1971.

"Time wounds all heels."

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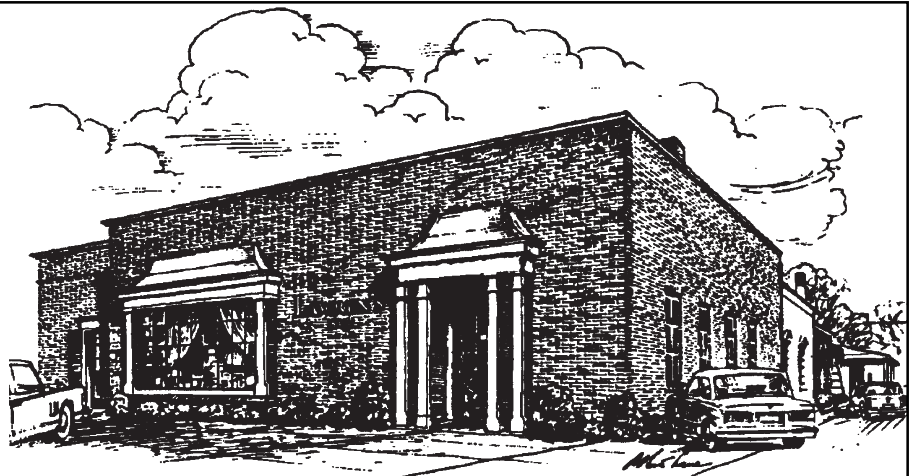
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My Huntsville Christmas Memories

by Tommy Towery

I sat down and tried to remember something unique about my Christmas memories as a child growing up in Huntsville in the 1950's. In my quest I remembered the toys that I found under the trees over the years like the Fanner 50 cap gun, Tinker Toys, Krazy Ikes, and red American Building Bricks and real wooden Lincoln Logs. I remember the year I got my favorite toy, "Robert the Robot", who would walk across the floor as you cranked a handle on a pistol grip and would say "I am Robert Robot, mechanical man; drive me and steer me, wherever you can" when you turned a knob on his back. I remember the toys that my brother Don got, like the real football and the electric football game and even the Erector set with a real electric motor. Then there was the year that my Aunt Helen gave me a Goldie

Locks and Three Bears Avon soap set. That gift was not appreciated by a boy of eight. I remember getting the Captain Gallant Foreign Legion fort that came from the Sears catalog that sold back then for about eight dollars and now goes for over \$400 on e-Bay. I wish I had kept that one. I don't dare check the price for the Avon Goldie Locks and Three Bears soap!

The toys were new and unique to me, but at the same time I was opening those presents under my tree, hundreds, if not thousands of other kids were opening the same boxes with the same toys inside. What might be rare for my block on Clinton Street, was common in many other blocks and neighborhoods not only in Huntsville, but

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It took a long while to really recall something that made my Christmas holidays stand out from all the other kids on the block. A smile came upon my face when I did. It finally dawned on me the one thing that I felt was truly unique in our house. When our stockings were hung by the chimney with care on the night before Christmas, my brother and I were the envy of all our friends.

Now to put the story in the right perspective, you have to remember that giant Christmas stockings were not as commercial back in the early '50s as they are today. Back then stockings were either normal white socks, or if you were lucky, you would have one of the ones made of the red mesh netting like fruit came packed in. People didn't go out and buy those jumbo size ones that are sold today. But not in our house, we had the granddaddy stockings of all stockings.

I wrote an earlier article about how my father, Jack Towery, stepped on a land mine at Omaha Beach on D-Day, and lost a leg as the result of that action. It was that bitter lemon of his life that we used to make Christmas lemonade, figuratively speaking. When he was fitted with his artificial leg he was given some big, white cotton stockings that went to about his mid-thigh

and were designed to cover the mechanical parts of the wooden and metal leg so that the moving parts would not catch on the material of his pants.

I don't know who started the tradition or when it was started, but on Christmas Eve, Don and I would dig in our father's sock drawer and each pull out one of the big white socks.

The house on East Clinton had real wooden mantels, and real chimneys. We had to be careful where we hung them because the fireplace was not just decorative; it was still used to heat the house. As late as 1953 the fireplace still burned coal that was hauled in from the coal shed in the back of the house.

The stockings were hung on the mantel with large nails which left holes that are probably still there today if they left the original fireplaces in the house when they restored it. On Christmas day, we would awake to find that the stockings were bulging and lumpy with the contents left by Santa. Back then I was positive that I would get more in my stocking than any of my friends got in theirs. I will never know for sure, but today I would guess that those socks could hold close to five pounds of fruit, nuts, and candy. They were about three feet long and as round at the top as a leg. We didn't get toys in our

stockings back then, but we loved the hard candy and the nuts the most, and we took great delight in dumping the contents onto the floor and examining it. The items I disliked the most were the Brazil nuts, maybe because of the slang term used for them back then. As a kid I could eat the apples and oranges and even the pecans, but I never found out how to get a Brazil nut open. If you hit it with a hammer hard enough to crack the shell, you usually smashed the nut inside so bad that you didn't want to eat it even if you liked its



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taste.

So this year when I see a stocking on the mantel, it will mean a little more to me now that I have remembered those days. I never knew as a kid what the cost of those great white stockings really was. I just knew how lucky I was to have it. I never knew or appreciated that they were not bought in some fancy department store, but rather were bought with the sacrifices that my father along with the other members of the Greatest Generation paid. Today I am a retired Air Force officer myself, and throughout my service years spent several of my own Christmas Eves in other countries. Only now can I see past the fruit and candy capacity of the large white sock that I hung on the mantel, and see the capacity of honor and duty that my father and his generation possessed for me to be able to have it. I am now aware that perhaps the greatest gift I ever received from him is not the stocking alone. It is the same gift that another generation

is now receiving from their own military parents who are serving our great nation on foreign shores. The greatest gift is their sacrifices that give us the freedom to hang our stockings, big or small, on our own mantels on Christmas Eve. God bless them all and grant them a Merry Christmas.

Christmas in Killingsworth Cove

by Penny Osmer

One of the things our family loved to do in the 60's was to go Christmas caroling in the back of a truck, with hay bales to sit on, quilts to cover up with, and flashlights to simulate candles. I have three sons and we would gather all the neighborhood children up and invite any school friends along with any "city" friends and off we would go. We'd blow the horn in front of the houses and start singing. After we had visited all the houses in Killingsworth Cove, we would return to our house for hot chocolate and cookies and try to warm up.

I hope I'm still around for the second generation to take on that fun night, so they can come to my house singing.

Writers

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The Lampshade Christmas

by Barbara (Mrs. Chuck) Saunders

Most people can recall at least one Christmas with the much wished-for newly fallen snow, the most beautiful Christmas tree, the perfect present and their favorite foods prepared with family gathered around; but how many can remember a year when Santa's presents were opened early while sitting "under" the lampshade?

When I was eight and living in Evansville, Indiana, my Mother was very homesick to be with her parents, siblings and extended family for Christmas. So, my Daddy decided that we would make the trip to Tennessee for the holidays; but what would they do about Santa coming, a tree and gifts for their only daughter? Well, as luck would have it, one of my mother's sisters, who was the craft queen of the time, told her about the latest trend in decorating lampshades for Christmas. No, you didn't just hang garland on the shade. You ripped the material off the frame - mind you it had to be an old lamp - spray-painted it green, wrapped garland around all the wires of the

frame and THEN you hung your favorite ornaments on the top and bottom wires.

Needless to say, I was not a happy child when I learned that this was going to be our "Christmas tree". I was even more confused when I heard that Santa would have to be contacted to see if he could put in an early appearance at our house before we left. Everything did come together. I got exactly what I'd wished for that year and we did have a great time with my grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. It even made me appreciate

things in life that I'd probably not otherwise have liked. The next Christmas season that was put to the test. Mother bought an aluminum tree..... boy, did I ever enjoy decorating it.

I didn't dare complain about it not being the kind of tree everyone else had ...I was afraid she'd pull out the lampshade again.

Why is it, in golf, when you tell yourself not to hit the ball into the water, your body only seems to hear the word "water"?

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The Christmas Sleigh

by John Shaver

In the early 1950's in Huntsville, there was one singular event that always represented the beginning of the Christmas season for all of us kids. It wasn't store sales or music on the radio. It was a magnificent sleigh, with Santa, complete with reindeer.

For year after year the tradition was the same, and every kid looked forward to it as much as any event of the season. We'd pack up in the car, drive west down Randolph Ave. downtown, til we came to the corner of Randolph and West Side Square, where the Henderson National

bank was. If you kept on driving, down that steep hill, it became Spring St.

And there it would be. At the bottom of the hill, on top of the John Deere Tractor Co. building, was a full-size sleigh pulled by reindeer, and sitting in the sleigh was Santa. The sleigh was outlined with moving lights, and the effect was dazzling. It was just as if Santa and his reindeer were racing through the night.

As we slowly drove down the street it appeared as if the sleigh was taking off into the night. I'll never forget it, nor will the

Apples and Bird Houses

by Bill Russell

We only got Big Red Delicious apples around Christmas. They were shipped to country stores in a wood

crate. Each apple was wrapped individually with a thin piece of paper and was sold for five cents each or six for twenty five cents.

The merchant allegedly made a profit at these prices.

My Dad was Tom Russell and owned a store out on Hwy. 36, therefore I got to keep the boxes and enjoy the first shipment. The wood was used to make bird houses. Dad would carefully open the wooden boxes so as not to damage the beautiful wood.

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Huntsville Coffee Talk

by Aunt Eunice



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

Well, it's the holiday season again. Boy, time has flown by this past year!

I'm still here at the **Big Spring Specialty Care Center**, but when you consider the alternatives I suppose I'm doing all right. I sure do miss my friends at the restaurant though. I want to thank all the people who have been so kind to me and sent me cards, flowers and phone calls. Two walls of my room are completely covered with cards. So many of my dear friends stopped by that I could move the **Liar's Table** here if I had a coffee pot.

Kathy Lockridge, a physical therapist from Crestwood Medical Center, guessed the picture of last month. It was our good friend, the handsome **Donny Lewter**, and she said she knew right away it was him! Kathy as soon as I open back up I want you to come in for your hot country ham breakfast!

Mushianah Sales, niece of **Catherine Wilson**, is a freshman at Oakwood college. Mushianah hails from Durham, North Caro-

lina and sure does love her aunt's wonderful homemade jellies and jams!

Sheriff Blake Dorning came to see me. He's doing such a great job and is the nicest man you'll ever meet.

My prayers go out to **Mrs. Joe Reid** - she hasn't been feeling too well lately.

Mrs. Bell, mother of **Judge Billy Bell**, had surgery recently in Mobile and we are so happy to say that she is doing well.

I was sad to hear that a good friend of mine died recently - **Mr. Ellis Owens** - our sympathy goes out to his family and friends.

If you've driven downtown recently you've seen all the holiday decorations going up around the square - we sure do love this time of year downtown!

Patty Smith's husband had a stroke recently and was in the hospital for a while. We're thinking of you both, Patty.

Mike and Ted Whisenant, sons of **Joe Whisenant**, both married their sweethearts in November.

Lincoln Smith, minister of **Twickenham Church of Christ**, told us that his mother died recently. Our love goes out to you.

There are so many of us these days who are suffering from arthritis, and I wanted you to know something that happened to me. For years I took various arthritis medicines to help control the pain, but recently stopped taking them altogether because they just didn't make me feel up to par. When my doctor told me that my kidney's were failing, it turns out that he believes the cause to be the arthritis medicine. It is different for everyone, of course, but just be careful about what you take and talk to your doctor about it.

Brice and Dolly Davis came by to see me - they are the parents of **Jan Davis**, the astronaut.

Our mayor, **Miss Loretta**, has been by several times to check on me. By the way, I have heard so many comments from visitors to our city, about how clean and beautiful Huntsville is. I have to say, I think it takes a woman to really clean up! She

Photo of The Month

The first person to correctly identify the family shown below, wins a free breakfast from Eunice's Country Kitchen.

Hint: One of the little girls is now a well known, and beautiful, lady.



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Byron Laird and his sweetie **Tilly** visited me and they're doing well. Then I looked up one day and there was my good friend **Bud Cramer** - he is working so hard and it was great to see him. **Mark Russell** came by to talk, and I've seen **Mark Young** and **his Julie** several times.

Steve and **Bonnie Hettinger** are busier than ever. **Bonnie** is still involved in real estate. **Ed Starnes** came by - he has painted some wonderful oil paintings and his work is on display in galleries throughout the world.

I hear that people are losing weight all over town because **I haven't been feeding them breakfast!** I'm not sure I believe that but I hear good things about a new breakfast place in town - the **Blue Plate Cafe**. Anything **David Martin** gets involved in pretty much turns to gold - he has the **Steak-out's** and **Rosie's**. Congratulations to him and his partners on the new restaurant (but I hear my biscuits are still the best!)

Hello to **Jean Reid** - I think about you all the time and I love you very much. **Joe**, I know it's been tough on you too.

I hear some rumors that **Jeff Enfinger** just may be the next Alabama governor. I know if that happens, he'll sure be a good one.

Heard that **Tim Morgan** had a big fund-raiser at the Heritage Club the other night - the place was packed. We hear that someone has thrown their hat in the ring to run against him - more about that later! They're going to have a hard time beating **Tim**.

I was sad to hear that **Sonny Osborne** has cancer, and my prayers are with you every day.

My dear friend **Joe Whisenant**, ex-sheriff, has taken up cooking now that he's turned his badge in - I hear that he's gained a few pounds but I sure couldn't tell it!

We hear **Sam Keith's** daughter **Rebekka** is pregnant with her first child - his other daughter **Leanna** should have her first baby any day now - Sam will sure make a fine grandpa. **Buck Watson** is the other Grandpa and he will be a great one too!

I wanted to say hello to **Leonard Adcock** who recently had bypass surgery - we're thinking about you and know you'll get back in shape real soon.

Well, it's almost Christmas and the lights and decorations are so pretty. Everyone is so worried about buying the perfect Christmas present but the best present is one that doesn't cost anything. And, it's worth more than all the money in the world. Just give someone a hug and tell them that you love them.

Have a Merry Christmas and remember that I love all of you.

Aunt Eunice

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Baker's Christmas Cookies

- 4 oz. cream cheese
- 1/2 c. butter
- 1 c. flour
- 1/2 lb. pecan halves
- 1 bag caramels, unwrapped
- 12 oz. chocolate chips non-pareils

Place softened cream cheese and butter in a bowl, add flour to form a dough. Chill dough in refrigerator. Roll out and cut with a 2" circle cookie cutter. Place on greased cookie sheet and bake at 400° for 12 minutes. Remove from oven, place 1/2 pecan on each circle. Place a caramel on top of each pecan. Return cookies to oven and watch closely. Remove from oven when caramels have melted. Lightly flatten caramels with a buttered knife. Melt chocolate chips in a double boiler or microwave. Stir melted chips and spread on top of each melted caramel. Sprinkle non-

pareils on top of warm melted chocolate.

Florentines

- 1/2 c. heavy cream
- 1/2 c. sugar
- 1 c. almonds or hazelnuts, finely chopped
- 1/4 lb. candied orange peel, finely chopped
- 1/4 c. flour
- pinch salt

ICING

- 8 oz. semi-sweet chocolate
- 2 T. cream or water

Mix all ingredients together and arrange 2 inches apart, by teaspoonfuls, on baking sheet. Flatten each with a knife dipped in cold water.

Bake about 10 minutes, or until browned around the edges. Cool, flat side up, on racks, then spread with chocolate icing.

Icing: Melt chocolate in a double boiler; add cream or water. Stir until smooth and spread on the flat side of the cookies.

Fruit Nut Wreaths

- 1 c. soft butter
- 1/2 c. light brown sugar, firmly packed
- 1 egg
- 2 c. sifted plain flour
- 1/2 t. baking powder
- 1 c. rolled oats
- 1/4 c. finely chopped pecans
- 1/4 c. marachino cherries, finely chopped

Confectioner's sugar icing, thin

Flaked coconut

Beat butter until creamy; add sugar gradually, beating until light and fluffy. Beat in egg. Sift flour and baking powder together; stir into butter mixture. Stir in oats, nuts and chopped cherries. Shape into wreaths. Bake on ungreased cookie sheets at 350 degrees for 12 to 15 minutes. When cool, frost with a thin confectioner's sugar icing. Sprinkle with coconut and decorate with additional chopped pieces of candied cherries.



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Orange Balls

12 oz. vanilla wafer cookies, crushed

1 c. confectioner's sugar

1/4 c. butter, softened

1/2 c. orange juice concentrate, thawed

1/2 t. vanilla

1 c. chopped vanilla

Extra confectioner's sugar and/or coconut

Combine crumbs and sugar; blend in butter. Stir in orange juice concentrate; add vanilla and nuts. Shape mixture into bite-sized balls; shake in plastic bag with additional confectioners' sugar or coconut. Arrange orange balls in single layer on tray; store uncovered overnight in refrigerator for best flavor. Makes 36 - 40 balls.

Reindeer Candy

1 pkg. peanut butter cookie mix

1/3 c. vegetable oil

1 egg

60 miniature pretzel twists for antlers

60 semi-sweet chocolate chips for eyes

30 red hot candies for noses

Combine cookie mix, oil and egg. Beat until well blended. Shape into a 7 1/2 inch roll; wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate for about 1 hour. Unwrap and cut into 1/4" slices. Place 2 inches apart on ungreased cookie sheets. Using thumb and forefinger, make a slight indentation one-

third of the way down the sides of each slice. Press in pretzels for antlers, chocolate chips for eyes and a red hot for the nose. Bake at 350 degrees for 9-11 minutes or until light brown. Cool.

Note - you can substitute any peanut butter cookie recipe for the cookie mix, oil and egg.

Easy Cherry Rum Balls

2 c. vanilla wafers, finely crushed

1 c. powdered sugar

1/2 c. marachino cherries

1 c. chopped pecans

1/4 c. rum

3 T. corn syrup

2 T. butter, melted

1/4 c. powdered sugar

In medium bowl, combine crushed wafers, 1 cup powdered sugar, cherries, and pecans. Add rum, syrup and butter. Blend well. Shape into 1 inch balls. Roll in powdered sugar.

Toasted Almond Candy

6 sq. vanilla almond bark

1 c. milk chocolate chips

1/4 c. semi-sweet chips

2 T. Kahlua (coffee liquor)

1/2 t. almond extract

1 c. sliced almonds, toasted

Combine ingredients except almonds in a saucepan and melt over low heat, stirring. When melted, stir in almonds (mixture will be thick). Turn into a lightly buttered loaf pan and pat in. Invert to a piece of wax paper approximately 14 to 16 inches in

length. Gently pat candy to flatten with hands or by placing another piece of wax paper over it and going over it gently with a rolling pin. Freeze for 10 minutes, until hardened. Store in a container in the refrigerator.



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I'll never forget that most wonderful 1924 Christmas when I was eight years old.

I had never asked for or expected such a great Christmas. We didn't ask Santa for specific presents. Instead, we just hoped that we would get something, something special that every kid would want and like.

I had been learning to ride a bike by paying a neighbor a nickel to rent his bike for an hour. Coker Hayes was the Baptist minister's son and he rented out his bike. It was full size, and I couldn't reach the pedals to ride it like an adult would. I had to pedal with my leg going under the bar, so falls were commonplace.... but I was riding a bike. Hot dog!

Christmas Eve was special. The West Huntsville Methodist Church always had a Christmas Eve program. The folks there would give everybody a bag with an apple, an orange, some nuts, and pieces of hard candy. We always looked forward to getting this. Fresh fruit in winter was a rarity back then. We sang the wonderful Christmas carols and all went home happy with the Christmas spirit.

Christmas morning finally came and Earleen, my

sister, and I ran to the parlor. By the tree was a beautiful red bike. We weren't sure who it was for until we found the tag—for me. A grand new bike, and I believe that I was more pleased and happier than a son getting a new car these days. A bike needed no license, no gas or oil, or batteries, or spare parts.

I rode that bike for many years. During the 80 years since then I've had two or three other bikes, but there never was a thrill like that first one. I hope that all of you has a jolly, merry, wonderful Huntsville Christmas this year!

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My Role Models

by Malcolm W. Miller

Today's children have their role models and heroes whether they are country singers, movie actors or sports personalities. Some of these failed miserably in setting examples for the people who are emulating them. For example, Britney Spears, Cobe Bryant and a host of others.

When I was growing up I had my own role models and heroes. Six of them. They were my older brothers, as I was the youngest of seven boys, one might say the last twig on the vine. I never did feel as though I could measure up to the examples these six boys set before me.

The role model I want to write about at this time is the oldest of my brothers, Robert.

Robert was born in the year 1910. He was the second child of my mother and father. The first was a beautiful little girl who died before she was two years old. Robert almost met a similar fate when just a young baby. My parent's house burned and my Mother risked her own life

by rushing into the burning flames and snatching the infant, Robert, from a certain death.

From that point on it seems that life was rough for Robert. My parents were sharecroppers and Robert, being the eldest in the family, had to shoulder a very heavy load from early childhood. He only went through the fourth or fifth grade in school although it has been said he was one of the smartest in his class, however, because he was needed so desperately to shoulder a large amount of the farm work, he stopped attending school at an early age.

Robert, to my knowledge, never smoked a cigarette or had a drink of alcohol in his 93 years of life. That in itself is something to be proud of.

When I was six years old Robert brought about the biggest change in my young life. That is when he brought his new bride, Beulah "Boots" Campbell home to live with us. He had been courting her for several months by riding his bicycle to her

home in Chase. I shall never forget that day. We were all in the yard, the older boys were cutting wood and when we saw the couple walking down the road there was back slapping, cheering and finally we all actually ran for cover.

Having another woman in the house was quite an experience for me. All I had known previously in the way of the softer sex was my Mother, and I was fascinated by this addition to our home. Can you imagine how hard it must have been for Boots to move into a small tenant house with Mom, Dad and seven brothers? However, we all adjusted real well over time. I know I must have pestered Robert and Boots something awful, because every-

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where they went there I was. Whether it was fishing on the creek bank or in their room just being a general six-year-old nuisance. Thinking back they must have had a lot of patience to put up with me.

Later their beautiful baby, little Barbara June, was born, when I was nine years old. Her untimely death at three months of age seemed so utterly unfair to me. Robert and Boots and the entire family were devastated for a time, however this young couple had the strength to move on. Later on another daughter, Faye, and a son David were born to brighten their lives.

One of my favorite memories of Robert is going to the A&P store on Green Street with him as a small boy, purchasing a pound of hoop cheese and some crackers and sitting on the Court House steps on the East side eating the cheese and crackers and listening to three different preachers all preaching different sermons.

Robert never had the finer things in life that some people

enjoy. You know I believe he wanted it that way, like my Father he seemed to want to do things the old way and the hard way. He never owned a automobile until he was a much older man. He never lived in a house with air conditioning. He would not use a tiller in the garden, only a hoe, because that is the way Papa did it. He often corrected me for wearing a cap or hat inside a building or even when eating outside, because that is the way Papa taught us. Even today when I start to eat at home or in a restaurant I think of Robert and remove my hat. That is what I call a lasting influence.

In Robert's later years, influenced by Boots, he became a devout Christian and church member. The influence of that Christian life was largely the reason their son, David, became a minister.

Finally, in his later years, Robert gave up farming and went to work for Madison County hauling gravel. He probably made more money at that time than he had ever made in his life.

Later on, after he retired from the county, he started raising produce and selling it at the Madison County Farmer's Market. He was a fixture there for many years.

Robert was well loved and respected in the community and by his church family. At age 93 he



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still would get up before the congregation at the Little Fellowship Baptist Church and sing his favorite song, "The Land Where We Will Never Grow Old" and play his harmonica.

Robert passed away earlier this year at the young age of 93. About a week before his death he was still seen plowing his garden on his old Farmall tractor. When Boots had passed away years earlier, he had threatened to take a sleeping bag to the cemetery and sleep beside her. As Robert lay dying with his family gathered around he told them he could see Boots standing, pleading with him to come join her. Now I feel certain they both are there together in a world without sorrow or turmoil that they both knew in this life here on earth. Robert was truly a role model for me and many others.

Woman Swallows Snake

Miss Mamie Nolan of Holmes Ave. has been in the habit of drinking water directly from the aqueduct by putting her mouth to the tap. She will not do it anymore, however, for she had an experience today that showed her the folly of such a course.

While she was drinking, a water snake about ten inches long passed through the faucet, and went halfway down her throat. She could not yell, but she managed to attract attention by throwing herself down on the floor and kicking.

The snake was pulled from her throat, and she fully recovered from her fright in an hour, but her throat is still sore.

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Mistaken Identity

This is a story that John Halloway swears is true.

When he first moved to Alabama from Chicago, in 1959, he was stopped by a policeman near Hazel Green at 2 o'clock in the morning. John had been driving all day and most of the night and was looking pretty rough.

After he pulled over to the side of the road, the policeman walked up, shined a flashlight in his face and asked where he was going.

"To Huntsville," replied John.

"Boy, you been drinking?"

"No sir."

"Where you from, boy?"

"Chicago, sir."

"Don't lie to me, boy. I seen them Illinois tags on your car."

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Cream together 1 cup margarine and 1/2 cup sugar, Add 1 tablespoon each of vanilla and lemon flavoring, six egg yolks and 2 cups white flour. Blend.

Fruit Mix

Sprinkle 2 pounds candied fruit mixture with 1/2 cup of flour, coating fruit so it separates. Add one pound each of raisins and pecans to fruit mix.

In large bowl mix fruit mix with batter - this is a heavy mix.

Whip 6 egg whites with cream of tartar to stiffen it, and fold this mixture into the batter & fruit mix. (Suggest using 10 inch stainless steel fry pan, lined with wax paper, with 2" diameter can wrapped with wax paper in center of pan)

Spoon in batter and add whole pecans on top, cover and seal with aluminum foil. Bake at 250 for 2 1/2 hours, remove foil and cook for additional 1/2 hour

till top is brown.

Turn cake out onto cooling rack and remove wax paper, let cake cool.

Put cake in airtight container bottom side up. Pour 1/2 cup of the best Cream Sherry wine available over cake and seal. Check in one week and pour 1/2 cup of the Sherry over cake. Check cake in another week and flip so bottom side is down - add more Sherry if not moist.

Brandy or Rum may be used instead of the Sherry. Cake should be seasoned at least three weeks - suggest making it at Thanksgiving and serving at Christmas.

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Slave Memories of Thomas Cole

Taken from a 1932 interview

I might as well begin back as far as I can remember and tell you about myself. I was born in Jackson County, Alabama and my mother was Elizabeth Cole, her being a slave of Dr. Robert Cole. She was a family nurse. She nursed all the six children of Marster Cole.

We lived in the house, in one room, with Marster Cole, as my mother was the nurse and housekeeper. We always had a good bed to sleep in and good things to eat. We would eat at the same table as Marster Cole and his family eat at, only after they gits through eatin' first.

I was raised up with the Cole chilluns and played with them all the time. We was all the time climbing trees in the yard, and as I got older, they jest gradually puts more work and heavier work on me. Marster Cole started us out working by toting in wood and kindlin and toting water and such odd jobs. Then, later on, as we got older, we had to feed the hogs, the cows, horses, goats, and chickens. All this kind of work was for boys too young for heavy work. Of course, we had to pick cotton every fall, as soon as we got big

enough to pick, and put the cotton in baskets. These baskets would hold about seventy-five to one hundred pounds. The little children would pick and put the cotton in a basket with some older person, so the older person could move the basket along.

Then, when a slave gets grown, he is jest like a mule. He works for his grub and a few clothes and works jest as hard as a mule. Some of the slaves on the plantation near ours didn't have as easy a time as the mules,

for the mules was fed good, but the slaves likes to have starved to death; the marster jest gives them enough to eat to keep them alive.

When I was a young boy, some other boys and I would go possum hunting and coon hunting in the daytime, and the men and us boys would go hunting sometimes at night, and we would skin them and stretch the hides and the white folks would sell the hides and give us the money. I always gives my money

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to my mother and she would save it fer me till I get enough. Then, she would go to town with the mistress, to Huntsville, Alabama, and buy me a pair of shoes, a hat, and a pair of Sunday britches. All these we called Sunday clothes, and we did not wear them unless we went to church. Missus Cole always helped my mother do the buying, cause my mother couldn't count money good.

One thing 'bout Marster Cole: he shore seen after his slaves when they was sick. And when he starts doctoring one of them, they usually gits well, too. He never lost but two, and they was ole people and ready to die, but he hated to lose them just as bad as he would a young stout man. Marster Cole he had one big, stout, healthy-looking slave, about six feet four inches tall, and weighed round two hundred and ten pounds, that he gives three thousand dollars fer. Marster Cole and a man from Mississippi and one from Louisiana was all bidding on this man, and Marster Cole bid him in at three thousand dollars. This slave shore was a powerful man and was easy to control, too. He shore was glad that Marster Cole bought him. Marster Cole thought lots of this slave, but he

hates to lose them ole ones jest as bad.

They was a man and his wife. When slaves gits ole, they gits cheap, just like a ole mule. Sometimes you couldn't sell them, 'cause they wasn't fit fer nothing'. But when this ole couple died, he had coffins made and carried them out and buried them. After one of the slave parsons preached the funeral, they was buried on the plantation, and rocks was put up fer tombstones.

Marster Cole never sole a slave, iffen they acted half way right. But iffen they gits unruly, he always carries them off to sell them. He bought six slaves that I knows of, and he gives from four hundred to three thousand a piece fer them.

The first time I married I marries Nancy Eliza Reed, in Chattanooga, Tennessee, right after the War. We lived together fer

thirty-two years, and she died with malaria. All this happened after Freedom. If I had married before Marster Cole died, I would have had to be married by the parson, cause that was one of Marster Cole's rules: he didn't allow none of this jest living together. When one of the slaves wants to get married, he takes them to a parson and they gits married. I has thought about this lots, since Freedom, and I believes Marster Cole was so smart a man he could looks ahead and sees Freedom. That is the reason he treated his slaves the way he did.

Marster Cole was a smart

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man, and he was a good man with it. He was 'bout five feet ten inches tall, blue-eyed and brown-haired, and weighed about one hundred sixty pounds. This man had respect fer other people's feelin's. He treated his slaves like they was human being's, instead of dumb brutes. He allowed his slaves more privileges then any other slaveholther round that part of the country, and he tried to learn them how to make money and how to counts money. He tried to learn them all what a person could sell. He was one of the best men I ever knows in my whole life, and his wife was jest likes him. Missus Cole shore was nice to all the woman slaves. She gives all them a new dress every spring jest as shore as the spring rolls around. An' she always helps all the slave women with their buyin, and sold all their chickens and eggs, and gives them every cent of the money that was coming' to them.

The slaves was woke up ev-ery morning at four thirty by a slave blowing a horn. Breakfast is eat, and the men folks goes on to the fields, and as soon as the

women finished up the house work and takes care of the babies, they comes to work, too. All the slaves carried their dinner to the field with them, and iffen you puts it where the ants or a varmit can git it, that is your hard luck. We all works till noon, then we eats our dinner in the shade and rest bout an hour and half, iffen it is very hot.

Some of the slaves was pretty smart fer the chance they had to gits any education. Iffen some of the white folks likes a slave, or they had some chilluns that likes a slave, they would learn him how to read and write, and that slave would learn another one to read and write, iffen he could. But some of them shore was thick-headed. You jest couldn't learn them nothing.

I has an awful time learning, myself. Marster Cole learned me to read and write, and I is slow with it yet, but jest give me more time and I will get it done. Marster Cole's boys tole me more times than I got fingers and toes that I was too thickheaded to learn anything, but I jest kept on trying and finally got on to it, jest

gittin' a little at a time.

The way most of us learns to read is the Bible. One of the slaves would learn to read, and he would read the Bible to the rest of them, or as many as wants to listen to him, and finally another one would wants to learn to read and he would learn him a little. Marster Cole was awful good about this. But some of the

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slave owners would not allow any of the slaves to own a Bible or have one round the plantation. And iffen they ketched one with a Bible, they would takes it away from him. Most every Saturday night and Sunday after dinner, Uncle Dan would read the Bible to the rest of us and tell the meaning of it. Uncle Dan was awful ole. He didn't know how ole he was, and Marster didn't know either, but he was grey-headed and his whiskers was jest as white as his hair. Uncle Dan could read good, and he could write good, too, and he knew the Bible about as good as anybody I ever saw. He could sit down with his Bible, and reads a verse in there anywhere, and tells you jest what it means.

Marster Cole always gives all his slaves a pass to go to church, and everybody knew it and they wouldn't bother us. The white folks would let the slaves join the same church as they was in, and they got lots of joiners among the slaves. And I has seen as many as fifty slaves, and I say half that many white people, baptized at one time. They would find a pond or hole in the river, shallow enough fer baptizing and where the rest could stand round and look on. All the slaves would stand outside and hears the parson preach till he calls for joiners, and then they would go in the water, they would all go to shouting.

What the baptizings comes off, it was almost like going to a circus. People comes from everywhere. That was the biggest crowd I ever seen. The baptizings was at a big tank and people was all around it. They was all singing songs, and the preacher preached and prayed, and everybody takes dinner and has a big time. That baptizing was the last one Marster Cole went to, as he took sick right after that, and he was sick for a long time. Something was wrong with his stom-

ach - I believe they said gallbladder or something like that.

Anyway, Marster Cole was sick fer a long, long time. My mother nursed him night and day as long as he was sick. They had doctors from all over the country come, and they all gives him medicine and doctored him, but the Lord had called him, I guess, and those doctors couldn't do him any good, for the next summer he dies.

They has a big funeral sermon fer him at the plantation, and all the slaves was at the house. We all lined up and marched by the coffin and looks in at him. He jest looks like he was asleep. I guess his soul was in the Great Heaven talking with the angels, for he looks like he had a peaceful smile on his face, jest like he did when he was alive and everything pleasing him.

All the slaves cried jest like it was one of their

own family dying. We all knew our good times was gone, or maybe we would all be sold. We didn't know what was going to happen to us, but we all knew that we wasn't going to have as peaceable a time and have as much freedom as we had when Marster Cole was alive.



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Clarence Carroll and the "Widdle" Haircut

by Ruby Crabbe

I believe just about everyone in Huntsville knows two men, Clarence Carroll and Floyd Hardin. Their goodness and kindness to their fellow man follows them everywhere they go. They have shown more love toward people in this area than anyone I have ever known.

Clarence's trips to the hospitals to visit sick folks are too numerous to even try to count.

His kind words to the sick are spoken with love and tenderness.

If anyone, not only in Dallas Village, but all the surrounding areas, needed help - Clarence and Floyd were there. If anyone was depressed or ill, Clarence and Floyd were there. If someone passed away and they needed more cars to carry the family and friends to the cemetery, these men were there to help.

I remember when my aunt Ida passed away 62 years ago. Someone made the remark that there weren't going to be enough cars for all the friends and family to get to the cemetery. A voice spoke up and said, "Clarence will be here with his car."

I remember the first time I ever saw Clarence Carroll. I was a second-grader at Rison school. My mother, Josie Allen, sent my sister Eva and I over to Clarence's barbershop for a trim. Clarence asked us how we wanted it cut. Without hesitation, Eva and I said we both wanted our hair cut just like Widdle's.

Well, Clarence had no idea who Widdle was. Didn't know him from Adam's house cat. We

had a first cousin by the name of Willie Thomas and we thought so much of Willie we thought he just hung the moon. But neither Eva nor I could say "Willie," so it always came out "Widdle." After more questioning, Clarence finally understood that Widdle was a boy. Clarence picked his scissors up and did he go to work on our hair! He gave us the finest boy's haircut we had ever seen. Hair was on the floor everywhere! Eva and I were so proud of our new cuts that we couldn't wait to get home to show Mama our Widdle hair cut.

We could tell at a glance by Mama's reaction that she was not pleased by our Widdle cuts. She went over to have a little talk with Clarence. Clarence told her that we wanted our hair cut just like Widdle's. When she heard that name Mama knew who he was talking about. She thanked him for cutting her two little girls' hair just like THEY wanted it cut, but for some reason my Sis and I noticed that when Mama sent us for our next haircut she gave us a note to give to Clarence BEFORE he cut our hair.

Old Huntsville Trivia

1943 - Joe Tidwell opens his grocery store and J.C. Jamar is publishing the city's newest newspaper - Huntsville Weekly Mirror.

1945 - Waterman Airlines begins regular flights to and from Huntsville.

1958 - Secretary of Defense Charles Wilson is hanged in effigy by Huntsvillians who blame him for a Russian being first to launch a spacecraft.

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In the spring of 1872, a young soldier visited Huntsville with an interesting proposition for our city's leaders.

He wanted to supply Huntsville's police force with uniforms. Although many Northern policemen already wore uniforms, the idea had not caught on very well in the South, partially because of the cost.

For the small towns still recovering economically from the Civil War, even a small item like uniforms was considered exorbitant.

The young soldier, however, had an idea. At the end of the war he had seen hundreds of

thousands of Federal uniforms lying useless in warehouses. After purchasing a quantity of them for a pittance, he had a tailor in Cincinnati alter them.

Now he was traveling the South, offering the modified uniforms at a price much lower than the competition.

Whether or not he was the salesman who actually persuaded the city to clothe its policemen in blue has been lost in history:

We do know for a fact, however, that two months after his visit our policemen had uniforms.

Despite his skills at salesmanship, the young soldier's business never really got off the ground. Faced with the prospect of failure, the young warrior once again returned full time to his military career.

Unfortunately, that too ended

in failure. Years later, the young soldier, George Armstrong Custer, was killed at the battle of Little Big Horn.



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A Hard Lesson Learned

by Helen Medlin

In 1936, firecrackers and sparklers were gifts some folks put in their children's stockings, and I was one of those that got sparklers and my two cousins were boys, so they received the firecrackers, we were all about the age of 3, 4 and 5 years old. The boys decided they were old enough to light the firecrackers without adult supervision, after all they were 3 and 4 years old. Not me, I was only the oldest of the threesome, all of 5 years old and a little scared of firecrackers. So after Christmas lunch we got the firecrackers and went to the yard to make a lot of noise.

We were at my grandmother's house in the country and after lunch was the perfect time to set them off.

With no adults around in the yard, we proceeded to light them and run each time they were lit. One time when one of the firecrackers did not go off, my cousin, Clarence, the oldest of the two boys, decided he would investigate. Much to his surprise when he picked it up, it

went off in his hand, burning his thumb and 2 fingers and blackening the whole palm of his hand. Not only that, we set the dry grass on fire around the base of the house.

After that we had adult supervision.

Needless to say, that cured our firecracker gifts. We never wanted firecrackers any more for Christmas, this was a lesson learned the hard way.

Eleven Yo-yos

by Aunt Eunice

Since our family was rather large, we never thought about Santa Claus back when I was a young girl. With 12 children, there wasn't a lot of money for gifts. We always had a Christmas tree even though they were very tiny. We would decorate it with popcorn strings and peppermint candies and then have a special dinner on Christmas.

My mother was a wonderful cook and always had food for anyone who visited - I remember turkey, ham, pork, chicken - most of which we raised - but very rarely any gifts.

I remember one Christmas

when my Daddy had a bit of extra money, and he went to town in his 2-horse wagon to buy each of us kids a gift.

He decided that a yo-yo would be the best gift for each of us. On Christmas day we were so excited, and Daddy started passing out the gifts. But there were only 11 yo-yo's, so I didn't get anything that year.

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February 4	6:30	Mark McDaniel	Criminal Law
	7:40	Judge Sue Bell Cobb	Alabama Court of Criminal Appeals
February 9	6:30	Ed Gentle	Estates and Taxes
	7:40	Connie Glass/Carol Wallace	Elder Law
February 16	6:30	Robert Prince	Roll on 18 Wheeler
	7:40	Mark Price	Divorce Law
February 23	6:30	Delaine Mountain	Concepts of Tort Liability
	7:40	Judge Sharon Yates	Alabama Court of Civil Appeals
March 1	6:30	Phil Price	DUI Law
	7:40	Allen Brinkley	Questions & Answers
March 8	6:30	Steve Heninger	Medical Malpractice
	7:40	Mike Wisner	Wills and Trusts
March 15	6:30	Kerri Riley	Employment Law
	7:40	Patrick Chesnut	Criminal Law
March 29	6:30	Judge Charles S. Rodenhauser	Municipal Court System
	7:40	Tommy Siniard	Nursing Home Law
April 5	6:30	Jock Smith	Justice in America
	7:40	Charles Boyd	Workman Compensation Law
April 12	6:30	John Haley	Fair Labor Standards Act
	7:40	Archie Lamb	Healthcare Law
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News From The Year 1918

News From Huntsville and Around The World

Influenza paralyzes Huntsville

Huntsville - A particularly virulent form of influenza, commonly known as the Spanish Flu, has paralyzed Huntsville. More than four hundred people have already died and thousands more are seriously ill.

The mayor has ordered all places of business, with the exception of drug stores, be closed between 5 P.M.. and 9 A.M. and all sporting events, theaters and similar gatherings be canceled until further notice. All city and county schools will also remain closed.

Citizens are warned against entering any premises displaying the quarantine notice. All deaths are to be reported to the authorities as soon as possible and the clothes, bedding and personal effects of the victims are to be left where they are until such time as the authorities can burn them. Failure to do so can result in a fine and imprisonment.

City leaders are considering a proposal to post guards at the

city limits in an effort to stop any more sickness being brought from other communities.

In a related incident, there was a shooting on Monte Sano when a family, fleeing the illness in the city, tried to set up a camp-site on private property. Scores of families are reported to be camping on the mountain in the belief that it is a healthier site. Some of the property owners, armed with guns, are said to be patrolling their property and a sign has been erected warning all people to stay away.

Local Boys Off To The War

Huntsville - A dance was held last night at the Elk's Theater to honor some of our local lads who are leaving for the war in France. Among those honored were Cecil Fain, Howard Jones, Felix Newman, Raymond Jones and William Coyle.

Selective Service Act is Success

Washington - The tide may have turned in Europe, but fledgling American doughboys keep pouring into training camps in unpredicted numbers. Thus far, about three million men have been drafted, with some one million volunteers, and their steady arrival in Europe has made the A.E.F. a most powerful force.

There have been few draft dodgers. Some farmers have been reluctant to leave their plows, and some "slackers" who would rather shoot pool have been rounded up by vigilante groups, so far some 14 million men have been registered.

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ARMISTICE SIGNED! Bear Mauls Dog in Sharp's Cove

Paris - Nov. 11 - At 11:01 this morning the guns stopped firing. All across Europe there was silence as men cautiously crawled from their muddy trenches hoping against hope that the end to a nightmare was finally over.

After the instruments of surrender were signed, at 5 a.m., orders were relayed to all fronts that hostilities would end at exactly 11:00 a.m. All German soldiers were ordered to disable their weapons and remain in place until they could be processed by the Allied armies.

In the final minutes of the countdown noise and bedlam erupted as millions of men fired off their remaining ammunition into the air in a spontaneous celebration.

This war, which has claimed over ten million lives, is finally over.

Huntsville - Campers in Sharp's Cove got a surprise when a black bear wandered near their campsite last week. Seven different people saw the bear which was described as being of a good size. A terrier, belonging to A.J. Fortner, was seriously mauled when it tried to confront the bear. There had been earlier reports of bear signs and tracks in the vicinity but were mostly dismissed as products of an active imagination. The last confirmed sighting of a bear in Madison County occurred shortly before the Civil War.

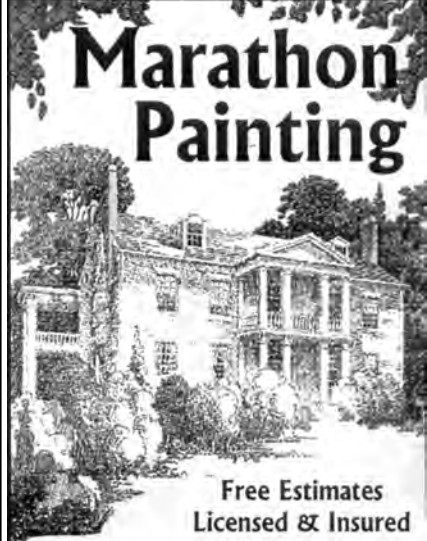
"The drive-in restaurant is nice in warm weather, but I seriously doubt that it'll ever catch on."

Comment made in 1957

Whiskey Still Burns House

Huntsville - A fire destroyed the home of James Sutler on Madison Street last night when a whiskey still exploded. Sutler was firing the still with wood when mash clogged the drip pipe and the built up pressure caused it to explode sending burning sticks of wood throughout the house. By the time help arrived the house was almost totally burned. Sutler escaped with burned hair and a severe scalding on the upper parts of his body.

Marathon Painting

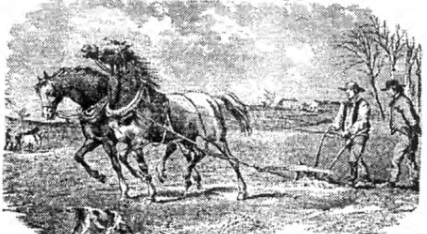


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Some Days Are Better Than Others

by (Governor) Fob James

Several years ago during my first term as Governor, I had occasion to spend several days in Huntsville attending a series of meetings. The second day I was there I awoke early with a ravishing hunger. As I lay there thinking about it, I remembered Eunice's Restaurant, a place I had visited several times before, and which was well known for its ham and biscuits.

Quietly getting dressed, so as not to awaken anyone, I slipped out of the hotel room and, after sneaking by the guards stationed in the hall, caught a ride with a taxi that was waiting out front.

Eunice's had not changed very much. The autographed pictures of many famous people were still on the walls, and the coffee pot was still brewing. Trying to be as incognito as I could, I slipped into a back booth and ordered breakfast. I was halfway through my second biscuit when I noticed this elderly gentleman staring at me. Every few minutes he would turn excitedly to his companions and, after pointing at me, would engage them in a spirited conversation.

"Oh well," I thought, "I should

have known I would be recognized."

Deciding to make the best of it, I hurriedly finished my breakfast, walked over to shake hands and introduce myself.

"I'm.," I began.

"I know who you are!" the old gentleman exclaimed, with a grin stretching from ear to ear.

"You're that TV fellow who announces the wrestling programs on TV every Saturday! Can I have your autograph?"

Suffice to say that the gentleman got an autograph.

Old News

Huntsville police arrested Claude Little the week past for circulating counterfeit money. His method was to walk into a business, ask change for a bogus twenty, and walk out with two legal ten spots. Mr. Little would never have been found out but for the fact of a suspicious barkeep who caught him passing a counterfeit ten dollar bill he had received in change.

From 1874 newspaper

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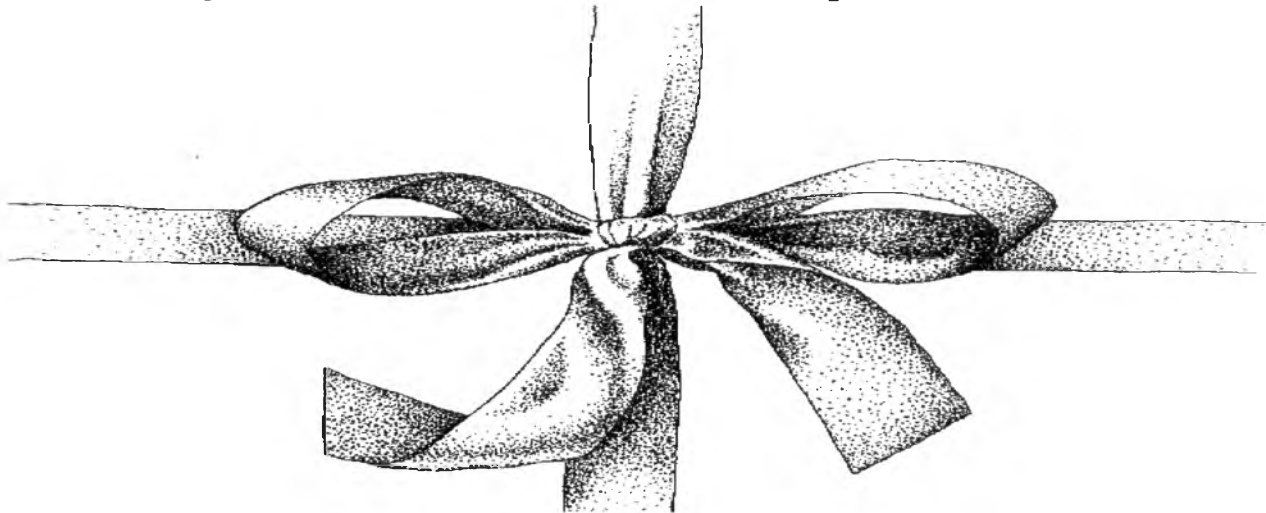
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History of Madison County

"The Early Settlers"

Written by Judge Taylor in the year 1890

In my previous writings I have made mention of numerous small towns in the county and now I propose to give a brief accounting of some.

New Hope

I have already stated that the South Eastern portion of the county was taken up in small farms, generally by men of moderate means. That portion of the county south of Keel's Mountain and east of Flint River did not come into the market until the year 1830 and though the lands had been ceded for many years, yet all the population were squatters. Between 1820 and 1825 a kind of trading place was located at Vienna, called Cloud's Town from old Mr. Cloud who first commenced business there and afterward went to Cloud's Cove on Tennessee River where he

entered a valuable tract of land. This section was first in Jackson, then in Decatur and finally restored to Madison County in the year 1824. The old Deposit Road was opened from Manchester to Deposit Ferry in 1813 and passed through the present town and as this became a regular thoroughfare George Russell built a tavern here before Alabama was admitted into the Union and this is said to have been the first house built in the old town.

This part of the County was in the twelve mile square Cherokee Reservation to which I have already alluded, and from various causes the sale of lands remained retarded until 1830, When Robert Owen and James McCartney entered the lands of the city and Robert Owen soon

afterwards laid out city lots on each side of the present Deposit Road, south beyond the spring. Among the first to set up in the new town John Kinnebrugh, a merchant well known and favorable to the old citizens, and William Stone who built the tan yard. It is said that his brother, George Stone, present Judge of the Supreme Court, was in some kind of business there before he wandered further south in pursuit of fame and fortune.

The town was first incorporated as Vienna on the year 1332 and as the population thronged to the new country surrounding it a brisk business sprang up. I. D. Vann and John Ledbetter were conducting prosperous mercantile establishments there at the beginning of the War. Their customers were generally men of moderate means, punctual on their dealings and consequently their business was a safe and profitable one. During the Civil War this unfortunately became a debatable land between the Federals from the line of the railroad and desultory and irregular Confederate troops, or as they were termed "Bushwhackers" and the people suffered from both sides until at length the Federals utterly destroyed the town and nearly all the buildings out to Wood's Mill.

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When the soldiers returned from the war they found a forest of chimneys marking the site of Vienna and where they had formerly seen good houses along the roads leading in that direction they found rude cabins perched around the base of the stone chimneys and all around for miles was open land as the fences had also disappeared. But the brave fellows who survived the war went to work with a will to repair the wasted places, enclosed the lands built new houses and in an exceedingly short space of time the old town was rebuilt and has nearly attained its ancient limits. There is a Vienna in south Alabama and the post office has always been called New Hope to prevent confusion and when the town was incorporated in 1881 it was formerly called the town of New Hope.

Whitesburg

It received the name Whitesburg from James White of Virginia who purchased the fine farm on both sides of the river near the ferry. In the old flat boat days Whitesburg was a place of considerable trade, but the serious difficulty is the habit of the river at flood tide of taking possession of the lower story of their business houses.

James Cloyd, Asa Shelton, Joel R. Love, and Joseph A. Brown are old business men of this place. Asa Shelton went to Nashville, James Cloyd is dead, while Joel R. Love and Joseph Brown are still in business there. The construction of the railroad

diverted cotton transportation from the town and business declined and like Triana it awaits its the opening of the river for its future,

Whitesburg, first known to the Whites as Ditto's landing, was one of the first points in the bend of the Tennessee river from the fact that it was considered about the line between the Chickasaws and the Cherokees, and a Chickasaw settlement was somewhere near the town on the river. When the County was first settled this was the port of entry for the boatmen of the Tennessee for flour and potatoes and fruit. There

was scarcely any wheat raised in the county at this time, in fact it had not dawned on the minds of the people that this was a fine wheat section so a large proportion of the flour used came from the head waters of the Tennessee River. I suppose they got to

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putting bad flour onto their customers for in the year 1816 a flour inspector was appointed at Ditto's Landing by legislative enactment, whose duty it was to inspect all flour landed and brand it's grade on the barrel for which he received the sum of six and a quarter cents per barrel. This in those days of low wages yielded a considerable income as there were many barrels landed at Whitesburg during the year. How long this office was continued and who was the inspector I can not ascertain. The office probably went out with the Territorial Government.

Here was also the rendezvous of the river pilots among the most noted of whom were Webster, Johnson and Black. They here boarded the broadhorns at high tide and piloted them through the shoals, got off at Waterloo and returned by land to Whitesburg. Vast quantities of lumber were also brought down the river from the Tennessee mills and brought to Huntsville. Whitesburg saw its most prosperous days from the completion of the turnpike up until the railroad was built, when it began to decline and since that time there has been little change in the town. There is no record showing that the town was ever incorporated.

Gurleystown (Gurley)

On completion of the railroad their watering place for two or three years was Cole Spring in Jackson County but about 1859 they brought the water from a fine spring on lands belonging to W.R. Gurley in pipes to a large water tank at the present site of Gurleystown. The place was known as Gurley's Tank. Soon after the war the depot was built here and one or two stores went up nearby. Frank B. Gurley and B.F. Walker inaugurated a variety of enterprises that gradually built up. F.B. Gurley put up a steam gin and E.F. Walker devel-

oped a large lumber trade here in cross ties and cedar lumber. These and other enterprises of a kindred character furnished employment for many men and circulated money among them. The business men of the town are, with scarcely an exception, energetic shrewd progressive men who deserve great credit for the success that has attended their efforts to build up a lively prosperous village. Gurleystown was incorporated in 1882.

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Boil Spanish onions til done. Cut each onion in quarters. Into a baking dish put a layer each of onions, white sauce, a sprinkle of grated cheese, crushed crackers and repeat until dish is full. Cover top with buttered crumbs and heat in oven at 350 to brown on top. Serve in same dish.



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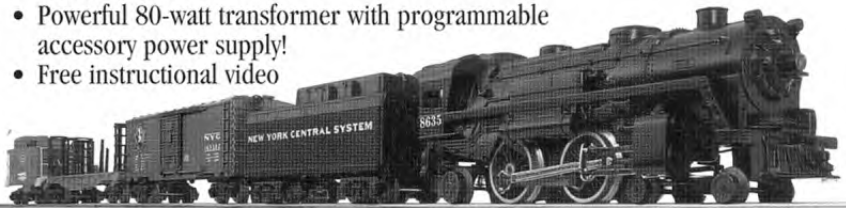
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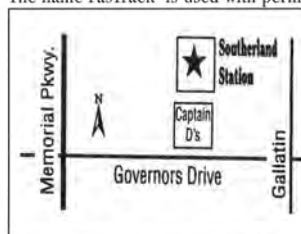
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A Christmas Homecoming in Hurricane Valley

By Theresa Hanvey Fallwell

During the Christmas season, the television is full of touching commercials depicting family reunions. One of my favorites is a coffee commercial where the young soldier arrives at his family home unexpectedly and surprises everyone. Each time I see this commercial, it brings back fond memories of my grandparents and a most special homecoming for my family.

The summer of 1942, should have been a time of celebration for the Walter and Ethel McGehee Family of Hurricane Valley. Their youngest son, William Kelly (Bill), had just graduated from Riverton High School. Their middle child, Walter Milam, had just completed his first year at Auburn University. And their eldest child, my mother, Velma McGehee Hanvey

and her husband, Ralph, had presented them with their first grandchild, Wayne. But in early days of that steamy summer, any celebration was tempered with worry and fear over the Great War raging overseas, and the anticipated sacrifices that many young men and their families

would make in defense of our country. In June of 1942, six months after the attack on Pearl Harbor, both of the McGehee boys joined throngs of other Madison County youth and volunteered for service in the U.S. Army.

Milam was inducted and left almost immediately on July 22, 1942. He took his basic training and became a highly specialized Computer Fire Director who calculated distances, angles, and

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positions for artillery attacks. He also became a Marksman with an M1 Carbine. Young Milam was shipped overseas and saw action in the Rhineland and Northern France campaigns. Milam was wounded on November 14, 1944 in France. He was shipped home to a Veterans' Hospital in Augusta, Georgia where his recuperation lasted almost two years. He suffered terrible shrapnel wounds to his hands and legs, and never fully regained use of his hands.

Kelly's deployment was delayed until December 8, 1942. He finished one semester at Mississippi State on a basketball scholarship before beginning

basic training. Kelly became a skilled Heavy Mortar Crewman. He served in the Naples-Foggia, Rome Arno, Rhineland, Southern France, and Central Europe campaigns. At one point he and some of his fellow soldiers were captured. They were tied together and marched toward a holding area. Suddenly, American planes were on the scene dispersing enemy troops with their fire power. This afforded Kelly and another man an opportunity to escape. They hid in hedge rows and muddy culverts until the enemy abandoned their search. They found their way back to an American unit. Shortly after that, Kelly was told to prepare for invasion training with Japan as the target. And then, with no advance notice, Kelly was discharged. He had served in the mandatory five campaigns necessary before discharge. The War was over for him.

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Kelly was shipped out of Naples, Italy to Newport News, Virginia where his discharge was completed on December 23, 1945. From there he traveled by train to Atlanta, and then caught a Greyhound Bus to Huntsville. He arrived in Huntsville December 24, about 1:00 in the morning. He found a taxi willing to take him the sixteen or so miles out of Huntsville into the country, past where the asphalt roads ended, down the old chert roads, and finally, to the one-lane, dirt wagon trail that ended in Hurricane Valley. Of course, there was neither the time, opportunity, nor method for letting his parents know he was on his way home. Ship to shore communication was limited for security reasons, and there were no telephones in Hurricane Valley at the time.

Looking much thinner and much older than when he left, Kelly climbed the old, steep rock steps and knocked on the door of his parents' clapboard farmhouse early that cold Christmas Eve morning in 1945. His mother answered the door. I can only imagine how she must have felt. She once told me she and my grandfather were astonished and dumbstruck and so grateful to see him, alive and healthy and home. I know relief and joy overwhelmed their prayers of gratitude at having one of their beloved sons home. However, their joy was tempered because

it would be some time yet before their other son, Milam, would be able to leave the rehabilitation hospital in Georgia, and return to Hurricane Valley. But on that Christmas Eve, 1945, the McGehees' were blessed that all of their family was on American soil and would survive the Great War. Not everyone in this close knit community of Hurricane Valley would be so fortunate, and each time, my grandparents or my mother or my uncles retold this story, their focus was always on their neighbors whose loved ones did not come home from the War.

Today, the remains of the original McGehee Clan, Kelly and his wife of more than 50 years, Jessie, and Milam's widow, Louise, and son, Walter, still live on the Hurricane Valley farm that my grandparents purchased in 1910. The barn, smokehouse, chicken houses, and tractor sheds have all fallen victim to the prolific vegetation that first attracted my grandfather to this property. But the old, white clapboard farmhouse with its rock steps remains stalwart, a continuing eyewitness to both the mundane and monumental

events that form a family's history. The Christmas homecoming of 1945, was a monumental event in the McGehee family history.



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A Civil War Letter

The following was written by Camilla Jamison who was a refugee from Giles County, Tn. during the war.

Huntsville, April 20th, 1863
My dear darling husband,

Good morning, Sir. How do ye do this morning? Glad to see you. All's well, I thank you.

Yours of 16th was read last night past at nine o'clock, giving the usual degree of pleasure and satisfaction although I hasten to write immediately, I will promise you nothing interesting for I am unusually dull this morning. Besides, the meanest pen in 40 states has fallen into my hand and if I could say ever so many good things, this pen would not write them down.

Ella got here Saturday night, safe and sound. No, she didn't for all the children have the whooping cough. I will move down to her house today, and we will have a rich old time. but I believe I will be afraid of buggers. Bass is not like himself at all; he is as ugly as he can be, and doesn't like me any better than he did last winter. But I'll make him like me yet if he doesn't watch. Nellie is the same old Nell. She makes me think more of home than anything I've seen since I left home, and I am getting anxious to get home. I had Jinnie (her mule) brought around to see how she was looking, having been told by everyone who knew anything about the boy that she would be well attended to, but instead, she is the poorest object I ever saw. Henry will get me some corn and I will try and fatten her myself, and then if I think best I'll sell her. I would have made more by

letting her stay at the stall at \$9.00 per month than letting her be worked to death for nothing.

It grieved me very much at first, but now I have gotten over it, for those who have, must lose, and our lot has been to lose all the time, but I hope there is a better day coming.

How is M. Smith?
If Sam Crocker

was very energetic and had good will enough, he might succeed in getting Jack out for Mr. Leatherman. I heard there were three hundred negroes burned

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to death in Murfreesboro—short time since. Such freedom they would have received in a few days or years at most, if they had stayed at home, and perhaps in a more honorable way than by burning.

April 5, 1863 My dear, I would prize so highly this evening a real old fashion talk with you, such as we often had during our short stay together. I get very impatient when old memories crowd the mind. I wonder if we ever will be as happy again. It seems to me I would give the whole world, except enough for us to live in, were it mine to give. If we could only live together again as happily as we use to live.

The belief here is that there will be general engagement in Tennessee in a few days, I wish "Rosa" would go home without a fight; it really looks hard to force our visitors away, but when they forget the old adage "visitors should not make their visits too long," they will have to be gently reminded of it.

Here comes Ella, and she says she is anxious for paper and pen to write you.

April 6th:

There is a perfect Negro mama here that everybody is trying to buy at the most outrageous prices. They pass all reason. Mr.

Crockett has sold all but two. When you get into old Kentucky capture a few and send them South. Henry has not got back yet but look for him in a few days. When I first commenced sewing, I thought making two shirts was a good day's work, but now I can make five and make them well. Mrs. C. is telling me heaps of bad things to tell you, but I am afraid it would make you blush. I will be sure to tell you when I see you again. My dear, I had rather not see you in six months than that you should offend in the smallest point. I get so anxious to see you sometime. I can't resist inviting you to come. I was only jesting when I said I would look for you every evening. I know full well you can't come. I hope, tho, it won't be long 'till we are granted the privilege that High Heaven allows us. I hope men will take a more correct view of

things in general, and learn the foolishness of war. This war has continued about long enough. I am getting tired of it. If Jeff and Abe don't stop it, they will get another fuss on hand.

Your Wife, Camilla

Guntersville Gold

Guntersville - Aug. 3, 1894 - Mr. Degg, superintendent for the new gold mines near Guntersville, brought down supplies and fixtures on the steamer, R.C. Coles, this week, preparatory to starting work. The heavier machinery will follow. The company is much encouraged from reports. Experts who have visited the mines near Guntersville have pronounced them some of the richest places they have ever seen.



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YOUR HOSTS: THE SANFORDS & HAMPTONS

My First Job

by Larry Groves

The thought of stuffing a couple of twenty-dollar bills in my pocket never entered my mind. Of course there was no reason to steal. I was being paid well for my efforts: usually about 25 or 50 cents at the end of the workday.

I was barely old enough to read at the time, but I could tell a one-dollar bill from a five, a ten and a twenty. I never saw anything larger than that.

My first job was at J.C. Brown's General Store, located on the corner of Triana and 9th Avenue, just a little ways down the road from the old Center Theater. The building is still standing, but the business is no more. At one time it was the busiest store around, but even in the mid-sixties: It was like a dinosaur floating on a melting iceberg; and the iceberg was melt-

ing fast. The supermarkets had come to town.

By that time, the original owner, Mr. J.C., had long been deceased and his son Bill was running the show. My great uncle Howard had worked there for an eternity, or at least since his return from World War II. I would accompany him to the store every Sunday morning, while he and Mr. Brown counted the money. My job was to separate the bills into their respective denominations, a stack for each. I guess I was handling a lot of cash for a six-year old kid. I once found a dime on the floor and asked my uncle if I could keep it. He said, if I had found it on the floor I could. That was enough to buy a six and a half once Coke from the soda machine. Licorice sticks were a penny apiece. I always preferred the black ones to the reds. They were hollow in the center and I would bite off both ends and use them as straws. When the Coke was finished, it softened up the

licorice and made it easier to chew.

I learned a lot from working at that store. I was even introduced to great literature in the form of Classic Comic Books. I don't see them around anymore and I think that's sort of a shame. Mr. Brown used to laugh and

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joke as I made my weekly selection each Sunday morning. Every day on the job was good for at least one comic book, sometimes two or three. "He's going to grow up and be a writer some day," he used to say.

I always chose the classics. Moby Dick, Ivanhoe, The Red Badge of Courage and War of the Worlds were but a few. And I would like to think that Mr. Brown just might have been right all along.

I'll never forget my first job, and I'll always treasure those Sunday mornings. I'm not really old enough to remember the business, the way some people do, the way it was in its hey-day. I was only lucky enough to catch a small glimpse before it disappeared beyond the horizons of time.

The Deacon

Deacon Johnson is a great temperance man, and sets a good example of total abstinence to all his churchgoing neighbors.

Not long ago he employed a carpenter to make some alterations in his parlor. In repairing the corner near the fireplace it was necessary to remove the wainscoting, when, lo! a discovery was made that astonished

everyone. A brace of decanters, a tumbler and a pitcher were costly reposing there, as if they had stayed there from the beginning. The deacon was quickly summoned from prayer, and as he beheld the bottles, he exclaimed,

"Well, I declare! That is curious, sure enough. It must be the same that old Bains left when he left this home for greener pastures, thirty years ago!"

"Perhaps he did," offered one of the carpenters, "but, Deacon, the ice in that pitcher must have been froze mighty hard to last all these years!"

Taken from 1893 Alabama newspaper

"Male, 1929, high mileage, good condition, some hair, many new parts including hip, knee and cornea. Isn't in running shape but walks well."
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The Old Man and the Violin

The night was cold and blustery, with a touch of snow in the air. It was a night unfit for mortal or beast, so when the old man with the beat-up violin case walked in and sat down in front of the wood-burning stove to get warm, no one paid much attention. On a night like this, everyone was welcome to share the warmth of the old bar.

It was a week before Christmas and everyone was feeling low. Joe and Laura, sitting at the table in the corner, were depressed. No money, no gifts to give their relatives. It didn't look like it would be a very cheerful Christmas. Benny, who had just lost his job, was sitting at the bar, carefully trying to nurse one beer to make it last as long as he could. Even Cathy the bartender was lost in thought, wondering how she would buy presents for her children and pay rent at the same time.

The old man might have sat there forever without anyone paying any attention to him if he had not picked up his violin and

begun playing. Softly and quietly he began, so low that it took the customers a few moments to realize where the music was coming from.

It was obvious to everyone that the old man and his violin had seen many years together, maybe a concert stage or maybe even a symphony orchestra.

Hushed and hauntingly the music poured forth, filling the room and finding its way into every dark corner and crevice. With his head bowed and his fingers dancing softly on the strings, the old man and the instrument seemed as one. It was the music of the gods—music that would make an angel cry.

The customers stared at the old man as his music began to envelop them with its warm, haunting melodies. The music seemed to gently beckon to them until finally, unable to resist, they were caught up in its magical harmonies and transported to a time and place where everything was perfect and the only tears shed were those of joy. Riding on a crescendo of love and passion, the violin carried the customers to a place where time had no meaning and Christmas was in their hearts forever.

Maybe it was because of the tears in the patrons' eyes, but for whatever the reason, no one saw the old man leave. ...

Just a short story about an old man, his violin, and Jay's Lounge. A completely meaningless story—unless you had been there.

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Micky Lanier

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The Christmas Fruitcake

by Helen Miller

Of all the aromas that came from our kitchen, nothing ever topped the one that came from Mama's fruitcake.

It was always on a cold November day. No one had to tell me when—I knew it the minute I came home from school and opened the front door. My nostrils filled and sent my salivary glands into a rain dance.

My sister and I would beg for the first piece but Mama's answer was always the same. "It's not cold yet and besides it needs to 'set' a few days."

Preparations had begun days before. It was always my job to crack the shells, pick out the nuts, and clean the bitter stuff that hid between the nut rows. Mama cut the fruit into tiny bits. First the big dried figs and dates, then orange, lemon peel, and citron. I never did like citron and didn't want it in there, but she assured me that no real Southern fruitcake was complete with-

out citron. Then came the pineapple and cherries. After that came the raisins: white raisins for a white cake and dark ones for a dark cake, but she said she liked to use both. When the sticky fruit was finally all cut it filled a huge pan. Then came the flour sifted in a little at a time, working slowly with one hand, sifting with the other. Each piece had to be separated so that no two pieces stuck together. Finally quarts of nuts were added.

This was no ordinary fruitcake. She steam-cooked it in a huge dish pan that she could hardly get into the oven. It must have weighed over fifty pounds! Mama's cake was so good I remember once Mrs. Brinkley asked if she used some secret ingredient and she wasn't telling anyone what it was. Mama just smiled.

Finally, the tasting day came

and we were given our first piece. After picking out the citron, I enjoyed every last crumb. We always left out a generous piece for Santa on Christmas Eve.

I was grown before I found out that Mama did indeed use a secret ingredient, and it came out of that same brown paper bag that was kept high out of reach on the pantry shelf. I asked her what was in there and she told me it was none of my business—just something to be used for medicinal purposes only.

Two Faced

Abraham Lincoln was one of the few people in this world able to laugh at himself. One evening, during a political debate, an opponent accused him of being two-faced. Without hesitation, Lincoln replied, "I leave it to my audience... if I had two faces, would I be wearing this one?"

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When The Circus Came To Town

by Judy Wills

In the days before movies and television, Huntsville residents were eager for any kind of traveling entertainment. They came in droves to see horse fairs, plays, and circuses. Even the famous Buffalo Bill Cody came to Huntsville with his famous Wild West Show.

The tradition of the traveling circus goes back to at least Roman times. It might be a group with only a few horses and dogs, but any circus, small or large, was assured a good audience. Even the fighting during the War Between the States didn't stop circuses from trying to perform, at least in the cities that were under Union occupation. A circus visiting Nashville in late 1864 just managed to get out of town before the major battle that occurred in mid-December. They were at times accused of spying and sometimes it was true, but garrison commanders had a hard time ensuring the loyalty of the troops and letting the traveling performers hold their show anyway, albeit under heavy

guard.

In late October, 1916 Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey circus came to Huntsville. They were already billed as the "Greatest Show on Earth." P. T. Barnum sought entertainers from all over the world and local people could hardly wait to see the circus freaks as well as the wild animals. This particular circus featured over 130 horses, performing ones as well as the wagon-pulling variety. In those days, the circus parade was a major event. Howard Harbin, a retired Madison County employee who had seen the parade as a small child, recalled that the parade would stop every now and then to put on a small skit. This was meant to whet the appetite of the crowd to come and see the main performance. The parade was to move along Jefferson Street and then Washington Street until it came to the site of the performance tents. This was a cleared tract of land on the east side of North Washington Street near the Southern Railway depot.

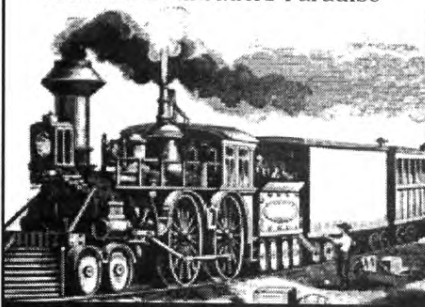
There had been great debate about whether the city of Huntsville should extend its corporate limits to include the site where the circus would be held. If the site had been inside the city limits, the city would have received \$150 plus a payment of \$75 for a permit to hold the parade.

Some of the citizens felt that the circus was a bad thing to have and could contribute to the decline of morality in Huntsville, but the mayor and council were in favor of having the circus inside the city limits so that the city, instead of the county, could benefit from the sale of a privilege license to the circus. Other local

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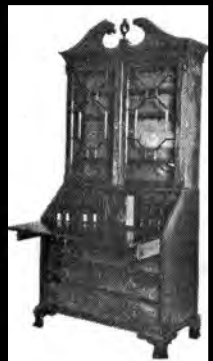
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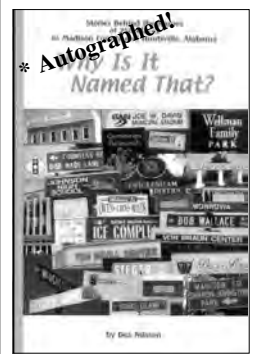
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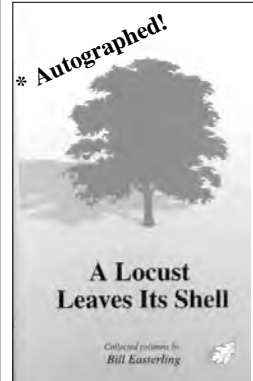
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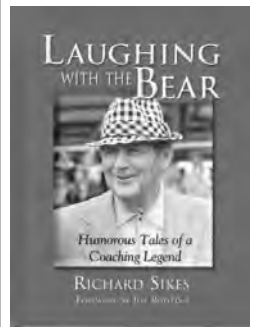
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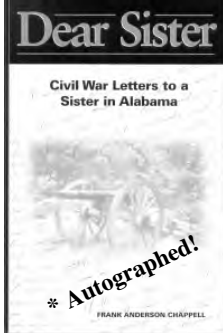
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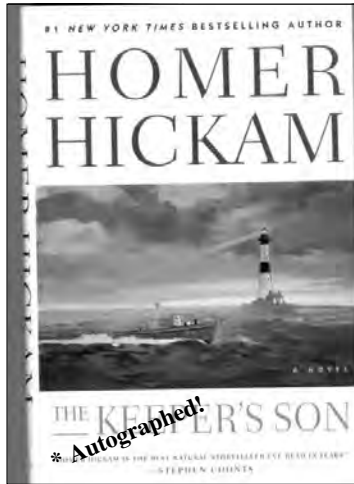
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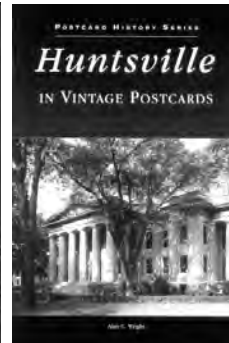
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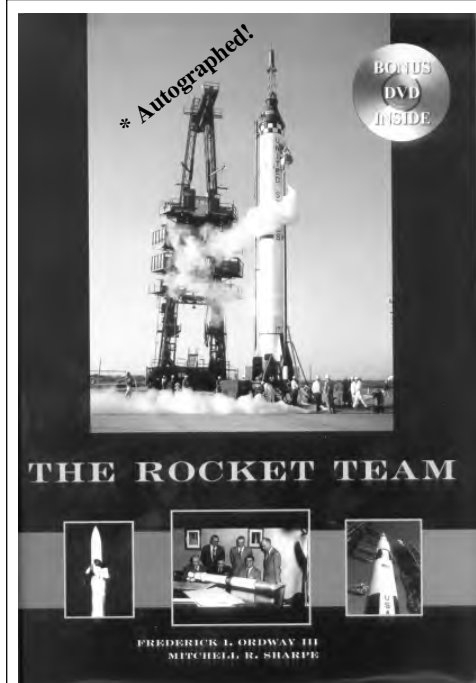
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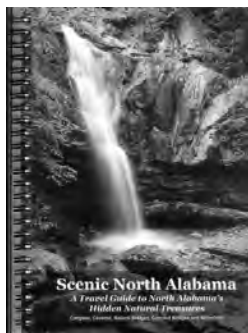


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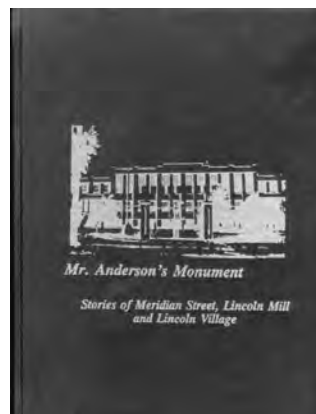


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cities had derived as much as \$1,000 from a visit from the circus. The opponents of extending the city limits were in the majority and the city lost the opportunity to receive a larger portion of the \$300 collected by the county.

Howard Harbin recalled that his family, who lived in Maysville, loaded into the wagon early in order to be in town before the parade started. In 1916 it was a two-and-a-half hour trip to Huntsville by wagon. The Harbin family found a good spot to watch the parade on Washington Street. When the parade broke up, the Harbins joined the crowd that followed the menagerie to the circus site. As they neared the site, a great commotion broke out. Harbin and his family saw smoke coming up from a little rise, just ahead of the big top. They moved away from the

crowd to a place behind a grove of trees.

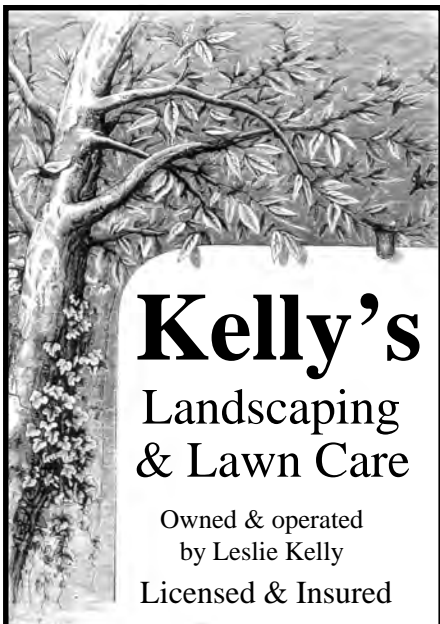
Just at that moment, horses started galloping in panic from over the hill. More than 100 horses had been stabled in a tent just over the rise. There were two rows of horses with a long manger that held grain and hay. They had been visited by scores of on-lookers and horse fanciers. It isn't known exactly how a fire started, but most of the men were smoking cigars and apparently a discarded cigar butt was tossed into the manger. The weather had been very dry that month and it did not require much to start a fire. With so many of the circus employees involved in the parade, there were not enough workers to put out the fire. The workers started cutting the horses loose, but the fire was spreading faster than they could release them. The tent caught fire and the screams of the horses were horrendous. Before the day was over 27 of the

most seriously injured horses were shot to death and in the end a total of 130 horses had died of burns or been shot.

The disposal of animals had always been a problem in the city.

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The carcasses were hauled to a site that was at the corner of present day Owens and McClung - back then, the site of the pest house. This disposal was of a magnitude that had not been anticipated before. State law provided that carcasses be hauled to a site where the odor of burning them would not reach residences. This was not possible on the pest house land so the circus officials contracted a local man who claimed that he could bury them at the required two foot depth. The local contractor was paid \$100 for his efforts and started digging trenches.

The circus fire had been on Saturday and by the following Wednesday it was apparent that the job was too much for the man who had taken it on. Rather than allow the matter to grow into a

law suit instituted by angry residents, Judge Archie McDonnell and Mayor T. T. Terry went to the site and put to work every available truck and wagon they could procure. Eventually, all the dead horses had been hauled to the site and enough trenches had been dug to hold them.

It was not the sort of revenue-enhancing event that the city fathers had anticipated.

The city and the county had to pay for almost all of the labor involved plus the hiring of the trucks and wagons. Efforts were begun immediately to get the circus to pay for the disposal, but it was not an easy task and it would be forty-nine years before Ringling Brothers, Barnum and Bailey would visit Huntsville again.



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Busy Session Of City Council Held Last Night

from 1906 Huntsville Newspaper

The city council held an interesting meeting last night and passed several ordinances that are of interest to the general public.

- Mayor Smith stated that on the advice of John Wesley, a paving expert, the entire cost of the paving will be passed on to the property owners. The paving ordinance was changed effective immediately.

- An ordinance was also passed providing for the grading of the extension of Locust Street, laying the street with concrete gutters, stone curbs and granitoid sidewalks.

- Permission was granted the owners of the little frame building on Washington Street occupied by the Davis Tin Shop for roofing the building with tin.

- The members of the Fire Department will be allowed vacation for the summer.

- The Hospital Association stated that an annex is being erected to the city hospital and permission was asked for the right to remove this new structure when the lease of the association runs out. This was granted by a vote of the council, water meters will be placed on the pipe furnishing water to the livery stables.

- The street committee, to which was referred the matter of extending Green and widening Cruse Alley, was reported favorable on both propositions. The recommendation of the engineer was that the new streets be made 46 feet wide but the committee reported in favor of 60 foot streets. The report was favorably acted on and City Attorney Murphy was directed to proceed with the condemnation of abutting property as provided by Section 21 of the city code. The committee expressed the opinion in its report that the widening of the alley and extension of the street would add from 20 to 100 per cent to the property that is now cut off from communication with the streets.

All in all, we are glad to see our city leaders earning their pay.

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and Common Sense



I love those old-fashioned superstitions - here are a couple of my favorites!

* Never comb your hair after the sun goes down, or you will become forgetful.

* If you kiss your own elbow, you will turn into a member of the opposite sex.

* Three bad habits - drinking the glass, smoking the pipe and scattering the dew late at night.

* A good laugh and a long sleep are the best cures in any doctor's book.

* If you whip a child with the branch of a green broom plant, the child will stop growing.

* Always cover your mouth when you yawn. That way you will keep evil spirits from entering your body.

* A hypochondriac is one who's afraid he's sick and scared to death that he's not.

* If you want to have a keen memory, never read the epitaphs on headstones in a cemetery.

* Never cut your hair during a full moon - very bad luck will ensue.

Here are a few of my favorite household tips!

* To clean your silk flowers, put them in a bag with half a cup of salt, close bag and shake.

* Put a fresh slice of bread in with your hardened brown sugar and it will be soft soon

* If you have too much sugar in a main dish, just add a teaspoon of cider vinegar.

* A bit of ground cloves added to your beans will give them a spicy taste.

* If you're congested on these cold nights, try propping your pillow up a bit. Also, invest in a cool mist humidifier.

* Rub some sage into your next pork roast prior to baking

* To use those small leftover rolls, hollow out the inside, spread with butter and toast slowly in the oven. Then fill to overflowing with tasty meat stew

* Kerosene will soften boots and shoes that have been hardened by water and will render them as pliable as new.

* Wash your hair, then follow up with a rinse of vinegar for shiny sparkly locks!

* To brighten your aluminum pots, fill them with water to which you have added a couple of slices of lemon, and boil.

* Screw a hook onto the end of your broom to save your bristles, use the hook to pull your shades if they get too high.



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Brawl At Lincoln Mill Church

by Charles Rice

Christian churches are supposed to be Houses of the Lord, places of sanctuary where one can go to escape the worries and woes of the everyday world. However, a Baptist Church in Huntsville's Lincoln Mill village became anything but that one strange September night some half a century ago. In fact, the sleepy little church suddenly exploded into a raucous free-for-all in which the women matched the men in ferocity.

The bizarre incident apparently came about at least in part over the efforts of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) to unionize the mill workers during those bleak depression years of the 1930s. Union backers felt the CIO would stand up for their rights and improve their standard of living. Union foes feared the Northern owners would retaliate by closing the mills and moving elsewhere, something the Yankee capitalists had already done several times in the South. After all, the New England mills had only moved to Huntsville to escape paying union wages in the first place, and to most folks any job was better than none in those days of massive unemployment in America.

The labor dispute seems to have spilled over into the church, where Rev. C. V. Headrick enjoyed the backing of the union. The CIO's opponents had become dissatisfied with their minister, apparently feeling he was meddling in matters that didn't concern him. There were other complaints against the preacher as well, but the union dispute obviously was the major grievance. Headrick's adversaries already had tried several times to have

him replaced. On the night of September 3, 1939, their impatience finally got the better of them.

Rev. Headrick was presiding at a conference in the divided mill village church. William Adcock, the local CIO leader, was on hand to give his support to the clergyman, which only angered the union opponents. Near the end of the meeting, a woman member of the congregation at last rose from her seat and forcefully shoved the preacher out of the pulpit. Other women quickly intervened, and the Lincoln ladies went at it hammer and tongs — kicking, punching, kneeling, slapping and pulling hair.

Not to be outdone by their spouses, the male members of the congregation promptly chose up sides and joined in the brawl.

World War II was just breaking out in Europe, but a visitor at the Huntsville church might well

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have thought he was at the battle-front in Poland.

According to newspaper reports the next day, two men (Ingle Gant and Tom Bragg) were stabbed, while several others were taken to Huntsville Hospital emergency room with head injuries. A number of the ladies were somewhat bruised and battered, but none required medical attention. Only one person was arrested, Dillard Adcock, who had stabbed Tom Bragg before being struck over the head by Olen Graham. Labor leader William Adcock, Dillard's brother, had also been hit over the head with a heavy object, probably a chair.

Tensions obviously remained high and Christian behavior was clearly the loser that day in Lincoln Village. In fact, it was later learned that another fight had taken place nearby several hours earlier on Meridian Street. A union organizer named Pearson had called a non-union worker named Sharpe a "scab" and several other uncomplimentary names. Sharpe took offense and attacked Pearson. An unamused Judge Price issued arrest warrants for both men.

All things considered, the Lord just might have preferred to look elsewhere on that incredible September day. Brotherly love was certainly lacking in the church that day.



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The Broken Telescope

by Bill Ivy

Sometime around 1929 or 30, I was at an age that I knew that there was no real Santa Clause but I did not want my parents to know because that might mean that I would not get any toys for Christmas. I desperately wanted a telescope and I certainly did not want to do anything that might prevent me from receiving the telescope. We lived at the foot of Monte Sano Mountain and it was my desire to see everything close up on the mountain.

One day my mother had gone next door to visit with our neighbor and I went on a house search to see if I could find a telescope. Eureka, in a cedar chest I spotted a big brand new telescope. I quickly sneaked out to the back door, telescope in hand, and aimed it at the mountain and put the scope to my eye. Horror of horrors, I could see nothing but a blur I knew that the scope was BROKEN. What was I to do? I thought if I told my parents that they had bought a BROKEN telescope they would have time to go and get a good one. However, this would require me to admit that number one, I really knew that there was no Santa Clause and I had been spoofing my parents, and number two that I had been browsing around in areas where I should not have been looking. It was a quandary and I didn't know what to do. I finally decided to say and do nothing and maybe after Christmas my dad could get rid of the BROKEN telescope and buy a new one.

On Christmas morning I dutifully opened presents and when I got to the BROKEN telescope I took it out to porch and aimed it

at the mountain and once again saw nothing. I called my Dad and told him that the telescope was BROKEN. He looked through the telescope and explained to me that you had to focus telescopes for them to work. He focused the BROKEN telescope and handed it to me. I looked toward Monte Sano Mountain and it was like the whole mountain had moved to our front porch. I could see trees, rocks, houses, everything on the mountain. What a happy Christmas it turned out to be.

I never told my parents about the BROKEN telescope and I sometime wonder how many times my son had a BROKEN

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Andy Rooney

telescope that I did not know about.

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Civil War Shell Causes Excitement in New Hope

From 1891 newspaper

From a very reliable source, a Mercury reporter was informed that on last Saturday at a point in the vicinity of New Hope, but on the Marshall County side of the river, an explosion occurred that has recalled the war and nearly scared the life out of an honest old darkey.

It seems that the old man was burning logs for the purpose of clearing up, and he had set fire to a heap which ignited a large dead tree. Suddenly a most terrific explosion occurred, one that was heard for miles, and the old tree was slivered and scattered to the winds. The old darkey who was a hundred yards distant took his departure without troubling himself, with an investigation.

A party who finally visited the spot where the tree once stood and made an investigation, found from the surroundings every evidence that the explosion was that of a bombshell that had been imbedded in the tree during the war.

It is known that there was a good deal of firing from cannon loaded with shell at this point during the war, a point that commanded the river.

The circumstances can admit of two theories, one that the shell became imbedded in the tree by

being fired from a cannon and failed to explode.

The other that it had been left in the hollow, if there was any in the tree, as a sort of keepsake, hoping at some future day that it would get in its work. The first theory, however, is the most probable. The report was heard far into Madison County and oc-

casioned considerable wonder. It is said the old negro will burn no more brush in that neighborhood.

My doctor refused to write me a prescription for Viagra. He said it would be like putting a new flagpole on a condemned building.

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What Happened?

by Bobby Stapler

We made the move to Huntsville in the summer of 1958 to a house at the corner of Newby Road and Bob Wallace Ave. My parents worked at Merrimac Mills in Huntsville Park until 1958 when my dad, Homer Stapler, and Verlon Plemons started the first armored car service in Huntsville.

I would walk down Newby Road, across the railroad tracks, to the bus stop at Genesco. Most teens in this district attended West Clinton Junior High School. Our school was next to the old Trailways bus station where we would gather after school to play nickel pinball machines and hang out.

My fondest memories of those days were when we sometimes walked to the Big Spring. In the winter the rocks would look like they were growing white tree limbs from the frozen over spray from the water.

Spring time and summer at the Big Spring was a joy. We would play in the water at the head of the spring, where it came out of the cave beneath the bank and sometimes we would climb up the rocks and jump while yelling "Jesse James!" This was the place where we were told that Jesse James jumped off the cliff, into the spring, on his horse. It was just a legend but it was fun at the time.

The real fun was trying to catch one of the large fish, usually a carp or a buffalo. This usually happened on a Saturday when we were supposed to be at the city swimming pool in the park. We would pool our money, and sometimes we would have two or three dollars. Whoever caught the first fish got the money.


The spring, with its cool summer breezes and large shade trees was always a favorite place for picnics. Bank presidents, business owners and common laborers all enjoyed each other's company as the smell of fried chicken and watermelons filled the air. These were hard times but we were all full of love and respect for each other.

The spring, with it's natural beauty almost untouched, the way the way John Hunt found it, was a special place for us. A settlement was built around the spring, which grew into a city and then a county, and finally into what we knew as Rocket City, U.S.A.


It seems as if every city council, from the early 1960s until present, has tried to outdo the other by chopping away at the Big Spring.

There's not much left to chop at anymore but, even though, in a few years we will all be asking, "What happened to our Spring?"

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Three Months To Live

She had always dreamed of her wedding day, imagining how her handsome husband would take her hand in his and pledge eternal love to her.

But, when that day came, and Mary Chambers took her wedding vows with William D. Bibb, they both knew she would be dead in three months.

Mary Smith Chambers was born in 1816, daughter of Dr. Henry Chambers, an early Alabama legislator who had been born in Virginia. Upon graduation from William and Mary College in 1808, he had studied medicine before coming to Ala-

bama, a new territory at the time.

After serving as a surgeon on the staff of Gen. Andrew Jackson during the War of 1812, he made his home in Huntsville and was elected a member of the state constitutional convention in 1819.

The whole town took an interest in the fatherless young lady, Mary, constantly speculating as to who would make a perfect match for her. The local gossips, after exhausting their limited list of possible candidates, surmised that none were good enough for her. But that was before the dashing and handsome William Bibb appeared on the scene.

Bibb and his brother, David Porter Bibb, of Belle Mina, were both handsome, reckless, polished, and everything a young woman could want in a husband. Their father was Thomas Bibb, second governor of Alabama

Whether by accident or intentional, both of the young people were invited to a party arranged

by mutual friends. It was here that the brothers met the beautiful Mary and her cousin, Mary Parrott Betts.

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As the Bibb brothers courted the two cousins, the older people watched with approval. Relatives on both sides agreed that they were perfect matches. These courtships seemed the logical preliminaries to unions that would connect these three prominent North Alabama names.

It was to no one's surprise that the brothers proposed marriage to the damsels in the fall of 1834. The proposals were accepted breathlessly. It was to be the most elaborate double wedding in the history of Alabama.

Orders were sent to Paris for elegant handmade wedding gowns. Both trousseaus were to be prepared of the finest materials and by the best designers possible.

Many parties feted the couples. Prominent citizens from here and adjoining counties celebrated the upcoming event extensively. The date, however, was yet to be set.

Christmas came and went with no word of the wedding day. January wore by. No one knew what was causing the delay, but the couples seemed as much in love as ever. The real reason for the delay was the fact that the

wedding dresses had not arrived. Conversations circulated about the length of time required for goods to arrive from France by boat. The brides-to-be met each stagecoach as it rolled to a stop on the downtown square. They were disappointed time and again.

Finally, in early February, a large package arrived that definitely looked like a wedding dress container. However, when it was opened the girls were heartbroken to discover that only one dress had been made. The seamstress had run out of material.

Days went by, then William Bibb and Mary Chambers declared their intention to marry at once, even though it meant there would be no double wedding. The other couple understood and arrangements were made for the ceremony to take place at the Chambers home. Excitement increased every day. There was a whirlwind of activity, with sewing, flower arranging, cleaning, cooking & sending out invitations. Friends notified them that they were coming from many other states.

The couple was blissfully happy and the older folks envied them.

Then the unthinkable happened. A few nights before the wedding, Mary's old Negro mammy said to her and her cousin: "Let me make you some 'settling down' medicine so you won't be a bundle of nerves dur-

ing all this wedding excitement. Gonna be a lot of handsome young men around here and you don't want your hearts a fluttering."

The girls just laughed. They loved their old mammy, who had taken care of them since they were born.

The old woman came back in a few minutes with a small glass of clear liquid.

"What is it, Mammy? Will it make us more beautiful?" They laughed.

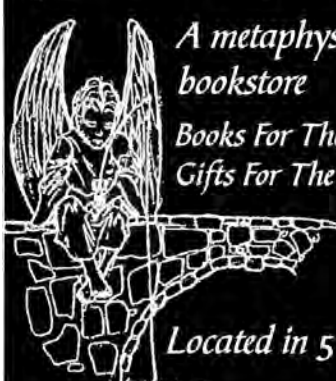
"Ain't nothin' but salts," she said. "Ain't gonna hurt you."

The girls couldn't decide who would take it first.

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"You're the one getting married, you take it first," Mary Betts urged.

So Mary Chambers swallowed the liquid in one gulp, making a face for the mammy's benefit. But, as soon as she put the glass down, she knew something was terribly wrong.

"My throat hurts! What's wrong with me? Help me, Mary!" She pleaded.

While her cousin soothed her, the mammy dashed into the other room, to return a moment later with her face covered in tears.

"Oh, what have I done to you?" she sobbed.

The "salts" had come from a bottle containing oxalic acid. A doctor was summoned and, after examining Mary, rendered his opinion: she could only hope to live for a short time, about three months at the longest.

Instantly, the Chambers home was buried in a deep depression. William Bibb was overcome with grief upon learning of the tragedy. For days he never left her bedside. During this time, he abruptly announced that he and Mary would be married immediately.

On Feb. 26 an entirely different wedding than that which had been planned took place. Friends and relatives, trying to act cheer-

ful, watched as the Rev. John Allen, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, united Mary Chambers and William Bibb in holy matrimony. The poignancy of the moment was such that words could not describe.

Mary Bibb lived three more months to the day. After her death, Bibb erected the finest monument money could buy. It was placed above her grave in Maple Hill Cemetery and was the first mausoleum ever built in the cemetery.

Across the face of this marker is inscribed the three major dates in Mary's life.

Mary S. Bibb
Wife of Wm. D. Bibb
Daughter of Doct. Henry Chambers

Born October, 1816
Married Feb. 24, 1835
Died May 26, 1835

Unfounded rumors have arisen through the years concerning the unusual mausoleum. According to one legend, the tall structure was built to house Mary, who had been buried upright, sitting in her rocking-chair. Like most legends, the truth is much simpler.

It was built by a grieving husband as a tribute to his wife, a testimony to two young people who were very much in love.

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The Nick Name

by Doug Martinson

My grandfather, Claude E. Barnes, owned the Claude Barnes Grocery Store, that was located on Fifth Street (now Andrew Jackson Way). The store was in the middle of the block between the current location of Hill's Lawnmower Sales and Service, and Eunice's Country Kitchen.

The Fifth Street Baptist Church (now Andrew Jackson Way Baptist Church) had a Christmas program on Christmas Eve night around the year 1941.

At 2 A.M. on Christmas morning Willis Routt, the Constable of Dallas Village was making his security rounds in the Village when he heard someone holler "HELP".

When Willis walked in the alley between Carroll's Grocery and Barnes Grocery he discovered that a man had attempted to break in the Barnes store by climbing down the chimney. Of course, the burglar was stuck tight in the chimney.

Willis called the authorities and the Dallas Village Fire Department answered the call and pulled him out.

The Village people nicknamed the man and after that date his name was "Santa Claus".

The above facts were given to me by my mother, Annetta Barnes Martinson, who was the oldest daughter of Claude E. Barnes.

If raising children was going to be easy, it would never have started with something called labor.

Mary Barksdale

Memories

by Escoe Henley

I remember back in the 1920's and 30's every year I went to Christmas Eve services at the Church of the Nativity. There was a woman, Mrs. Pratt, who used to sing the same song every single Christmas. I don't remember the song, but do remember it was always the same. I remember delivering the morning papers on Christmas day - it was just like

any other Sunday. Back then the hardware stores all sold fireworks on Christmas - it was the Zebra brand. I remember there were nickel and dime packs, and the rich people would throw those fireworks out onto the streets, with people milling all around, and it would be like rapid-fire. I remember Hutcheon's Hardware had a big fireworks stand but on Christmas day they'd be closed, so we'd have to go to Steger's store on the other side of Meridianville to get our fireworks.

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Playing Santa Claus



by Chuck Owens

In my early years, and before I had my own family, I was asked by my friend if I would be willing to come to his home on Christmas Eve and play the part of Santa Claus for his two children; Carol, 4 1/2 years old and Janet, 3 years old. He told me that he had the necessary costume and everything else to do the job. I agreed, though I was a bit apprehensive since I had never played this merry old gent before.

I arrived at their home at 9 PM as I had been requested. The children had been in bed for a couple of hours so they were deep in dreamland. Henry, my friend, and his wife Carol had a very elaborate costume with boots, the long beard and even some pillows to help fill out my more sparse areas. With their help I got into my regalia and must admit that I made a pretty good Santa

I was given a big chair on the porch, next to their decorated Christmas Tree, and it was very bright with some extra lamps that had been added. At 10 PM Carol went into the bed room and awakened the two children. She came out with a big smile on her face and the two children in tow, one at each hand. Henry stood at the side completely elated with the scene he was watching.

The two children came up to me and I gave them my best "Ho Ho Ho" and they looked absolutely terrified. I put my arms around each one of them and helped them sit on my lap. I continued with my "Ho Ho's" and talked to them in my best Santa voice and they just sat there - rigid. They were shaking so much that it was difficult for me to keep each one perched on my knees. Finally, I helped them slip off my lap and they ran back to their mother and her protective arms. Carol carried them back to bed. The next morning I was back to wish the family a Merry Christmas. When I arrived the two children ran up to me and excitedly related their experience the night before. They told me that they had seen Santa and they had hugged and kissed him and told him all the toys that they wanted for Christmas.

I thought to myself that there is no end to the imagination of a little one.



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A German Christmas

by Annelie M. Owens

Weihnachten means Christmas in German. As a youngster, growing up in Berlin, I recall many times when I happily celebrated Christmas with my family. It was a time when my 3 brothers and I, as well as all children in Germany, looked forward to with great anticipation.

In my family, my parents closed off one room about three days before Christmas. We knew why the room was closed to us and knew that we were not permitted to look into this room - and we made sure that we did not.

On Christmas Eve, after patiently waiting, we finally heard the tinkle of the Christmas bell which my mother rang. It was the signal for us to go into the room to see all the presents and the decorated tree. This room had our piano in it and the first thing that we did was to gather around the piano to sing Christmas carols as my mother or brother played.

We thought that the Christmas tree was beautiful and a work of art. My father was in charge of the tree. The tree was fully decorated and in addition had numerous lighted candles - real ones. The candles had to be placed such that they would not be in contact with any of the branches and cause a fire. Following the singing, we went to the table to pick up our toys or gifts.

Each child had a specific place on the table for his or her gifts.

These were fond memories with much fun and laughter. Sometimes we had friends and relatives with us to share this enjoyable evening. After the festivities in the Christmas room we all went to the dining room and sat down to our traditional Christmas dinner.

Carp was (and still is) considered a delicacy in Europe and was the usual main course in Germany and in other parts of Europe, just as turkey and ham are in the U.S. My mother pre-

pared this dinner with all the trimmings and it was delicious. The children drank a fruit drink and the adults enjoyed their wine. Later on we had more singing until we were all ready to call it a day and go to bed.



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