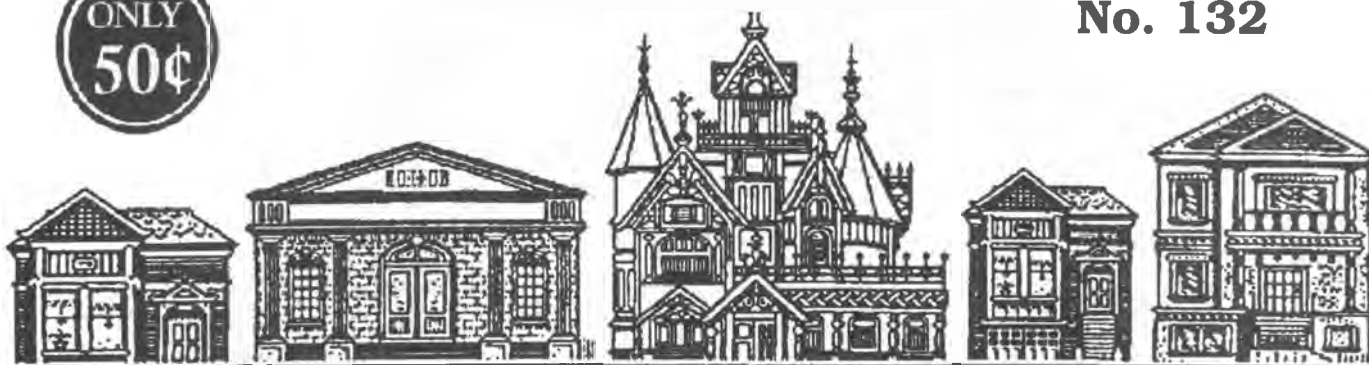


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In 1916, Huntsville was permeated to the core by corruption, graft and crime. The sheriff and chief of police were openly involved in whiskey rings, while elected officials sold patronage and took kickbacks for city and county contracts.

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In 1916, Huntsville was permeated to the core by corruption, graft and crime. The sheriff and chief of police were openly involved in whiskey rings, while elected officials sold patronage and took kickbacks for city and county contracts. Almost nothing could be accomplished in the city of Huntsville unless someone was paid a fee.

Ironically, the political system itself bred corruption. Most of the wealthy politicians who could afford to fund their own campaigns were turned out of office in the last century and now the newer breed had to find other sources of money. Adding to their difficulty was the fact that they were notoriously underpaid.

Left unsaid but acknowledged by everyone was the fact that elected officials were expected to find ways to make up the difference.

Fortunately for the officials, there was plenty of money to make up the difference. Moonshiners had to pay a certain fee each month to stay in business and bootleggers who brought whiskey in by the boatload from Chattanooga paid for the right. The people who distributed the whiskey also had to pay, as did the lowly shot houses

where it was sold by the drink. Even the taxicab drivers who hauled the whiskey from the river to town paid each month.

It was reported that the total "taxes" on the whiskey was more than the cost of manufacturing and transporting it. Corruption was not confined to whiskey alone. People who ran gambling establishments paid off every month and the three local bordellos paid according to the number of "ladies" they employed.

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Though the corruption was no secret, it was almost impossible to prove. Trusted "bag men" were employed to collect the payoffs that were then delivered to a local attorney. The attorney, after taking his share, would split the money up among the various officials. These officials in turn, after taking their share, would pass the money down to trusted confidantes who would pay off the various deputies, clerks, road foremen along



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It was later alleged that these payoffs extended all the way to the state capital in Montgomery.

In the summer of 1916 the whole graft system was in danger of collapse. Numerous unsolved murders and charges of election fraud had brought about demands for grand jury investigations.

W.T. Lawler, who had recently been elected to the position of County Probate Judge, quickly became the main focus of one investigation. Evidence had surfaced that he and his political opponent, David Overton, had each spent in excess of \$20,000 in the last campaign although they had both pledged to limit their expenditures to \$1,000.00.

Now the public was demanding to know where this huge sum of money came from.

On the morning of June 15, 1916, Judge Lawler's wife called the sheriff, Bob Phillips and reported her husband missing. She and her sister had attended the Chautauqua at East Clinton school the night before and her

husband was supposed to have met them there.

When he failed to show up Mrs. Lawler returned home where she anxiously paced the floor all night worrying about what might have happened. Early the next morning Lawler's Maxwell automobile was discovered parked in front of the courthouse. Its seat was saturated with dew. Obviously, it had been there all night.

Many people automatically assumed that Lawler had left town to avoid testifying before the grand jury.

Sheriff Phillips quietly reassured Mrs. Lawler that her husband would surely show up once things had settled down. "I wouldn't worry too much if I were you," Phillips told her.

Phillips himself though had plenty of things to worry about. The night before, at 3:00 a.m., he had been summoned to the courthouse where he met a bloody and disheveled David Overton.

Overton was forty-five years old and had lived in Huntsville all his life. For fifteen years he had been a policeman and for ten years had been chief of the police force before resigning to serve five years as Clerk of the Circuit Court. He was also one of the major players in the whiskey ring that controlled Hunts-

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ville.

Now as Overton sat in a chair facing the sheriff he unfolded a story that would ultimately destroy the very foundations of Huntsville's corrupt political system.

The day before, Overton and Lawler had met and talked briefly of the necessity of standing together in defending themselves against the expected grand jury indictments. They agreed to meet that same evening in the offices of Robert Spraggins who was a mutual friend.

"At about 8 o'clock," said Overton, "I was waiting on the street near the First National Bank. Lawler met me and said he had phoned Spraggins, who wanted to go to the Chautauqua and asked us to postpone our conference until the next morning.

"My buggy was hitched close by. Lawler suggested we drive around while we talked. We

drove down Whitesburg Pike until we came to the bridge when I thought that was far enough and turned the horse around. But Lawler wanted to talk some more so we got out and, after we scouted around for any unwelcome eavesdroppers, stood on the bridge and talked.

"Lawler had a list of all the grand jurors, some his friends and some mine. He wanted us to start that night calling them and trying to get things fixed up. I said that would cause too much talk— calling them so late at night and everything.

"The talk started agreeable enough but when I stuck to my idea, the Judge got mad. Words led to blows and he got out his pocket knife and started hacking me. I had been sick, lost forty or fifty pounds in the last couple months and the judge was big and strong.

"I had a gun and when he started cutting me I pulled it and began hitting him with it. When he still wouldn't stop I shot him. I left him lying on the bridge and came back here."

As Sheriff Phillips listened to the story he immediately realized the impending danger. If the body was found it would spur new investigations and if Overton was arrested it would raise even more questions. Not sure of what to do, Phillips picked up the phone and called Shelby S. Pleasants, a local attorney. Pleasants was alleged to be the person who handled the payoffs

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to the local officials.

Pleasants also quickly realized the danger they were all facing from any additional investigations. After listening briefly, he offered the sheriff one piece of advice, "... cover it up. Let people think Lawler left town because of the grand jury."

Sheriff Phillips turned his attention back to Overton who was sitting in a chair, weak from loss of blood. "Go see Charles Nalls," the sheriff told Overton. "Tell him to go get Percy Brooks and they'll help you get cleaned up and make up an alibi."

Charles Nalls was the Circuit Court Clerk and Percy Brooks was a part time deputy who ran the ferry at Whitesburg. He also oversaw the unloading of the whiskey from the boats.

Nalls and Brooks drove Overton to an empty house on Whitesburg drive where he changed clothes and got his wounds dressed. They then drove back to Overton's home where Sheriff Phillips was waiting.

"Was the body still there?" Asked Overton.

"Don't worry about it," replied the sheriff. "It's taken care of. Just act like nothing has happened."

The following day, as speculation about Lawler's disappearance grew, an anonymous note was sent to deputy sheriff N.L. Pierce. "If you drag that creek down there under the bridge at Whitesburg," the note read, "you'll find something interesting."

Pierce showed the note to Phillips who, though he knew what the note referred to, dismissed it as "probably bootleg whiskey hid in the creek."

Nevertheless, a few days later when he had some spare time, Pierce decided to check the tip out. A cursory inspection of the creek and surrounding brush turned up nothing but as Pierce walked out onto the bridge his attention was drawn to what looked like fresh spots of red paint. A closer inspection however revealed what appeared to be blood spots that someone had clumsily tried to cover with paint.

Pierce now realized the note was referring to some other crime rather than whiskey. After summoning more help and bor-

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rowing a boat from a nearby farmer, Pierce began dragging the bottom of the slough. Finally, just as dusk was settling, the grappling hook snagged a heavy object. It proved to be the body of a man, who had been bound with rope and weighed down with a heavy piece of iron. All the men instantly recognized the body as that of Judge Lawler.

Leaving his companions with the body, Pierce rushed back to town to inform the sheriff of his gruesome discovery. Pierce later described the sheriff as "being shook up over the news."

Minutes later while David Overton was eating dinner, he received a phone call from the sheriff. After a brief, whispered conversation Overton hung the phone up, walked out the door and disappeared. Even his fam-

ily claimed not to know his whereabouts.

News of finding Lawler's mangled body swept across town like a wind-blown brushfire. Incredible wonderment quickly turned to anger as people began to wonder who the murderer could be. Within hours crowds began forming in front of the courthouse demanding to know what progress was being made in the investigation.

Fearful of mob action, Judge Allen requested help from the governor to help keep the peace. The same day three companies of the National Guard were sent to Huntsville where they promptly took up posts around the courthouse, jail and fire station.

The first break in the case came when, acting on a tip, Deputy Pierce arrested Charles Nalls and Percy Brooks. The back seat of Nalls' car was saturated with blood, and a pistol that had recently been fired was found in his desk.

When Sheriff Phillips learned his deputy had arrested Nalls he was terrified. He knew it was just a matter of hours before his own involvement would become known. With his entire life crashing down around him, Phillips went into his office and closed the door. He signed a few papers,

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tidied up his desk, placed a pistol next to his right temple and blew his brains out.

News of Sheriff Phillips' suicide horrified the people of Huntsville— none more so than Nalls who had been expecting the sheriff to suppress the investigation against him.

Angrily, Nalls called Shelby Pleasants demanding he do something to get him out of jail. This was the last thing Pleasants wanted to hear.

Pleasants had spent years building up a thriving law practice, helped to a large extent by his ties to the whiskey ring. He knew that now it was just a matter of time before his own role as the "payoff" man was exposed.

Fearing the consequences of an investigation and trial, Pleasants locked himself in his office, and with the pistol alleged to have been the murder weapon,

committed suicide. With all of their alibis committing suicide, Nalls and Phillips decided to cooperate and named David Overton as the murderer.

With the sheriff dead, the chief of police A.D. Kirby temporarily took over the investigation, but within hours of assuming his new duties, Kirby himself became the object of an investigation. It quickly came to light that he too was heavily involved in the whiskey ring.

Police Chief Kirby and his chief deputy wisely resigned. By now the governor had become involved. He appointed a new sheriff to take over the investigation and caused a warrant to be issued for the arrest of David Overton. B.M. Miller, later to become governor, was named as a special judge to try the case.

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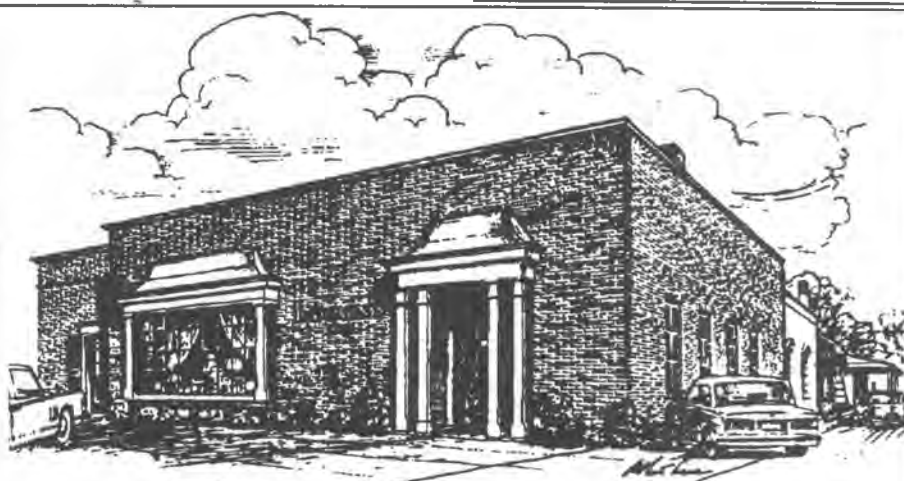
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was arrested in Smithville, Tenn., and returned to Huntsville for trial. During his months on the lam he had traveled extensively throughout Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Tennessee, accompanied by his wife and family. At first he pleaded innocent to the charges, disclaiming all knowledge of the incidents described by Nalls and Brooks.

Unfortunately for the surviving known members of the whiskey ring, a plea of innocence by Overton meant that he, Nalls, and Brooks would all stand trial and probably implicate other unknown members in their efforts to go free.

On the second day of the trial Overton suddenly changed his plea to guilty and exonerated Nalls and Brooks. His testimony was collaborated by the wives of Nalls and Brooks who testified that their husbands had been home asleep during the night of the murder.

It was later alleged that Overton's change of heart was caused by members of the whiskey ring who assured him that if he took the fall alone they would influence the jurors to find him innocent.

On November 25, 1916, the jury found David Overton guilty of murder and sentenced him to death. He was transported to the Birmingham jail to await execution.

To say that Overton was bitter would be an understatement. He now realized that he had been offered up as a sacrifice. With him in jail many of the other investigations ceased.

Overton, facing death by hanging, frantically began calling politicians and other influential people he knew who had prof-

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ited from the whiskey ring. If he was hoping they would use their influence to gain him a pardon he was sadly disappointed. They refused to accept his calls. Next he began writing letters. They too went unanswered. With no other options available, Overton contacted officials in Montgomery and expressed his willingness to testify about the corruption in Huntsville and Madison County.

Two days after his message was received in Montgomery, a jailor "accidentally" left Overton's cell door unlocked. Overton and five other prisoners escaped. Minutes after the escape the police received an anonymous tip that Overton was hiding in a grove of trees several miles from the jail.

Oddly, the police arrived at the scene before Overton did and were about to leave when they spotted him approaching. Later speculation claimed he was waiting for an automobile that never arrived.

In the ensuing gunfight David Overton was killed. Also stopped was any chance for a thorough investigation of corruption in Huntsville.

Although the whiskey ring could undoubtedly breathe easier with Overton's death, there were still other loose ends to be tied up.

Charles Nalls, who was bitter from his time in jail and his forced resignation as circuit court clerk, conveniently died of a "virus" several months later. The son of Sheriff Phillips was reportedly about to make public a list of people involved in the corruption when he was found dead, the victim of a "suicide."

Percy Brooks, who claimed to be the only person "who had all the facts," was run over by a train in Sheffield. A witness later claimed to have seen a stranger push Brooks in front of the train but the allegation was never investigated.

With all the main players in Judge Lawler's murder dead, the public quickly turned its attention to other matters.

The whiskey ring returned to doing business as usual.



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Dumb and Stupid News

- 45 year-old Amy Brasher was arrested in San Antonio, Texas, after a mechanic reported to police that 18 packs of marijuana were stuffed in the compartment of the car which she had brought to him for an oil change. Per police, Brasher later said that she didn't realize that the mechanic would have to raise the hood to change the oil.

- Portsmouth, R.I. Police charged Gregory Rosa, 25, with a string of vending machine robberies in January when he (1) fled from police inexplicably when they spotted him loitering around a vending machine and (2) later tried to post his \$400 bail in coins.

- Karen Lee Joachimmi, 20, was arrested in Lake City, Florida for robbery of a Howard Johnson's motel. She was armed with only an electric chain saw, which was not plugged in.

- David Posman, 33, was arrested recently in Providence, R.I. after allegedly knocking out an armored car driver and stealing the closest four bags of money. It turned out they contained \$800 in PENNIES, weighed 30 pounds each, and slowed him to a stagger during his getaway so that police officers easily jumped him from behind.

- The Belgium news agency Belga reported in November that a man suspected of robbing a jewelry store in Liege said he couldn't have done it because he was busy breaking into a school at the same time. Police then arrested him for breaking into the school.

- Drug-possession defendant Christopher Johns, on trial in March in Pontiac, Michigan, said he had been searched without a warrant. The prosecutor said the officer didn't need a warrant because a "bulge" in Christopher's jacket could have been a gun. Nonsense, said Christopher, who happened to be wearing the same jacket that day in court. He handed it over so the judge could see it. The judge discovered a packet of cocaine in the pocket and laughed so hard he required a five-minute recess to compose himself.

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Local news from the year 1900

- About 9 this morning Street Car No. 5, east bound with Dick Hatcher, motorman, collided with a two-horse wagon belonging to D. I. White and injured the two negro men drivers, Jack Parham, slightly and Jim Fields, seriously. The accident occurred at the corner of Holmes and Green streets. The wagon and team were going south at a rapid rate and the car was advancing east in back-up fashion, the two colliding before the men in charge of either could see the approach of the other in time to avoid the accident.

Both wheels on one side of the wagon were broken off. The Parham negro escaped with a bruised head and shoulder. Fields was more seriously hurt, his right hip being dislocated and fractured.

- Yesterday Luther Chambers was fined \$25 for beating his wife. Chambers said he could prove by his wife that it was his first offense. A sweetfaced little woman walked out of the crowd to take the witness stand. "Is this little woman your wife?" When Chambers responded that indeed she was, the Judge immediately raised the fine to \$500.

- An automobile crash on Holmes in which the bridegroom, his parents and his best man were injured was not enough to prevent the marriage of Philip Shaffner to Miss Beatrice Weil, according to schedule last night.

Mr. Shaffner, his wedding suit torn and dirty, with several bruises to his face, took the hand of his bride and answered questions put to him by the minister. The injured best man limped and was considerably mused up, but did duty effectively as if he had not been hurt. The par-

ents of Mr. Shaffner had to be propped up in chairs, but they gave their blessings to the bride and groom

- Tomorrow the people who are making the local directory will have completed their work. Including the corporate limits and adjacent suburbs, a carefully tabulated count of the enumerators show the city and suburbs to have something a bit more than 20,000 people.

The corporate limits will be extended sometime in the near future.



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See Our MENU in the RESTAURANT MENU SECTION

A Good Idea

"It may be a good idea," said the loan officer, "but we don't loan money for ideas."

Disappointed, Sam Sherril returned to work where he donned his apron and began flipping hamburgers the same way he had been doing everyday for years.

His restaurant, the Nu Way Restaurant, was highly popular and was renowned for the small, square, five-cent hamburgers. It had become a virtual fixture on the North Side Square in Huntsville, with people waiting in line everyday.

Though Sam put aside any ideas of expanding his restaurant, his son Glenn did not give up as easily. In 1932 Glenn moved to Chattanooga and opened a small restaurant with

a partner, serving the same hamburgers his father had served. Within a few years the restaurant had become so successful that the partners began opening up others across the country. Neither man had any idea at the time that they were founding a business that would eventually become one of the largest fast food businesses in the South - the Krystal Restaurants.

Did You Know ...

In 1928 a pound of sausage in Huntsville cost 25 cents. Bacon was also 25 cents a pound while cigarettes sold for \$1.45 a carton.

Stockton Motors was selling a Chevrolet Coach for \$595.00 but you could still buy a team of mules for \$300.00. Haircuts were 25 cents, a ticket to the movies 5 cents, and electric bills averaged less than seven dollars a month.

Fried Bananas

from 1904 newspaper

Fried bananas is a palatable dish for breakfast, and gives that fruit a flavor of its own, and to many, tastes better than when eaten in its natural state.

Take off the peeling and split the fruit in half. Have a hot frying pan with half an inch of butter in the bottom. Into this put the banana, being careful not to let it burn, but brown well in both sides, just before lifting it out sprinkle with sugar and set it in the oven to crisp the top. Serve as a hot dish.

**"I get up every morning and read the obituary column. If my name's not there, I eat breakfast."
- George Burns**



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Huntsville Coffee Talk

by Aunt Eunice

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



First of all, congratulations to **Judy (Baker) White, of White Fleming Company**, for guessing last month's Photo of the Month. It was **J.B. Tucker**, Judy's long-time boy friend, who is also Mayor of Hurricane Creek. We had so many calls and 90% of them were right - he must have a lot of friends around here! Judy gets a year's free subscription to "Old Huntsville" magazine.

I've had so many visitors here at **Big Spring Care** on St. Clair during January but I can always use more, so come see me!

Sometimes I think my old body is just worn out. I still have to have dialysis 3 times a week, can't get around anymore, and my arthritis hurts something awful.

But I still think I'm one of the luckiest people in the world. I have a wonderful family, precious memories and dear friends. What else do you need?

Always remember there is no such thing as a bad day ... if you wake up ... the day's already off to a good start!

Larry and Sue Landman have visited me so often here and called me - I love ya'll.

Delbert & Ethyl Ann Williams, Billy, Monica and Amanda Bell, and Tom and Cathey Carney have all come and brought me candy! Thank you so much for that.

Not many people know that **Billy Bell**, family judge of Huntsville, has the finest recipe for pickled eggs I've ever tasted, and he brings me some whenever he gets a chance - I just love them.

Congrats to our good friends **Dan and Dawn Schmit** who just became the proud parents of twins - **Jacob Edward and Jeremy James**. Dan is the weatherman for channel 48. Boy, are their lives going to change!

We wanted to send out a big HELLO to **Robert Martin**, who lives at Madison Morningside Assisted Living. He is very proud of his son, **Randy Martin**, who is stationed at Mosul, Iraq as a Lt. Colonel since May. Randy has been accepted at "War College", a very rare and prestigious honor

that very few people are offered. Congratulations to **Randy and Nancy**, his proud wife!

I was happy to see **Dr. Craig Thorstad** with his nurse **Millie**. They are such sweet people

Jane Smith came by and decorated my room with a beautiful Christmas tree! Others who came by include **Jim Reed, Earl Walker, Jim Heard, Greg Anderson, Lincoln Smith and Larry Smith**. I just wish I could tell everyone how much it means to me to have such dear friends.

I got to hear the choir at **Twickenham Church** a few weeks ago. My daughter, **Doris**, sings in the choir & it was great.

We were very saddened to hear that **John (Jack) Gurley** died recently. He had been fighting cancer for some time. **Tom Gurley**, his son, as well as the whole family will really miss him. We love you all.

My love goes out to my good friend **Catherine Wilson** - she is a woman with a heart of gold. She brought me my favorite homemade jelly that she sells at **Limestone Flea Market** - 2 jars!

Photo of The Month

The first person to correctly identify the sweet baby shown below wins a free year's subscription to "Old Huntsville" magazine. Call (256) 534-3355.

Hint: A Lee High girl who is now co-owner of one of Huntsville's most popular businesses.



Sandra Steele
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Stop by and see her some time. Tell her I sent you.

Joe Whisante has been a jewel - he calls me so often and comes by to bring me pecan pie and cookies (that he bakes himself!). That man could never go on a diet - he loves his food!

Thank you all for the beautiful cards you sent me. I have saved every one and they are covering two of the walls in my room. I have a special place for the pictures I have received from so many of you - including **Mark Russell's children, the Ceci triplets, Bud Cramer & family.**

Well, looks like the mayor's race is starting. **Dr. Parker Griffin** came by to see me and just happened to mention he's thinking about throwing his hat in the ring. **Ms. Mayor** is going to be hard to beat but it should be interesting.

June Young came by for a visit. She always knows what's going on in town. **General Link & his wife Judy** stops by all the time to check on me. **Byron and Tillie Laird**, my faithful friends, come by often. I love you so much. And my friend **Fran Hamilton** is a regular visitor whom I really depend on.

Ann and Jim Ledbetter brought me a red poinsettia. It just looked so beautiful on a table by my bed. I was happy to see **David Heard** and find out he is doing OK. Take care of yourself. I had a nice visit with **Jack and Sandra Bozeman** recently. Time just flew by.

Roger Christopher brought his four beautiful girls with him the other day to see me. That sure is a pretty family.

It was so good to see **Steve & Bonnie Hettinger** the other day. They were sure looking good!

I was so sad to hear about the son of **Brother Owens** who died recently from cancer. He was only 25 years old and will be missed by everyone who knew him.

We were sorry to hear our good friend **Barney Gamble** is in the hospital and has been really sick lately. Get well soon, Barney, the Golden K Kiwanis sure do miss you.

Our friend **Joyce Russell** was one of the hosts recently for the big New York Life blowout at the Heritage Club. Everyone was so distinguished - black tie, tuxes, formals, etc. The President of New York Life, **Frederick Sievert**, was honored with an Honorary Citizen's certificate.

Friends of mine said they met some of the nicest people at Humphrey's recently, **Brenda Anderson** and **Richard Smith**. Brenda is office manager for **Medical Arts Pharmacy** and Richard is resident manager of the **Holiday Inn** at Madison Square.

What about all these people running for President? I always think I'm doing all right until another four years roll around and they tell me again how bad everything is. Makes me wonder.

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

David Sumner

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Steve Givens



Valentine Sweets

*(From the kitchens of
Hewlett-Packard Employees -
1986)*

Cheese Cake

1 box yellow cake mix
1 egg
1 stick butter, melted
Mix and press into baking dish.

Mix:

1 box confectioners sugar
3 eggs
1 8-oz. cream cheese
Pour mixture over the cake mixture, bake 45-60 minutes at 350 degrees. *Marylee Eaton*

Wine Jelly

3 c. sugar
3 c. burgundy wine
1/2 bottle pectin
Bring wine and sugar to full rolling boil. Add pectin. Boil and

remove from heat. Pour into jars. *Marylee Eaton*

Strawberry Pie

1 small strawberry jello
1 c. sugar
3 T. cornstarch
2 c. water
Pie crust, baked and cooled
Whole fresh strawberries
Whipped cream
Bring Jello, water, cornstarch and sugar to a boil; cook til thickened. Fill pie crust with whole strawberries and pour the thickened mixture over - let cool and top with whipped cream.

Lucy Goforth

Chewy Chocolates

3/4 c. pecan halves
12 dates, halved
1/2 lb. soft caramels
2 T. heavy cream
4 sq. Baker's semisweet chocolate, melted, slightly cooled

Place 2 pecan halves and a date half in clusters on lightly buttered baking pan. Melt caramels in cream in saucepan over low heat, stirring constantly til smooth. Spoon caramel mixture over clusters, leaving ends uncovered. Let stand til set, about 30 minutes. Spread chocolate over caramel mixture.

Cathey Callaway

Five Pound Fudge

1 1/2 c. sugar
12 oz. chocolate chips
16 large marshmallows, cut
1 c. nuts
1 large can evaporated milk
1 16-oz. Hershey bar
1 t. vanilla extract
Boil sugar and milk over medium-high heat for 5 minutes, stirring constantly. Add other ingredients; mix well. Pour into buttered cookie sheet and cool. Cut and wrap in foil. Store in refrigerator in a tin can - will keep forever. *Oscar Chapman*

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No Bake Cookies

- 2/3 c. peanut butter
- 1/2 c. milk
- 1/2 c. butter
- 2 c. sugar
- 3 c. rolled oats
- 3 t. cocoa
- 1 t. vanilla

Bring milk, butter and sugar to a boil over medium heat. Boil one minute and remove from heat. Mix with remaining ingredients. Drop by rounded teaspoonful onto waxed paper to harden. Store covered.

Bob and Mary Poore

Peanut Butter Pie

- 1/2 c. crunchy peanut butter
- 3 oz. cream cheese, softened
- 1 c. confectioners sugar
- 1 9-oz. Cool Whip
- 1 graham cracker crust

Cream peanut butter with the cream cheese and sugar. Add the Cool Whip and beat til smooth. Pour into crust and top with crushed peanuts.

Sandy Whitfield

Sand Tarts

- 1 c. butter
- 1/2 c. confectioners sugar
- 1 T. vanilla
- 3 c. cake flour
- 2 c. finely chopped pecans
- 2/3 box confections sugar
- Cream butter and 1/2 cup

confectioners sugar well. add vanilla, flour and pecans, Roll into small bars, 2" long. Bake on greased cookie sheet at 300 degrees for an hour and bottoms are light brown. Roll in confectioners sugar immediately and let cool before putting away.

Judy Parks

Pineapple Nut Cake

- 2 c. flour
- 2 c. sugar
- 2 t. soda
- 1 t. vanilla extract
- 1 c. chopped nuts
- 1 20-oz. can of pineapple tidbits (undrained)
- 2 eggs

Mix dry ingredients, add rest of ingredients. Mix by hand. Pour into 9x13" greased pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 35-45 minutes, put icing on hot cake.

Icing:

- 1 8-oz cream cheese, soft
- 1 stick butter, soft
- 1 1/2 c. confectioners sugar
- 1 t. vanilla extract

Beat cream cheese and butter, add the rest. Frost hot cake. Best when refrigerated overnight.

Sandi Meese

Pink Fluff Salad

- 1 12-oz. Cool Whip
- 1 can cherry pie filling
- 1 c. chopped pecans
- 1 c. shredded coconut
- 1 sml. can crushed pineapple

- 1 c. miniature marshmallows
- 1 can Eagle Brand milk
- Combine all & refrigerate.

Ann Smith



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When They Killed The President

by Tommy Towery

I was brought out of a shallow sleep by the noise of a crowd and a reporter talking over the school's public address system. I was sitting in geometry class, which was the one subject I usually understood. For some reason on that day, I seemed to have been looking at the book so hard that I had slipped off into a little catnap. As I woke up, I was puzzled at what was coming over the PA system.

It was unlike our school principal to broadcast anything over the PA except for the normal morning announcements about what was happening in school or the date of the next football game. The last special event I remember hearing broadcast was when John Glenn entered outer space. That was important to the people of Huntsville since they had played such a large part in making it all happen. This

announcement was not about a space shot, though, and I sat dazed and tried to listen to what was happening. There seemed to be about as much confusion on the announcement as there was in my head. It finally came to me - the president had been shot. Yes, he said it, "John F. Kennedy has been shot."

The report was coming from Dallas. We all listened intently. We forgot about geometry and naps for a while trying to hear what was happening. It all seemed as if it wasn't really happening at all but was still a part of a dream. The reporter kept talking about gunshots and hospitals and motorcades. At some point, he seemed more interested in keeping up his talk and keeping the radio reports going than giving any real facts.

At the time, I probably knew as much sitting in geometry class at Lee High School as the reporter did in Dallas. We continued to listen intently, assuring each other that we were really hearing what we thought we were hearing. Little talk was going on in the room, except repeating what was being broadcast. There were few speculations, no

"what will happens." We just sat there listening. The length of time we listened, waiting to hear something definite, is sketchy. I

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Sara Hartwood



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do remember the words that finally came over the PA - "John F. Kennedy is dead."

I couldn't actually grasp the meaning of that short statement. High school kids didn't worry about who was in charge of the country or things like that. We wondered who shot him, and why, but we didn't think the political situation was anything to worry about. It never really dawned on me, or any of us I suppose, what a change in our own lives would come about because of the shooting. We didn't know how serious it was to lose a president while we were in the middle of the Cold War.

Not everyone in Alabama was sad, I suppose. Most Alabamians were a little put-out with Kennedy because of his civil rights policies. Some downright hated him for it. On more that one occasion I had heard jokes like "Why do they call Massachusetts, Machusetts now? They took the ass out and put him in the White House." Jokes like that were common in Alabama in 1963. One of my favorite uncles was very much anti-Kennedy. He started out being anti-Catholic, but religion was not the key issue. For white folks, it was popular to be anti-Kennedy in Alabama in the early Sixties.

The reports continued from Dallas for the rest of the day and

were varied and vague. Johnson was sworn in as President. They had found a gun. The name Lee Harvey Oswald kept being mentioned in the news. I wondered why he was always called Lee Harvey Oswald, and not just Lee Oswald. Why did they insist on using his whole name?

For those of us who sat there in school, that day would be a milestone in history for years to come. This would be the day that marked the difference of the young and old. To my generation, those who were not yet born or not old enough to remember what they were doing on the day Kennedy was shot would forever be labeled as infants. Those in school, in any grade, would be a part of our generation. Those who were older than we, would continue to be our parent's generation. Pearl Harbor would remain their milestone. They had a name for their day. It is "a day that will live in infamy." We would have no such rhetorical name. We only remember it as the end of Kennedy's Camelot. It's a common bond between those of us that lived the day.

In the margin of my English book I made a simple entry that stated "Novem-

ber 22, 1963. President John F. Kennedy was assassinated today." Those words were the start of my recordings of my high school life.

It was important to me and shall continue to be. The shooting showed me that the world was not just one big happy place. It showed me that evil existed in the world, and that the evil could reach out from a place as far away as Dallas, Texas, and affect me. I hated it for that. I hated it for forcing me to face reality.

November 23 - Nothing of significance comes to mind about the weekend that followed the assassination. We watched the on-going saga on live television. In glorious black and white, we joined the newsmen in Dallas and Washington, D.C. and lis-

"I wonder if other dogs think that poodles are members of a weird religious cult?"

Rita Rudner

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tened to and watched their interpretations of what was happening. In reality, I know for certain, that the days were not as unimportant as we must have thought they were. Our whole structure of government was changing almost hourly. The world watched to see what the United States did and how we did it. Very little was known about the impact Lyndon B. Johnson would make as the next president and all that he would have to face. People talked about how Kennedy had stood up to the Russians and made them back down in Cuba. The Bay of Pigs was discussed but the significance of it was not understood.

Johnson's background and family were explained to those of us who hardly knew him. He had been a background player in the

I don't make snowmen. If I wanted to hang around with a cold man with slush for brains, I'd still be married.

Maxine

Kennedy government. John and Robert were the ones who captured all the news. It was as if the Attorney General was more important than the Vice-President. The world watched Kennedy's casket being loaded onto the airplane in Dallas. We watched the funeral, and watched Jon-Jon salute the casket while Caroline and Jackie Kennedy stood by in black. We saw the riderless horse march through the streets of Washington, D.C. We watched and some cried. That was about all we could do.

Kennedy will always be the youthful president to us. He will eternally be a symbol of our Sixties' generation. He will remain a symbol of progress and our great expectations and our new frontier.

November 24 - Other events followed fast and furious after Oswald's arrest. I was in church when Jack Ruby killed Oswald. I remember seeing the bulletin about the shooting when I returned from church and walked into the living room and turned

on the television. I felt like I had missed something by not seeing the killing on live TV. It was morbid, feeling that something was missed by not seeing one man take another man's life on live television. The live coverage was missed, but we watched the replays for the rest of the day.

On that Sunday Huntsville's

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churches were filled with prayers for the past and new presidents and for the country in general. Catholics, Christians, and Jews all united for the same reasons. It didn't matter whether they were in church, synagogue, or at home, they prayed for our future.

I spent most of the day watching the events on television, doing nothing special that can be recalled. We all got to stay up later than normal that Sunday night, because the next day's school had been cancelled. It was a night of meditation and wondering.

Have you ever wondered why there is an expiration date on sour cream?

- Niles Howard

Raids Near Depot

from 1911 newspaper

At about 11 o'clock yesterday City Police Bullard and Carmichael raided two soft drink establishments on Church street near the Southern depot. At the establishment said to be operated by Tom Mason, quite a quantity of wet goods were found. Later Mr. Mason was arrested and placed under bond. At the other establishment Bob Edmondson, a clerk, was arrested and placed under bond. Their cases will be tried before Mayor Smith tomorrow morning at 9 am.

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Fair Rates For A Doctor

As settlers poured into Madison County the need for adequate medical care became a major concern. Most of the early pioneers depended on home remedies, superstitions and a bit of good luck to see them through their ills. Unfortunately, many of the doctors of the day were not much better.

The first doctor to ever advertise his services in Huntsville was Dr. William Turner who moved here from Knoxville, Tenn. In 1825 his rates, as advertised were: Riding per mile - 25 cents each way plus one dollar per visit; Bloodletting - 50 cents; Pull tooth - 50 cents; Midwife service - \$10.

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Whose cruel idea was it for the word "Lisp" to have an "S" in it?

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A Tale of Two Friends

Earl Frazier and J. B. Webb had a strange relationship. They were good friends and spent much time in one another's company. They shared the same friends and had even once talked about opening up a garage together. Unfortunately, J. B. Webb was a bootlegger and Earl Frazier was a deputy sheriff whose job was to put bootleggers out of business.

Needless to say, Huntsville in the 1950s and '60s was a much different place than today. It was still a small rural community, where everyone knew everyone and a man's word was his bond.

J. B. Webb's bootlegging enterprise operated out of an old frame house off Monroe Street. It was reported that he began the

first "curb service" in Huntsville. A customer could pull into an alley next to J. B.'s house, blow his horn and someone would take his order. Webb stocked a wide variety of beers, whiskeys and an occasional jar of moonshine, all of which found a ready market among Huntsville's citizens.

Webb and Frazier had been friends for years when Webb heard the new sheriff was looking for another deputy. Immediately he sent word to the sheriff, recommending Frazier for the position. Earl Frazier was well qualified for the job. He was honest, a native of Huntsville and above all, a man whose physical size demanded instant respect from any would-be law breakers.

The same day after being sworn in as Madison County's newest deputy, Earl stopped by to express his thanks to J. B. After exchanging greetings, the two men sat down at the kitchen table to enjoy a drink and talk of

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old times, much in the same manner they had done for years.

Their conversation was interrupted, however, by the loud blowing of a car horn in the alley next door. Webb disappeared outside, took the order and then came back in the house to get the merchandise.

"I wish you hadn't done that," drawled the deputy as he watched Webb retrieve two bottles of whiskey from the cupboard.

"Why?" replied Webb, not really paying attention.

"Cause now I got to arrest you for selling."

Strange as it may seem to people today, Earl had sworn to uphold the law regardless of his personal friendships. Even stranger was the fact that J. B. respected him for it.

Arriving at the jail and preparing to make bond, Webb realized he had no money with him. Frazier immediately loaned him the required amount.

Periodically, just before elections or holidays, Huntsville's finest would stage raids on the community's bootleggers. Though it was a nuisance, J. B. Webb accepted it as the cost of doing business. One time however, he received a tip about an impending raid that worried him. He had just received three cases of an expensive Scotch, part of his Christmas stock and could not afford to have it confiscated.

Hurriedly placing the liquor in the back of his pink con-

vertible, he drove to Earl's house where he hid it inside of a shed behind the house. If the neighbors saw him they paid no attention as Earl and J. B., were continuously borrowing lawn mowers and tools from one another.

Just like clockwork, the police arrived the next week and raided the premises. After they left, Webb sat down at the table to have a drink when Earl walked in carrying a package.

"J. B." He said. "I just wanted to come by early and give you

your Christmas present."

The old bootlegger, after expressing his thanks, opened the package to reveal a bottle of expensive, aged Scotch. Touched by his friend's generosity, Webb asked, "Where did you ever find such good Scotch?"

"Oh, it's nothing," the deputy replied. "I was cleaning out my woodshed the other day and I found a few cases I must have forgot about, so I figured I'd give them for Christmas presents."



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News From The Homefront

Huntsville Daily Confederate, Feb. 13, 1864

From Jackson County, Alabama. Recent advices from Jackson County, Ala., represent the terrible devastation throughout the county, except where there are mountain defiles and fastnesses favorable for guerrilla operations. We are told that Maj. Lemuel G. Mead is operating in that county with five companies, and with good effect — that he, recently, captured and brought out 20 prisoners. He remains with his men in the county and subsists them there, at points, where it would be dangerous for the Yankees to travel and they are discreet enough not to attempt it. There are three Tory companies there — one raised in Jackson County, the Captain of which is Ephraim Latham, who deserted from the 50th Ala. in which he held the rank of Lieu-

tenant, about a year ago. The other two companies are from DeKalb County, Alabama. The Yankees feel contempt for them and stigmatize them as the 1st Alabama Tory Battalion. We are told that one of the miscreants - Sample by name - not long since, went to the house of Elias Barbour, a true Southerner, and beat Mrs. Barbour with a hickory with, and only desisted when her daughter, very heroically, seized an axe and drove him off. We are also told that an old "Rebel" woman, living near Bellefonte, was struck by a Yankee, with a stick, on the back of her neck,

breaking it. The Courthouse and all of the block on the West side of the Square, in Bellefonte, have been burnt by the Yankees. One of the parties from whom we get our information represents that he was under arrest at Stevenson.



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Though the story makes for an endearing legend, nothing could be further from the truth.

Actually Virginia-born Dr. Thomas Fearn, a cousin of Robert E. Lee, named our mountain Monte Sano. Fearn had studied medicine in both London and Paris, and monte sano means "mountain of health" in Italian.

Old Tyme Superstitions

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• If a bird flies into your house a death will occur.

• If you sweep under someone's feet, they will never marry.

• Set in a silver ring, a diamond prevents insomnia. Also, the wearer will be protected from nightmares.

• According to gem thera-

pists, the turquoise is said to increase its owner's sexual drive.

• When your palm itches, you will come into some money.

• If you know a sleepwalker, place a wet piece of carpet by his/her bed. The second their feet touch it, they will awaken.

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Deuteronomy 24:5 - the Bible

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Whitesburg, Alabama

by Jack Harwell

About the time that the town of Huntsville was being laid out early in the last century, other settlements were springing up all over the county. These were generally located along well-travelled routes that brought the new migrants into northern Alabama from the large population centers to the east. A large number of these arrived from Virginia, entering Alabama by way of the old Winchester road.

By 1810 there was a long string of settlers' homes stretching from the Briar Fork of the Flint River, between Huntsville and New Market, southward almost to the river. The area near the river was not well populated, partly due to its proximity to the Indian lands, which still included what is now the southeastern corner of Madison County.

One of the first of those who were willing to make their home on the river was John Ditto, who for a number of years operated the river landing at that location that bore his name. The Tennessee River was a popular route for merchants and travellers, and Ditto's business did well.

About the time that John Ditto was running his riverside trading post, James White came to Huntsville. Like many trans-

planted Easterners, White had money and was looking for business opportunities. In 1811 he went into business with Alexander Gilbreath, who was possibly the first merchant in Huntsville. White and Gilbreath operated a store on Gates Street, a block south of the courthouse.

White later bought large plots of land at the site of Ditto's Landing on both sides of the river. The population of this area began to grow soon after the county boundary was extended to the

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Flint River (it was extended to the Paint Rock, its current alignment, in 1836). John Ditto's old trading post became a real town, and it was incorporated by the legislature two days before Christmas 1824. The town was named Whitesburg for the man who owned the land where it was located.

The borders of Whitesburg correspond roughly to the limits of the marina and park which are located there today. The town was located at the southern terminus of the highway to Nashville, and that and its proximity to the river brought in a considerable amount of traffic.

In the days before trucks and trains, the rivers bore much of the nation's commerce, and many flatboats laden with Alabama cotton stopped at Whitesburg on their way to New Orleans. Often these boats would take on "shoals pilots" at Whitesburg, who would guide the craft through the treacherous Muscle Shoals down river. Once calmer water was reached, the regular pilot would take over and the shoals pilot would be put ashore, to return home on foot. This long walk from Muscle Shoals to Whitesburg (or, in some cases, Decatur) was not considered exceptionally tiresome at that time; many of the river pilots who accompanied their boats down the Mississippi would return home the same way, up the Natchez Trace. Richard Anderson, a long-time river pilot and resident of Huntsville, is said to have walked from Huntsville to Whitesburg every day - before breakfast.

Whitesburg, and other communities on the Tennessee, remained largely unchanged for many years, even in wartime. Unlike some parts of Madison County, Whitesburg was relatively quiet during the Civil War. Occasionally Southern soldiers and sympathizers would smuggle arms and troops across

the river to the Union-occupied north bank under cover of darkness. Federal troops confiscated all ferry craft when they could find them. Records show that a skirmish took place at Whitesburg on May 29, 1862, but provide no details.

For most of a century after the war, Whitesburg remained a quiet little village, like many others throughout the South. The road to Huntsville was macadamized and turned into a turnpike. A railroad line was built to the river, but Whitesburg was bypassed. Eventually the town's charter expired, and its post office was moved. But Whitesburg, the place, remained.

There were no schools in Whitesburg, and children might have to travel a mile or more to reach one of the one-room schoolhouses, some of which were privately operated. One resident who grew up in the area in the 1890s recalled years later



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the first public school he attended, in a log cabin heated by a wood stove. "We children would go out in [the] woods, chop a tree, cut it up," wrote C.D. Hobbs in 1962. "That was our fuel." The seats, he wrote, were boxes, and the desks were "split logs with pegs in them."

With the opening of the Clay Bridge in 1931, the character of Whitesburg was permanently altered. No longer was it the end of the line.

But if Whitesburg was doomed, its name would live on. The bridge became known as "the Whitesburg bridge." When a second span was completed in the 1960s to carry south-bound traffic, it became the Whitesburg bridge, too.

Today the Huntsville-Madison County Marina occupies the land where the town once stood.

Court Orders Wife To Stay Home

from 1909 newspaper

Decatur Ala. - Thirty times Mrs. Aaron Ridenour left her husband; twenty nine times he induced her to return; nine times she had him arrested.

This was the family record disclosed when the wife filed a desertion and nonsupport suit.

Just how the judge felt about it was indicated when he ordered Mrs. Ridenour to pay all the costs of the suit and to go home, stay there, and to take care of her husband.

There is sure to be more to this story later.

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Letters From Over There

Nov. 1, 1918

My dear Brother,

Will try and write you a few lines to let you know I am well. Just got back from the front, was up for twenty five days. Sure had some hard fighting. We captured close to three thousand prisoners and killed quite a few. The machine bullets were pretty thick and I was lucky to get by without a scratch.

We have to drill when we are not fighting so you see I won't get much rest until the war is over. I think I may get a seven day pass soon. I received your letter dated Sept. 15. Sure was glad to hear from you and glad that you all were well and glad too you had a good crop. Sure wish I was there to help you save your crop, that sure would be easy for me now.

Well, the way things look now, the war will be over soon, and I will get to come home and be with you next spring. That will be the happiest day of my life. I sure have had enough of the army. It is HELL. I think I have walked all over France. Been walking ever since I got off the ship. France is not as pretty of a country as people there think. It is about a thousand years behind the times. I sure will have a lot to tell you when I get home. Well I have to close for now. Paper is very scarce. I want you to see that old Santa Claus remembers little Clifton for me and kiss him for me. I know he is a fine boy by this time.

With Lots of love to all,
Walter Davis

June 30, 1918,
Mr. Tom Mason

Huntsville, Ala.

My dear Mr. Mason, It is with utmost regret that I inform you that your son, James T. Mason, Company D, 167 Infantry, was killed in action against enemy troops by high explosive, June 1, 1918.

I realize the irreparable loss in this sacred offering to the cause we all feel is so right and just, and hope that it may be of some consolation to you to know that your son fulfilled with that splendid spirit and determination so characteristic of the American soldier his great part in this terrible drama. His memory will never be forgotten by his comrades.

A beautiful custom has been inaugurated here in France for the care of the resting places of our fallen comrades. Each grave is enclosed in a lattice-work fence and the enclosure planted with flowers. French children tend the graves and their innocent hands garnish the mound

where your boy sleeps.

Please accept my deepest condolences.

Very Sincerely,
Major General C.T. Mendher

Oct. 22, 1918

Mr. J.A. Ellet,
Owens Cross Roads
Dear Sir,

Your son (Jesse J. Ellet) has asked me to write a few lines as his right arm was amputated near the shoulder. The left arm also has a couple of wounds but not serious. They are healing fine and he is feeling good. You know wounds in the arms do not hinder walking and that helps a lot. We get the best of care from the nurses and doctors. I expect he will start to the States within a few weeks. Will close with best regards.

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Memories of Tillman Hill

originally published in 1995

The old two-story house that was built in the late 1800s at the corner of Oak and Half Street that was later renamed St. Clair and Gallatin Street was to serve a lot of people in many different ways. It brought a lot of happiness, sorrow, joy, fun, health, comfort, and death.

In 1904 the City of Huntsville found themselves in possession of this house, whose late owner Mollie Teal was alleged to have been a well-known Madam of a Sporting House. Despite her purported reputation, she was obviously public-spirited and generous so she was specific in her will that the house was to be used for a public school or a hospital. In 1904, the City of Huntsville, with a lot of help from some ladies in town, opened a hospital and it stayed a hospital until 1926. The hospital on Whitesburg Drive was built and then the old hospital was turned into an apartment house. It was used as an apartment house and rooming house until sometime during World War II.

During the war it became the Harlem Club. Jesse Smith, who had a bootleg cafe on Meridian Street, opened it up as a black

nightclub. I have already said that the old house had brought a lot of different things to a lot of people. Well it brought death to Jesse Smith on the morning of September 5, 1945. Henry White, a 29 year old former employee of Smith's, was said to have ended the cafe and road-house operator's colorful career with two blasts from a double barrel shot gun fired as Smith was entering the Harlem Club at about 7:00 in the morning, of

which he was now the late owner.

This also brought the end to the old house. After the killing, the law came down on the club and after having been raided many times, it closed. About that time, Community Development came in and rebuilt that part of town.

As the war raged in the South Pacific, there was another war raging in Madison County. Just as President Truman's order to drop the A bomb on Japan had

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ended the War, Henry White, according to the newspaper, with a 12 gauge double barrel shotgun, ended the Roadhouse War in Madison County, when he allegedly shot Jesse Smith on the morning of September 5, 1945.

There had been several shootings and killings between roadhouse operators in the last years. J.C. Bounds, who ran White Castle, a roadhouse on Meridianville Pike, was killed and nobody was ever convicted of his killing. There were two or three other people who were shot and to my knowledge, nobody was ever convicted.

In the last eight months before Henry White allegedly killed Jesse Smith, Jesse was tried three times for murder and all three times there was a hung jury. The last trial that ended in a hung jury was on August 27, 1945. Henry was tried in February of 1946. He was brought into the courtroom on a stretcher. He was reported to have tuberculosis.

Henry White was brought to court again in May of 1946. The first trial was a mistrial. In May he appeared in court looking healthier and sat at the table during the trial. He was found not guilty. After all the killings and trials were over, the D.A., came down on all the roadhouses. The Sheriff was raiding them very often and they began to close down and the War in Madison County was over.

I used to shine shoes in Jesse Smith's cafe inside and outside of the cafe. He always treated me good. I know his wife and her Mother and Daddy. Her Daddy ran a kindling and wood yard on Dallas Ave. and I have worked for him, splitting kindling at the wood yard. So I kept up with the killings and trials very close. It seemed like I knew everybody that was involved in this, but I was too young to really know what was going on.

The last time I saw Jesse, to my remembrance, Grady Baswell from Lincoln and one of my cousins and myself went into Broadway's Place, a restaurant. Grady and my cousin were both a few years older than me. Broadway's had marble-top tables.

We came into the cafe and Jesse was standing at the cash register talking to Mr. Broadway. By this time, Jesse had a real bad name and people did not want to make him mad. Grady was mean and would fight with a circle saw and caused trouble about everywhere he went. Jesse had a felt hat on and wore it pulled down over one eye, as was the fashion at this time.

The three of us walked to the back of the dining room and started to set down, when Grady hollered, "Hell Fire, there is Jesse Smith," and then turned over one of the marble topped tables. You can imagine how loud it was when it hit the tile floor. My cousin and myself hit the floor. I would have run if I had not been too frightened to. Grady jumped

down behind the table and started to act like he was shooting a gun at Jesse. He did not have a gun and was pointing his finger at Jesse and saying "BANG, BANG." We laid there a few minutes, then looked up and Jesse was smiling.

I have never in my life, before or after that, been as happy to see a man smile!



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News From The Year 1916

News From Huntsville and Around The World

United States Invaded by Mexican Pancho Villa

Columbus, N.M. - A Mexican revolutionary army, led by Pancho Villa, has crossed the border at Columbus, New Mexico.

Rampant looting and outright banditry preceded the army of almost 600 men as they swarmed across the Rio Grande. At least 12 ranches have been robbed and their buildings put to the torch.

Though preliminary reports are sketchy at this time it appears the operation was carefully planned. Small groups of 15-20 men snuck across the border first, cutting telegraph wires and sealing off the roads leading into and out of Columbus. As the main army approached Columbus it became evident that resistance was futile against the heavily armed band of marauders.

There is no report on the numbers of lives lost though it

has been confirmed that the two banks in Columbus, along with all the other businesses, were looted of their cash and weapons.

First reaction from Washington was one of shock with a promise of swift retaliation.

Polio Discovered in Maysville

Dr. L. W. Howard has confirmed that a new and dreadful disease has been identified in Maysville.

Nettie Preston, the two year old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Will Preston, was diagnosed yesterday as having polio.

Though two other cases have been reported in other parts of the state, this is the first confirmed case in North Alabama.

Wilson Urges World Peace

Washington - President Wilson called tonight for creation of a league of nations to keep peace in the world once the war in Europe has ended. The president's proposal was made in a speech to the League to Enforce Peace.

Saying that rule by force should end, President Wilson maintained that the United States would be willing to join in an organization that would protect all small countries from aggression and stop wars begun in violation of treaties. The world, Wilson said, has a right to live in peace.

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Tragic Fire Ravages Ringling Brothers Circus - Horses Killed

Huntsville - What started as a day of merriment for people attending the Ringling Brothers Circus here quickly turned into tragedy as flames swept the compound.

Over 600 people were on the circus grounds when a fire, apparently caused by a carelessly discarded cigarette, and fueled by high winds, swept through the grounds.

The main damage was concentrated near the stock pens where immense quantities of fodder had been stowed for the livestock.

The stock handlers, who had been prepared for such an emergency, immediately began blind folding the horses and leading them to safety.

Though there is no report of human casualties, 37 horses burned to death in the conflagration. Scores more were severely injured.

Several of Huntsville's doctors were pressed into service in an attempt to save the injured animals but in many cases it was too late. Shots rang out through the day as more of the animals were put out of their misery.

A spokesman from Ringling Brothers Circus stated the show

will continue its run here in Huntsville with no interruption of scheduled shows. Agents for the circus are already in negotiations with local livestock dealers to replace the horses.

The fiery blaze, and the smoke, was seen all across the county.

Citizens in New Hope, upon seeing the smoke, immediately raised a contingent of volunteers and dispatched them to Huntsville.

Ford To Unveil \$250 Auto

Detroit - The horse and buggy days may be ending for many people when the new \$250 touring automobiles roll off the Ford Motor Co.'s assembly lines.

The rollback in prices, in the works for several years, could increase dramatically the Ford share of the automobile market and open the way for perhaps one million new car owners who currently travel by horse-drawn vehicles. The effect of the cheaper models is expected to be felt primarily on the nation's farms and in small towns.



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Tips From Liz

Household Advice, Beauty Tips
and Common Sense



- When planning your meal, presentation is very important. Visualize how the food will look on the plate - try for contrasting colors and textures. Certain flowers can enhance any meal.

- Save all kinds of leftover bread - bagels, rolls, biscuits, crackers, breads - and grind them to very fine crumbs in your processor or blender. Freeze in freezer bags and use for stuffings and toppings. Add a touch of garlic powder or onion powder to spice it up.

- Stop a runny nose by adding 3-4 drops of Tabasco sauce to a glass of water and drinking it all down.

- Want to control that sweet tooth? Dissolve 1 teaspoon of baking soda in a glass of warm water and rinse out your mouth. Spit out the water, don't swallow. The explanation of this has to do with the stimulation of the hypothalamus, arousing the papillae, releasing saliva and along with it, the sweets craving. In minutes, you will be able to control that craving.

- If you are wearing your favorite perfume and want to smell it all day, put just a dab under your nose before you leave

for work.

- Peeled garlic cloves, submerged in wine, can be safely stored in the fridge and used as long as no mold appears on the surface of the wine.

- If you change the water every three to four days, asparagus will keep fresh for as long as two weeks.

- Keep four or five different kinds of nuts in your freezer for drop-in guests. "Jump-fry" them in a hissing-hot nonstick skillet with a touch of butter, sea salt and ground hot red pepper.

- Wrap your grater with plastic food wrap when grating citrus zest from lemons, limes or ginger. The zest will cling to the wrap when you pull it off.

- The fastest way to crush berries for a crisp or pie is with a potato masher.

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- Cavalcade of Comedy *August 11 - 15*
- American Queen Cruise *September 6 - 13*
- Fall Foliage Cruise* *October 10 - 21*
- Senior Friends Convention - San Diego* *Nov. 5 - 9*
- Kentucky Christmas Treat *November 30 - December 1*
- Lone Star Texas Adventure *December 11 - 16*

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An Early History of Huntsville

Written in 1880 by Mai Taylor

I, being one of the younger boys, officiated as mill boy, at first accompanied by an older brother or a Negro man or boy, but as I grew older, I frequently made the trip alone. Men now living in this country, in 1880, can have but little conception of the richness and beauty of the region between Brownsboro and Huntsville. With the exception of the mountain spur known as Cedar Ridge and then covered with a thick growth of stately cedars, it was one continued grove of magnificent poplars interspersed in the lowlands with oak, walnut, and hickory. It was a case of survival of the fittest for there was little or no undergrowth and the forest titans had reserved so much space for light and ventilation that where not prostrated by storms, wagons could be easily driven anywhere over the woods and in riding through the beautiful open forest, a deer on the run could be seen for a quarter of a mile through the forest avenues. Roads then were not so necessary as at present when the undergrowth prevents driving and frequently riding through the for-

ests. The mountain was rather difficult, especially on the eastern side,

The path wound among low jagged cliffs of limestone and it took experienced steering at some points to prevent our meal bags from coming in rude contact with the sharp socks loom-

ing up on each aide of the trail. At this time, but little impression had been made on the unbroken forest east of the mountain.

There was a house at the Nuchols Spring near Cedar Ridge and some two or three alone the base of Monte Sano, near the cool sparkling springs on the south side of the Moore plantation. From Huntsville to the mountain top was one unbroken forest with small clearings made south of the road, one by Moses Vincent at Underwoods and another near

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American Heartland Real Estate

the old Calhoun quarters.

There were a few straggling log cabins on the path from Steele's corner out as far as the Fleming place and several new houses among the trees from Holmes Street down Green Street towards the pike, from Steel's corner the road wound around a large pond where the water stayed all summer and which was full of green briars and old stumps and logs to where the ground began to rise into a considerable knoll where the court house stands. Here stood at that time a little frame building used as a court house, and another north of it for a jail, which in a year or two were replaced by brick buildings which were a source of wonder to the young natives.

A trip to Huntsville mill was a great holiday for the boys, as some times a dozen or more would come together. In the crowd was generally some older person who could put up sacks for unfortunate boys who were dragged off by the rocks or saplings, and needles and thread also were forthcoming for repairs in case of damage.

We generally started at sunrise or before and reached our

destination in two or three hours, and as we tarried until all had obtained their grist, we reached home near nightfall. Thus we managed to spend the great or part of the day in town and no exposition of the present civilized period ever delighted our souls as did the wonders of the new and growing little city. We wandered around the spring cliffs and waded in the wide and sluggish waters in the swamp below. Somebody had started a tan-yard just below the spring at the foot

of the hill and the making of leather was a revelation to us.

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Then came the brickyard and brick laying, and the carpenters and masons at work, and there was also a cotton gin run by Dr. Moore and a distillery above the Mill, owned by Jas. Clemens.

As evening approached we set out in time to reach home before nightfall and turning round the cedar ridge and circling round the point we would frequently hear the scream of the catamounts that infested the rough and honeycombed rocks covering the upper ridge, and listened to many, blood curdling stories of adventurous hunters who had encountered wild beasts in their lairs up in the black cedar glades.

Huntsville had grown to a town of seven or eight hundred inhabitants and was driving a profitable trade with the Indians, among whom even at that time civilization was advancing. But many who bought land at the land sales of 1809 delayed bring-

ing their families to the new territory at a time when the temper of the Indians was unsettled and war appeared probable. But the settlers were not easily intimidated by fear of Indian hostilities.

A large part of them had come from Georgia and Tennessee where there had been continual hostilities between the races until the beginning of the present century and the rising generation who had heard their fathers fight their battles over again longed for an opportunity to emulate their deeds. But with the year 1811, from some cause not then explained, the apprehension of Indian hostilities seems to have passed away and settlers began pouring into the country.

East of Flint River, out toward Hurricane Creek, a large colony of Germans were locating, among them was Jacob Derrick, a wealthy man who bought large

bodies of land near the Indian boundary. In 1809, Jehu and John Lawler, John Lamberson, Henry Harless and Richard Pockruss and John Paseur

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whose descendants scattered over North Alabama and many of whom now comprise some of the best citizens of Madison County. John Brown purchased a large tract of land near Brownsboro, built a mill on Flint River and gave his name to the old village.

The old town was laid off into lots and in the year 1812 it was second to Huntsville in population and importance. Its population increased rapidly and it was the headquarters of the Flint River Navigation Company that at an early day shipped cotton and produce down the Flint river.

A large settlement soon gathered around the village among whom were the Hewletts, McCartneys, Lambersons, Taylors, Peeveys, Massingales, Browns, Lawlers, Cottons, Scotts, Jordans, and Derricks who rapidly cleared and opened for cultivation the fine fertile lands on the sides of the Flint. The settlement extended up the river to Three Forks, where Haughton's Mill was erected and where the second voting place in the County was established.

Everyone lived in log houses of various grades from the humble cabin daubed with clay to the hewed log house with

plank floors, shingle roof, and the cracks chinked and finished off pointed with lime. Lumber was all sawn at saw pits by hand and it was a serious task to saw out the planks for a first class dwelling. For the accommodation of my father's large family, he built a square log home about twenty feet square with a side room. The floor was made of white ash plant, sawn at a saw pit, covered with chestnut shingles, and the house stood with but little change and without being recovered for near fifty years. The kitchen and smoke house and negro cabins were rude log cabins chinked with clay and several of them with dirt floors. East of the house was a slough or lagoon with many

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springs running into it and some boiling up from its bottom. The water in this lagoon was clear and cold with tupelo trees grown up in the stream and along its borders. It was always swarming with fish and a haul or two with a seine generally supplied both white and black with an ample supply of fine fish.

Seen on a desk in a Huntsville reception area:

"We shoot every 3rd salemen, and the 2nd one just left."

Oil Wells in Madison County

from 1909 newspaper

E. R. B. Martin and J. K. Mahan, millionaire natural oil operators of Pittsburg, PA and who have options on more than 20,000 acres of oil lands in Madison County, left this afternoon for their home after spending a few days here in the interest of their probable local operations. The tip was secured by a prominent business man and friend of the gentlemen present, that within a very short time they expect to simultaneously start the drilling of 5 to 10 wells near Huntsville.

Classified Ads From 1911


- Visit "Adams" for soft drinks and lunches; also the place "across the corner." Both for Gentlemen only.
- Found - Buggy lap robe on Franklin street. Owner retrun to this office and recover by describing and paying for this advertisement.
- New four-room Cottage corner 6th street and Pratt avenue for rent cheap. Apply to J. E. Pierce
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An Affair of Honor

The Huntsville Cotton Mill was created by the efforts of D. L. Love, a businessman from Mississippi. Traveling throughout the Southeast, Love aroused interest in Huntsville, found subscribers for common stock and persuaded the City to pass a 10 year exemption on taxes.

As the cotton mill began to prosper, such was not the case for its organizing genius. Apparently in his gallivanting around the country, Love became infatuated with the young, beautiful Ada Johnson of Huntsville. But following the demands of a busy travel schedule, Love did not press his suit in time. The newspaper on September 21, 1881 announced the marriage of Ada Johnson to "Mr. John F. Lanier of Madison County." The paper further commented, "The Huntsville public was greatly surprised that Miss Ada, whose hand had been sought by so many suitors, had at last succumbed to Mr. Lanier's offer of marriage."

None was more surprised than Mr. Love who, when learning of the betrothal, lost his temper and sought to avenge his loss by besmirching her character.

So foul were his accusations that the young husband did what honorable young men of breeding were expected to do in such cases. He went to Greenville, Mississippi and killed Mr. Love.

Defended by Huntsville Attorney Captain Milton Humes, young Lanier was completely exonerated. The judge announced from the bench, "It is my opinion that he did just what I or any other man of honor would do, and I therefore discharge the prisoner and bid him go hence without delay."

Cold Drink Stands Busted

The City police and sheriff departments continued their raid on cold drink stands last night but without the success that yesterday afternoon brought them. Early in the evening they visited a Washington street establishment and found nothing. Later, however, they arrested "Whiskey," the negro porter at the place on the charge of violating the prohibition laws. Mr. Carroll and Mr. Burns, the white men arrested yesterday afternoon, were released. It is suggested that this will be a "closed" Sunday in Huntsville.

from 1911 Huntsville newspaper

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Carved In Stone

No one remembers what the fight was about. Some accounts claim it was over property boundaries while others, whispering quietly so as not to be overheard, said the trouble started over a woman.

What is known however, is that Curry Turner and A.J. Warren met on the front porch of a small country store on June 5, 1901. Harsh words were exchanged and Warren left to go to his buggy. Perhaps fearing that Warren was going to get a gun, Turner pulled his own gun and shot him dead. Turner was arrested but was found innocent after pleading self defense. Many people later claimed that Turner, a wealthy man who owned a gin and grist mill, was found innocent because of his wealth and standing in the community. If Turner hoped the controversy would be quickly forgotten, he was soon to learn different.

Warren's family, after packing all their worldly belongings in a wagon, traveled to the nearby graveyard at the Madison Cross Roads Presbyterian Church where they placed a tombstone on their slain kin's grave.

Afterwards they got back in their wagon and continued their journey. Although they would never return to Madison County they left behind a grim reminder of their departed kin.

Carved in stone and weathered by age, the words remind everyone of a bloody encounter on a store's front porch almost a hundred years ago.

A. J. Warren
Born April 19, 1847
Murdered by Curry Turner June 5, 1901



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On Athens traffic accident

News from Gurley in 1891

* Gurley is still enlarging her borders. The new bucket factory of Vorenburg & Bros. is about completed. The workmen are putting up the machinery, and expect to commence the manufacture of Cedar buckets in a very short time.

It would seem to an ordinary thinker that there is great room in the country for cedar bucket factories, there are only about 4 in the United States and Gurley is in line to be number one in production.

Mr. Vorenburg is in Boston now in the interest of his business.

* The new Baptist church will soon be completed, which will be quite an addition to our town. The work of the new building seems to be first class and will be an asset to the community.

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Memories of Robert B. Morrow

(written in 1912)

In July 1864, I joined as a volunteer of Co. L, 5th Regiment, Alabama Cavalry.

I rode a mule, a large gentle one, a good traveler. The bridle was made of home tanned cow leather sewed into the bits with cords made of home-tanned fox or coon hides. The bit was made in a shop nearby and was what was called a cord bit.

The saddle, homemade also, consisted of two pieces of poplar, shaped so it was supposed to fit the mule's back as they lay lengthways on her. These were fastened together in front by a piece of tough oak with rivets made of iron in the shops nearby, the back part was fastened the same way, by tough oak, cut so as to resemble any ordinary saddle.

This saddle had holes mortised, through which to tie on the

belongings of a soldier of the C.S.A. When this was covered with a heavy woolen blanket, spun and woven at home by my Mother and Sister and colored with bark, the soldier, dressed in cloth made by the same loving hands was ready to mount and be off to war.

Neither the boy nor his equipment would make a formidable looking soldier or inspire terror, you will say. True! But the mule could travel, and the boy could shoot. These three formed the chief requisites for a Confederate soldier.

Have you ever wondered why they don't make the whole plane out of the material used for the indestructible black box?

Potlikker

by Ron Eyestone

Put a ham shoulder into about 3 quarts of water and simmer for about two hours. Wash young turnip greens and put them in the pot with the ham. (Cabbage can be used if preferred.) Add 2 teaspoons salt, 1/2 teaspoon black pepper and pinch of red pepper. Cover and simmer another 2-3 hours. Add water as required to keep original volume. Chop the greens, slice the ham, put the greens and ham on top of the PONE and pour some POTLIKKER over the whole mess.

Personally, I think that's why Grandpa died!

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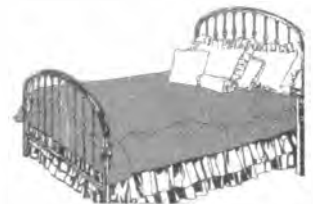
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John Turner, a thrifty grocer, has filed suit asking that Miss Etta Thompson, a pretty young lady in town, be required to pay him \$5,000 for flirting.

He had been keeping company with the young woman for some months, but she gave him up for another.

Referring to his suit Turner said: "This is not a breach-of-promise case, but a case for damages. I don't like flirting, and I am going to show people that this country is a very unhealthy one for that kind of business. I have been fair with the girl. I told her that I detested flirting and when I started keeping company with her I told her that I did it with the intention of marrying her. I had every reason to believe that she wanted to marry me, too. Now she has gone to flirting with other people and I intend to punish her for it.

From 1890 newspaper

Heard on the Street in 1891

- Henry Hone, white, who resides in the northern part of the county, had been lying in jail for sometime now on a charge of being unlawfully married - he having a living wife, was turned loose yesterday on bond for his appearance at next term of Circuit Court. Both his wives are expected to attend.

- Charlie (Buck) Monroe, after several months absence, has returned to the city and will in future be associated with his brother, D.C. Monroe, in the tonsorial line at the McGee hotel. Both of these young men are competent and skilled artists in their business and will please the public with their work. They extend their friends a cordial invitation to call on them

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Hugh Gipson

by Austin Miller

Hugh Gipson was born in 1905 on the Gipson family farm. He was a stocky six feet tall with either a birthmark or burn scar on his jaw that covered about half of his left cheek. Another distinguishing feature was a high nasal voice that you would recognize the rest of your life if you heard it one time. Younger people in the community called him Mr. Hugh; his friends called him Mr. Shugg. Daddy, who nicknamed everybody, called him Sugar Foot Rag. It has been said that as a young boy, he was so strong, reckless and dangerous that his daddy, Mr. Bob Gipson, made him work away from the rest of the family. Their land was not very good but the family managed to survive by raising their own food, cutting their fire wood and working hard from daylight until dark twelve months a year. Mr. Hugh loved the farm and never had any interest in leaving or doing anything else. His siblings left as soon as they were old enough but Mr. Hugh stayed and raised a large family of his own. Like their uncles and aunts, however, his children didn't take to the hardscrabble life and left as soon as they were old enough. After Mr. Bob died in 1959, Mr. Hugh farmed the land alone.

He was a notorious spinner of yarns. Despite that, some of his real life episodes matched or exceeded his tall tales. As a young man one of his hobbies was catching rattle snakes. One Sunday afternoon he was crossing a bob wire fence with two rattlers in a toe sack when one got loose and bit him on the hand. He loved western novels and had read about cowboys cutting the wound with a knife and

sucking out the blood. This is exactly what he did and it may have saved his life. Another time, he was riding a mule along a fence row shooting at the posts with a pistol. One shot hit the mule in the back of the head and killed it instantly. Both of these stories were once well known and etched in Ryland lore.

In the early part of his life he rode a bicycle for transportation. I remember him speeding along on Ryland Pike nearly as fast as a car. He would tell you that he could travel fifty or sixty miles per hour on a level road without his front wheel hitting the

ground. In later years he drove a two and a half ton, red, black fendered flat bed 1949 Chevrolet truck with a two-horse wagon hitched to the rear. This wagon train replaced the bicycle and was a common part of the Ryland scenery for many years. When my grandparents moved back to Ryland in 1959, my grandmother saw the truck and wagon speeding down Ryland Pike, the

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spoked iron rimmed wagon wheels ringing on the pavement and bouncing about a foot high when they hit a rough place in the road, she laughed and said, "what in the world is that?" When I told her it was Mr. Hugh Gipson, her reply was, "I should have known."

Daddy told a story about riding with him from Huntsville to Ryland. They were coming down Huntsville Mountain when one of the wagon's wheels came off and passed them on the driver's side. The wheel rolled down the highway for about a quarter of a mile before it finally veered off into a ditch and flew all to pieces. Mr. Hugh stopped the truck, got his axe from behind the seat, cut a long hickory pole out of the mountain and make a travois for the wagon. None of this was out of the ordinary except that he resumed normal speed the rest of the way home and paid no attention to the pole supported wagon bouncing all over the highway.

In his late forties, he got sick and went to the doctor for the first time in his life. The doctor sent him to the hospital for tests. They ran the test and told him he had terminal cancer. He decided that if he was going to die it would be at home in his own bed. Sometime after midnight, he put on his overalls and brogans, walked out of the hospital got in his truck and headed to Ryland. I can visualize the spectacle the truck and wagon made

leaving Huntsville in the stillness of the night. There must have been a loud clatter of the wagon on the streets and distorted reflections of the strange rig in the dimly lit glass fronted buildings. He made it home, slept the rest of the night in his own bed and chopped cotton the next day.

One clear October moonlit night at Ryland gin, I accidentally put the tractor in reverse causing it to lurch backwards, jamming the full weight of the tailor over the bumper of a truck parked behind me. It

stuck tight and wouldn't budge. As I was about to make one last desperate attempt to jerk loose, a familiar nasal voice said, "now try it." I put the tractor in gear and easily pulled away. Mr. Hugh

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had lifted the cotton-filled trailer off the bumper. After pulling up in line, I asked him how he did that? His response was, "I used the great strength God gave me." To demonstrate, he put his arms around a 500-pound bale of cotton, lifted it about six inches off the ground and dropped it with a thud. As we waited for our turn under the suck, he began to tell stories. His nasal voice was clear and easy to hear above the loud hum of the gin. The tales were outrageous but intriguing and I can still remember them all in detail. He told about what a good fighter he was and how he could easily whip any of the notorious thugs that once hung around the Ryland depot. My favorite was about women. He said that his biggest problem in life was women chasing after him and the only way he could get away from them, even at church, was to take his wife Dolly with him. Another favorite was about plowing with two tractors at the same time. This specious feat involved tying the front wheels and the steering wheels together with hickory poles. The stories were obviously total fabrications but they were spell binding and I was exposed to a Ryland legend.

In the early spring of 1967 there was a revival at Wears

Chapel Baptist church. The emphasis was on getting young people to go to church instead of the Snuff Dippers Ball or other honky-tonks in Huntsville. On the last night, Aunt Boots talked me into going. I rode to the church with her, my cousin Faye and her husband Wayne Hill. There were several visiting preachers, all of whom either spoke or prayed. At nine o'clock the service had been going on for two hours with no end in sight. When the revival preacher finally got up to speak, he asked that all single people sit together on the left side of the

church and the married people on the other side. I took advantage of the commotion and sneaked out the door. As I crossed the churchyard headed toward home afoot, I heard a familiar nasal voice ring out, "hey young Miller!" I knew that it was Hugh Gipson. He was standing outside the church watching the

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service through the window. I walked over and shook his hand. He told me that he heard I was home and was glad I didn't get killed in Vietnam. He said he took his boys behind the barn and taught them how to knife fight before they went to Korea. Close by was a 1965 green GMC 1/2 ton pickup truck that looked new. I asked him if that was his truck? He said it came from the sale of the family farm and he was going to use it to make a living. When his mother died, his brothers and sisters forced a sale of the farm and his part was only enough to buy a used pickup truck. We talked about this and other things and I soon lost track of time. Before I knew it people were leaving the church and Wayne was asking me if I was ready to go home. It was about ten thirty.

He and his wife rented and moved into the old Bosart house. It was a large weathered and dilapidated barn of a building that had been standing empty for several years. True to his plan, he made a living with the truck. He cut wood out of the mountains and brought it home to sell. A huge woodpile soon dwarfed the house. About dark, well into the 1980's, it was a common sight to see the old GMC truck speeding down Ryland Pike toward Maysville with wood stacked high on the bed, cab and tail gate. All the green paint was gone and it was hard to find a place on the vehicle that wasn't bent, rusted or dented. The old man who was supposed to die of cancer years before, worked alone in the mountains with a chain saw until he was past eighty.

In April of 1990, he called the house at Ryland to ask about Daddy who had just gotten out of the hospital. I told him if he wanted to visit sometime one of us would come after him. He said that sounds good. About five

minutes after I hung up, the phone rang again. It was Mr. Hugh. He said, "are you the one who said he would come after me?" When I replied that I was, he said, "I am ready to come now." He visited most of the afternoon. He was about 85 but looked and acted about like he always did. I remember thinking that it wouldn't surprise me if he could still pick up a bale of cotton.

He is probably the most colorful character that ever lived in Ryland. Considering the compe-

tion for this distinction that is saying a lot. I am glad I knew this man because I will not know one like him again. Daddy died in February 1991, Mr. Hugh died less than a month later. When they died, old Ryland and its way of life were already gone.

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Barbara Fortner

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