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The Lynching of Elijah Clark

Anger boiled over among the mill workers on a hot summer day in 1900. One of their own, a small girl, had been brutally attacked.

Tired of the authorities turning a blind eye, tired of the mills that had enslaved them and their families, employees walked out of the mill and took justice into their own hands.

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Also in this issue: Six Dead Husbands

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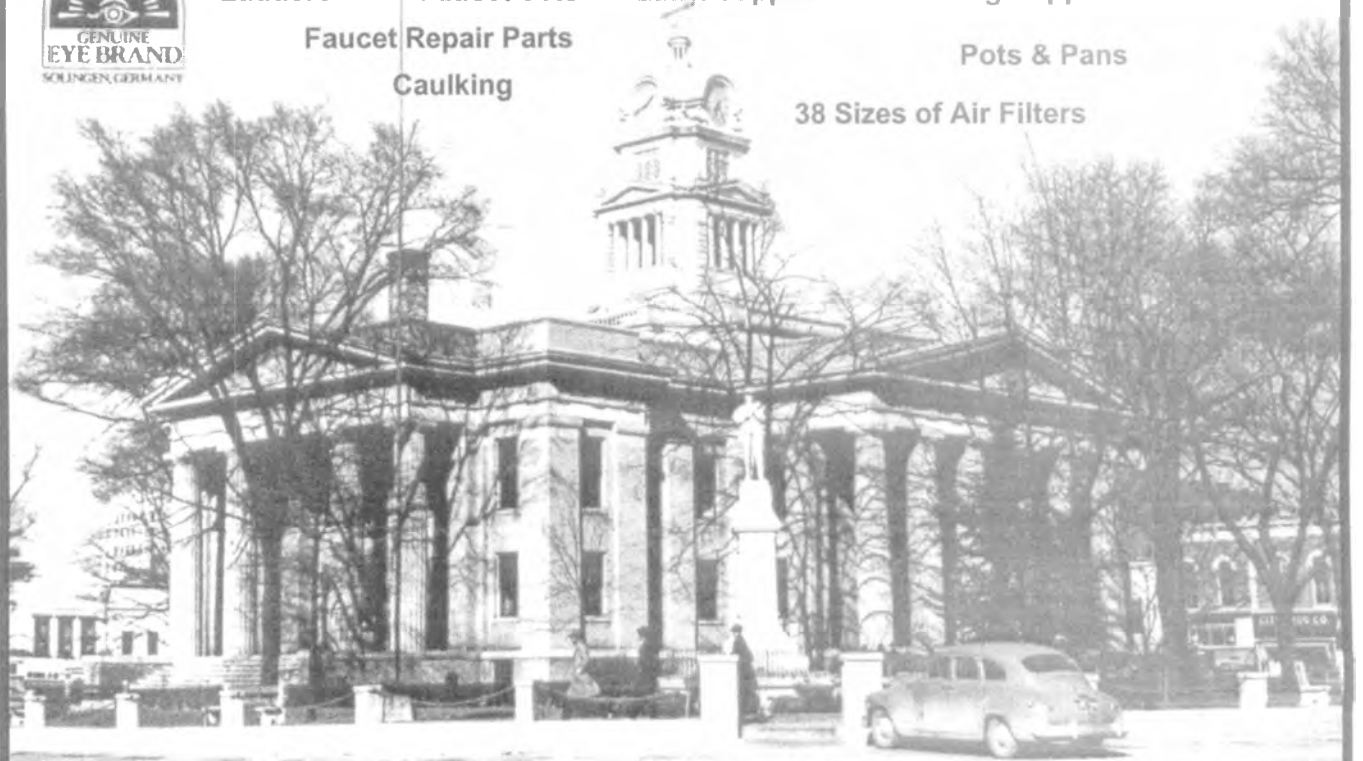
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Old Timer's Sale

The Lynching of Elijah Clark

by Jon Jackson

There's nothing as hot as an Alabama summer. There the sun will burn even the blue from the sky and leave what is left like a bowl of ashes across the heavens. But they say it's what it does to a man's heart that's the worst. Every day he toils under that brutal sun puts fuel to the fires in his belly. And those fires must be cooled lest they consume him. The summer of 1900 was such a summer. A summer when two people, one innocent and one guilty, were consumed in that fire.

One could argue that 12-year-old Susie Priest and her sister, 10-year-old Nellie, were innocents. Certainly from the perspective of what was about to happen to Susie they were. Yet both of them had already endured years of life at Dallas Mills just outside the city limits of Huntsville. In a state with no child labor laws they had already been working most of their lives in the brutal conditions of the cotton mills, mills that could break a grown man let alone two young girls. Getting up at four a.m. and at work by six, the girls would not get off until six that night. Their only break was a short lunch around noon, if the

mill would let them. Because the Mill, that ever present, all-powerful Mill, controlled every aspect of their lives.

So it was that on the 23rd of July that year Susie and Nelly decided to cross the blistered, cracked, weed choked field to get to their shanty for a bite to eat before going back to work. So it was that they met Elijah Clark.

A charitable person might describe Clark as a teamster. Around Huntsville they had another name for what someone like Clark did: Muleskinner. Twenty years old and unable to find full time work, Clark had drifted from job to job until he finally washed up on the doorstep of a local freight company. Perhaps one of the reasons that he could not find work was that something in his soul was fundamentally violent. Perhaps it involved one of his other faults. In modern parlance one might be tempted to call him a predator; that too would be charitable. Low life would be a better description.

The girls had already put in what, to twenty first century Alabamians, would be a full day's work and the labor and the heat had leached the energy from their very souls. The filthy, ever present cotton dust permeated every cubic inch of their bodies and gave them a sheen of grime that all the soap in the world could never wash away. Tired and looking forward to being



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able to sit down at home for a few minutes before having to go back to work the girls trudged across the field and did not notice Clark at first. As he approached he called out to the girls. "Which way to Whitesburg?" he might have asked.

Whatever it was, the innocents stopped and were about to answer the stranger when he attacked. Knocking Susie to the ground he grabbed Nelly by the throat and squeezed. The struggling child proved too much for Clark and when he lost his grip on Nelly she ran back to the mill for help. Arriving at the mill she found a group of men standing around outside smoking before going back to work. Quickly gathering some of their coworkers, a group soon headed back to the lot where Nelly had left her sister. There they found Susie bloody, naked, and curled up in a ball crying hysterically on the sun baked red dirt. Anyone with eyes to see knew what had happened.

Someone questioned the girl and the men soon determined the identity of the attacker. Anger boiled in their guts under that hot Alabama sun. The men dreamed of action, long denied them by the emasculating system that controlled their lives, and something long dormant stirred

within their souls. Under that Alabama sun, rage began to stir.

"It ain't right," one cried. "They treat us like slaves, work us like dogs, and now even our children ain't safe."

"If they'd pay us a decent wage," said another, "our children wouldn't have to work and this wouldn't have happened." Others in the group echoed them as their collective rage began to build a head of steam.

"Back to work!" shouted a blue shirted foreman, shoving his way to the front of the group. The spell broke and the men fell silent. "Anyone not going back to work now will be docked a full day's pay."

From the midst of the crowd someone said that he was going to look for the assailant and "the mill be damned." The foreman spat on the ground and fired him on the spot. Resistance collapsed. As bad as this was, they could ill afford to lose their jobs.

Though the work resumed after lunch, anger continued to simmer through the day. When an accident mangled the legs of a ten-year-old boy less than an hour later the rage once again surged through the mill workers and when the blue shirts came to get the men back to work that anger erupted. One of the foremen took a worker by the collar and ordered him to "get back to

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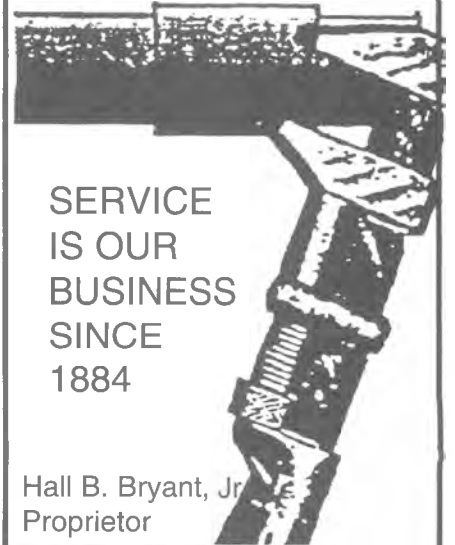


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work." The snarling worker laid him out on the floor with a curled fist and in minutes over 1000 workers walked out. Dallas Mills shut down.

In minutes, alarmed stockholders began calling the mill demanding that something be done. The Mill manager responded by calling the sheriff and demanding that the rapist be jailed "and quick." Hoping that an arrest would bring the men back to work, the manager was not disappointed. Early the next day word spread that Clark had been arrested and most of the workers returned.

Yet all was not peace and light at Dallas Mills. Rumors flew and tales spread on a day that was, if anything, even hotter than the day before. They began to talk about the case of Albert Thompson, a twenty-nine-year old cavalryman stationed in Huntsville, who had recently been tried for a similar crime and had received only a light sentence. Anger incensed the minds of the mill workers at the thought that a man who had raped a twelve year old would also get away with such crime. To many it was proof that the local authorities and the mill owners saw them as a lower form of life.

Their anger ran at a low boil beneath that brutal Alabama sun for most of the morning but by the afternoon someone, no one is sure who, said those fateful words: "That Elijah Clark should be lynched." The words, once spoken, shimmered in the air like heat above a roadway. Lynching fever soon spread through the factory. From mouth to ear the fever spread, and each man, woman, and child that contracted it felt it burn into their brain and into the pit of their belly, and they liked it. It filled them with a deep, abiding sense of their rightness, of a measure of the power that the system had conspired to take away from them.

Then, as one, the mob began to move. Armed with rifles, shotguns, and pistols they surged through the streets of Huntsville sweeping all that stood before them into their numbers. Housewives left dinners in ovens to become crusaders of justice. Lawyers left their practices, their clients in tow, to join the flood of humanity. Storekeepers closed their businesses, hanging closed signs and out to lunch signs in windows during the middle of the day to be with their fellow man. Mechanics dropped their tools and joined the surge of a powerless people united in one desperate act. At every corner the mob grew. A thousand men, women, and children soon grew to over two thousand. They surrounded the jail and the force of law could not hold back that tide.

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Demanding that Clark be turned over to them, the anger that burned in their bellies would not be assuaged with the empty promises of a system which conspired against them.

Sheriff Fulgham, warned that the mob was coming, quickly deputized six men, armed them with repeating Winchesters, and stationed them outside the jail. But, faced with the threat of so many hungering for blood and justice, the new deputies abandoned their posts, many joining the mob. No one knows why a sheriff who had formerly turned a blind eye to what went on in the mill villages decided to take a stand for his prisoner. But he did. Sworn to uphold the law, the sheriff and his two full time deputies barricaded themselves inside the jail. When someone in the mob demanded the keys, Fulgham told them that they "would have to walk over my dead body." They replied that they would be only too glad to.

The anger of the mob blazed and they surged toward the jailhouse. Getting several large pieces of timber from a nearby construction site they commenced beating the door down. After breaking through the doors, the mob was met by the sheriff and his deputies who opened fire on them. Luckily, for the members of the mob, the officers didn't have much in the

way of firepower. The buckshot used by the deputies injured only one man, Will Vining, an electric light worker.

The sheriff, his prisoner, and the two deputies retreated upstairs while the mob acquired several sticks of dynamite. Placing the explosives outside the jail the crowd again demanded the release of Clark. Fulgham refused and the fevered mob surged toward the door again. Milton Humes and Daniel Coleman, two Huntsville businessmen, got on top of a nearby buggy and tried to calm the crowd down.

The mob jeered under that Alabama sun and pelted the men with rocks for their efforts. Their rage had burned mercy from their souls that day. Someone in the crowd lit the dynamite. The fuse sputtered and hissed as the crowd paused, expectations of the inferno to come making their eyes shine. For almost a minute the errant fuse sizzled and spat before going out completely. A reckless soul checked the fuse. It was out but not completely burned up. They lit the thing again and threw it into the jail. The explosion ripped through the first floor and on the second

the sheriff, his deputies, and their prisoner thought God had come a calling as they hung on for their lives.

As the sheriff and deputies picked themselves up off the debris-strewn floor Sheriff Fulgham offered to let the depu-

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ties go. The two men quickly shimmied through a window at the back of the jail and dropped the two stories to the ground. Meanwhile Clark wept and begged in his cell.

As the smoke cleared below, the mob surged into the jail only to find the door between the first and second stories still intact. Howling in frustration they regrouped outside. Someone suggested burning the stubborn sheriff out and several members went to fetch combustibles. A short time later they returned with a barrel of oil, a large quantity of sulfur, and sacks of chicken feathers. These were piled in the middle of what was left of the first floor and ignited. Black, slick smoke rose from the pile, slid along the ceiling, coiled its way up the stairs, and licked

through the cracks around the door. The hot black smell drove the crowd back and sent the sheriff and his prisoner to their knees in uncontrollable fits of coughing.

The Huntsville police chief, D.D. Overton, who had been standing back watching the mob, asked to be allowed to enter the jail and try to talk Fulgham into surrendering. The crowd allowed him this grace and a short time later he managed to convince the sheriff of the hopelessness of his situation. When the last bastion of law and order left the jail the mob again surged forward.

Fulgham had thrown the keys away before leaving the jail so when the mob got to the second floor it had to set about tearing the cell open with crowbars, hammers, chisels, and other tools. They worked for over an hour with a steady stream of gawkers and souvenir hunters parading through the area, but at last they took custody of Clark.

Dragging their victim outside, someone in the crowd mounted the jail steps and addressed the others. "Now gentlemen," the spokesman said, "you must put up your guns. We are going to hang this man and if no one interferes, no one will be hurt."

The mob complied and Clark was marched through the streets

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to the house of Susie Priest who was asked to identify him.

Without hesitation Susie told them that Clark was indeed the man who had raped her. Any hope that Clark might have had turned to ash at that moment and this was too much for the rapist. Losing control of his legs, he collapsed to the ground, sobbing and begging anyone who would listen for mercy. No one listened. Making a last effort to escape, Clark was easily caught and a noose placed around his neck.

The crowd dragged him to nearby Moores Grove. There 4,000 more people waited in the thick, oppressive air of that hot evening swelling the mob to over 6,000 people. The crowd grew quiet and then sighed as someone tossed the rope over a branch. A horse was brought forward and Clark placed upon it.

Will Priest, Susie's older brother, came forward and asked Clark if he had any last words. Clark sobbed quietly. The formality over, Priest slapped the horse. The body jerked and danced at the end of the rope and soon the smell its bowels letting go filled the hot air of the grove.

For almost ten full minutes the crowd stared silently at the corpse hanging in the evening air and then, as if hanging were not enough to blunt their rage, Will Priest began firing at the body. Others in the crowd began firing as well and in moments the corpse was riddled with over 150 rounds. Finally, their rage spent, the crowd began to disperse.

The next morning Dallas Mills opened as usual. Though those the mill identified as ring-leaders were fired, including the entire Priest family, no one was charged in the incident. The official reason given was there were no witnesses.

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The Last Rebel Yell

In the spring of 1949, The Smithsonian Institute hired Frank Tolbert, a famous historian, to capture on a tape recording the most spine chilling sound ever created by man ... the infamous "Rebel Yell."

Time was of the utmost importance. There were only four veterans of the Civil War, all Confederates still living and they were all over 100 years old. Fortunately, they all lived in Texas, which appeared to make his job much easier.

The first veteran Tolbert visited was Joseph Haden Whitsett, a feisty 103-year-old.

"Can't do it," Whitsett answered. "Can't Rebel yell. I'm sorry. I tried to learn it a thousand times when I was with General Joseph Shelby's escort during the war. I didn't seem to have the right kind of voice."

Walt Williams, 107 years of age, was next on Tolbert's list. "Used to could do it," he replied. "But I haven't got the throat lin-

ings for it now. When you get a hundred seven you can't do everything you want no more."

Disappointed, Tolbert next traveled to Wichita Falls, where 104 year old Thomas E. Riddle made his home. Riddle had recently divorced his third wife and claimed to be looking for a fourth.

Unfortunately, though Riddle remembered the yell well, he could not do it. "Takes a young man," he said, "and I ain't got the strength no more."

Only one name was left on Tolbert's list - Samuel Merrill Rane, 103 years of age.

"Can you do the Rebel yell?" Tolbert asked Samuel. Abruptly the old veteran threw back his head and started yelling, "like an opera singer reaching an almost

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impossibly high note, as if a mountain lion and a coyote were crying in chorus," Tolbert later remarked.

Tolbert listened in awe to the historically significant shout. He, alone, was listening to the last person left alive in the world who could do the Rebel Yell the same way it had been done during the Civil War.

When the old man had finished, Tolbert inquired about making a recording of the yell.

"Can't," the old man replied. "Ain't got no electricity." Undaunted, Tolbert went to town in search of a battery powered tape recorder. A few days later he returned to Raney's farm and knocked on the door. A strange man opened the door. "I'm looking for Mr. Raney," Tolbert said.

"He ain't here," the man replied. "He died."

Clodhopper Files for Divorce

Charging that she told him his ancestry was too common for her, called him a clodhopper and followed her verbal assaults with a bombardment of glassware which much blackened, cut and otherwise mutilated his countenance, Paul Oscar Werner has sued for divorce from his wife Frances C. Werner.

He added that she insisted on living at expensive hotels and wearing high priced jewelry for which he could not pay.

They were ejected six times from various apartments because he could not pay the rent, he stated.

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- There were only 8,000 cars in the U.S., and only 144 miles of paved roads. The maximum speed limit in most cities was 10 mph.

- The average wage in the U.S. was 22 cents an hour.

- More than 95 percent of all births in the U.S. took place at home.

- Ninety percent of all U.S. physicians had no college education.

- Sugar cost four cents a pound. Eggs were fourteen cents a dozen. Coffee cost fifteen cents a pound.

- Canada passed a law prohibiting poor people from entering the country for any reason.

- The population of Las Vegas, Nevada, was 30.



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Mama and Octagon Soap

by Helen Miller

Back in the 1920's the makers of Quaker Oats and Octagon soap should have known about Mama. They would have put her on their payrolls. She proclaimed that each day must begin with a bowl of hot oatmeal and end with a scrubdown in Octagon soap.

Those important household staples seldom got very low on her pantry shelf even during the Depression. She said hot oatmeal kept the body warm and that produced energy and energy was absolutely essential for intellectual aspirations. She didn't have any sympathy for mothers who complained because their children made poor grades knowing they went off to

school every morning with a half-filled stomach of cold corn flakes. This was a non-negotiable issue and there was just no other way to raise children.

It was my job to cut out and save the coupons from Octagon soap wrappers. "Woe be" unto any family member that unwrapped a fresh bar of Octagon soap and failed to save the coupon!

Once or twice a year the Traveling Emporium came around loaded with all kinds of attractive household items that could be traded for the coupons. For a hundred you could get a colorful set of mantel vases, a pretty bowl for the table or some gadget for the kitchen.

Besides bathing, scouring the floors, scrubbing my dog, and washing the clothes with it Mama even shampooed her hair in Octagon soap. After letting it be known, half the ladies in town tried it too and the mystery of Mama's healthy shining tresses was no longer a secret.

One summer I was inflicted with boils and Mama made poultices combining Octagon soap with white sugar to draw the poison out. Dr. Gaillard heartily agreed with her formula and assured us there was nothing in the drug store with so much potency.

I didn't mind washing my hands with it but really despised the scrub-downs that came every evening.

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A Monte Sano Romance

From a 1897 newspaper

Among the visitors at the famed Monte Sano hotel above the town of Huntsville was James S. Porter, a young man whose wealthy parents lived in Birmingham. Porter had been roughing it on the mountain since the latter part of May. One of the first objects to catch his eye was a mountain lass, who lived two miles or so from the hotel.

The young people became acquainted casually, but the girl's fair cheeks and ankles were too much for Porter, and he visited the home of his sweetheart time and again.

Unfortunately for him, Porter's knowledge in games led the girl's mother, an old lady whose Bible and spectacles were her Sunday companions year in and year out, to suspect that he was a gambler. The girl refused to believe anything was bad of Porter, and in the face of her mother's opposition, she continued to receive her lover's atten-

tions.

Last week she agreed to quit her home and to go with Porter to accompany him to Boston as his wife. They left the girl's house together, on foot, and took a wagon a quarter of a mile down the road. When a few minutes after they had started, the bride's father missed his daughter, he set out in hot haste and in anger to stop the runaways. He came upon them at a point where the road was steep and rocky, and when they whipped up their horses, he gave his animal such a furious cut that he was thrown

from his wagon down the mountain side.

The mad horse ran past the lovers, and they knew that their pursuer had been injured. They went back, found him, took him home and restored him to consciousness. Subsequently, the young man won the confidence of the mountaineer couple and they gave their consent to the marriage.

Mr. Porter has not forsaken his games of chance but his new mother-in-law is holding her tongue.



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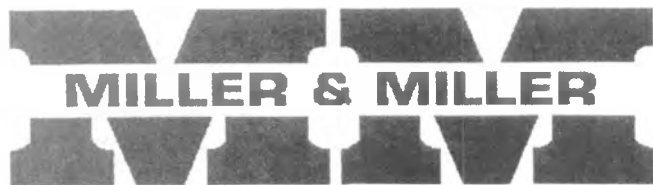


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An Extraordinary Phenomenon

from 1833 Huntsville paper

The inhabitants of our town were aroused at an early hour yesterday morning to witness one of the most extraordinary phenomena which perhaps have ever occurred in this country. It was the incessant falling of meteors, in such vast numbers as to illuminate the heavens. We did not witness the commencement, which was about 12 o'clock, but for more than two hours previous to daybreak, we were up and had a full view of this most awful and sublime appearance, which continued until obscured

by the light of the Sun.

For several hours thousands or even millions of these meteors appeared in every direction to be in constant motion - all taking the direction of the earth, but rather ranging from the East. They presented exactly the appearance which is exhibited by the shooting of the meteors which we occasionally see almost every night.

Our town was the scene of great commotion, particularly among the blacks, who were praying and shouting in every direction, thinking the Day of Judgement had come. The early hour at which our paper issues (for the mails) prevents our being able to converse with those of our town who would be able to properly account for this strange phenomenon.

It is no doubt the effect of an impure state of the atmosphere, the weather for some days having been warm and damp, but suddenly changing to cool or frosty.

Old Huntsville Trivia

1879 The first phonograph is demonstrated in Huntsville. It was shown at the Huntsville Female Seminary and the admission was 50 cents per person. The money went toward the purchase of song books.

1899 Joe Wheeler, a general in the Spanish American War, visits Huntsville and is presented with a horse as a gift. The last time he visited Huntsville, in uniform, he was a general for the Confederacy.

1908 The first local automobile agency and garage opens at 212 Washington Street.

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Huntsville Coffee Talk

by Aunt Eunice



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

Boy, I'm getting tired of sitting here and looking out my window at all this winter weather! It could be worse though - I could be out in it! This cold damp weather really gets to me.

Leroy Cunningham guessed the picture of the month. It was **Margaret Poole**. She's such a nice person!

We have a great little boy's picture this month, and he looks just like his daddy did.

I had a surprise visitor the other day - **Alvin Blackwell!** He's also here at Big Spring Care and tells all of his friends to stop by and see him.

My buddy **Glenn Watson** has been by to see me a couple of times. He's a great guy and really is sincere as a city councilman. He might have a hard time in this next election though.

Every time I pick up the paper I see where our mayor, **Loretta**, is working on something new. Boy, she's a hard worker and we need to keep her around!

Cecil Ashburn and **Robert Madison** stopped by and brought me some fresh cornbread and cold milk. Boy, it was so good!

Cathey Carney also brought me some hot cornbread the week before and **Joe Whisante** had some of it too. Now we know where that extra inch on Joe's belt came from.

I feel so blessed to live in a city like Huntsville and to have so many dear friends.

Aunt Eunice never got to finish her column. She died at 2:35 pm, February 17, 2004.

Photo of The Month

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

Hint: He's not a writer but deals in the written word.



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He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
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He restoreth my soul:
He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness
for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley
of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil: for thou art with me;
Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me
in the presence of mine enemies;
Thou anointest my head with oil;
My cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy
shall follow me all the days of my life
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

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Deep South Favorites

These are some recipes that we think Aunt Eunice would have liked.

Bride's Salad

- 1 pkg. lime gelatin
- 1 c. crushed pineapple
- 1 c. cheddar cheese, grated
- 1 c. toasted pecans, chopped
- 3/4 c. real mayonnaise

Prepare gelatin and when partially congealed, add the pineapple, cheese, nuts and mayonnaise. Mix well. Pour into molds, chill in fridge to firm, top with whipped cream to serve.

Cherry Cheese Crunch

- 2 c. plain flour
- 1 c. pecans
- 1 stick butter, softened
- 6 oz. cream cheese
- 1 box confectioners sugar

1 container whipped cream
 1 large can cherries for pie
 Mix first 3 ingredients and press in baking dish. Bake at 350 degrees til brown and let cool. Combine cream cheese and sugar, cream well then fold in the whipped cream. Spread mixture on crust and pour cherries on top. Keep in fridge til serving.

Macaroni and Cheese

- 1 c. uncooked macaroni
- 3 eggs, slightly beaten
- 3 c. milk
- 1 1/2 lb. cheddar cheese, chopped

Cook macaroni in boiling water for 8 minutes, drain and run cold water over it to stop the cooking. Mix the eggs and milk, pour the macaroni into egg mixture. Spray a 9 x 13" baking dish with garlic cooking spray and layer in this order: macaroni, cheese, macaroni, cheese. Sprinkle top with bread crumbs,

bake at 400 degrees about 35 minutes.

Tater Puffs

- 2 c. mashed potatoes from day before
- 2 T. butter
- Salt and pepper
- 1/2 t. garlic powder
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1/2 c. cream

Combine all ingredients and form into small balls. Either bake in oven at 400 degrees til done or fry in deep fat.

Fried Ham with Red-Eye Gravy

- 4 large slices country ham
- 1 T. plain flour
- 1 c. cold water
- 1 t. strong black coffee

Put your ham slices in a hot skillet and fry over medium heat, turning a couple of times. Cook



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for 10 minutes til browned. Remove ham from pan and keep hot on platter. Leave a tablespoon of fat in the hot pan, toss in the flour, raise the heat and stir til it browns. Pour in the cold water and coffee. Bring to a boil, stirring real well to get all that good stuff off the pan. Lower heat and simmer for about 5 minutes. Throw your ham back in, get some really good fresh biscuits and start soppin up all that good juice.

Cream and Cheddar Biscuits

2 c. self-rising flour
1 c. heavy cream
1/2 c. grated sharp cheddar cheese

Melted butter to coat biscuits
Preheat oven to 400 degrees. In a medium bowl combine flour, cream and cheese til mixture forms a good ball. Roll this out on a floured surface to about 1/2 inch thick. Cut with 2-inch biscuit cutter and dip each biscuit into melted butter. Place these on a buttered cookie sheet, spaced 1" apart. Bake for 10-13 minutes til lightly browned.

Sweet Potato Pecan Balls

1 1/2 c. mashed, cooked sweet potatoes
1/4 c. orange juice
1/2 t. vanilla extract

3 T. sugar
1/2 c. chopped pecans
Mix first 4 ingredients and shape into balls, using about 2 tablespoons for each ball. Roll them in the pecans and bake in preheated oven at 350 for about 20 minutes.

Green Beans, Ham & Pecans

1 lb. green beans
3 T. butter
4 T. chopped pecans
1/4 t. pepper
1/4 t. cayenne
1/2 c. chopped cooked ham
Wash and prepare your beans. Bring 4 cups water and a dash of salt to a boil, add the beans. Cook uncovered for 15 minutes, drain and set aside. Melt butter in a skillet, add the pecans and cook til golden, stirring often. Add beans and chopped ham, toss til heated.

Wonderful Coconut Pie

1/2 c. self-rising flour
1 1/2 c. sugar
4 eggs, beaten
1 t. vanilla extract
1/2 stick butter, melted
7 oz. flake coconut
2 c. milk
Blend together the sugar and flour, stir in the eggs and remaining ingredients. Pour into 2

greased 9-inch pie plates and bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes.

Your family will love these sweet, Southern pies!



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Life in Killingsworth Cove

by Joe F. Broyles

From our front porch we had a sweeping view of the immediate neighborhood, before the roads took off to parts between mountains. To the left, we could see the store and the road all the way from our house to it. Then, looking to the right, we saw the Methodist Church on a side road, next the schoolhouse, then the little barber shop. After that came Mr. Bruce Lawler's barn and the back of his house, then the Givens' home and a road going up the mountain toward the Houck home. Then came the Lee's home and most of that farm; next was a close-up view of a mountain with several homes built into the side of it, where some of the Sanders families lived; next could be seen the home place of the Sanders family.

Everywhere mountains framed our vision. Behind our house stretched the pastures and fields of our farm, spreading along Hurricane Creek toward the mountains beyond.

Lots more farms and homes lay farther back in the Cove, carrying such good family names as Acuff, Gray, Lilly, Duskin, Hawkins, Allbright, Spivey, Kirkindall, Renfro, Wilbanks, Barnett, Moring, Knight,

Flippen, Givens, Holman, Keel, Cabaniss, Miller, Rutland, Mitchell and more. I may not remember the names of all.)

In those days, Cove families lived on farms and most of them got their living from their land. Each farm was an independent industry within itself. Each had its own vegetable garden which produced most of the family's food, in season. The surplus was canned, dried, or stored for winter use. The fruit trees and vineyards kept fresh, canned, and dried fruits and juices available year round. Wild berries were made into preserves and jellies. Potatoes were stored. Pigs were raised and butchered to provide bacon and hams year round, as well as sausage and ribs and white meat to cook with turnip greens and other good things - not to mention rolling it in meal and frying it as crisp brown bacon. Chickens, ducks, and geese supplied fried chicken and scrambled or fried eggs every day.

Lady cows,

nearly always considered a part of the family, provided all the milk, butter, and buttermilk you could ask for.

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Many families raised enough wheat to have made into flour and baked into biscuits and pancakes. Many raised enough sorghum cane to make their year's supply of molasses plus enough to give their city kinfolks a gallon or two. All of them raised enough corn to feed their livestock year-round and still have enough to take bags to the grist mill a few times a year to grind up cornmeal to make corn bread for the family and its hunting dogs. Some families kept bee hives to produce all the honey they could use. Many raised their own popcorn and peanuts.

What else would anybody need? Salt and pepper? Maybe a plug of chewing tobacco now and then. Coffee. Needles and thread and buttons. A few things like that. And Mr. Ed sold those things at the store. A cash crop, usually cotton in those days, took care of salt and pepper and coffee.

With farmers, first things come first. And in those days they had to plant enough crops to feed the horses and mules - absolutely essential in the operation of a farm - and for transportation. No tractors, no trucks, no cars or buses, no airplanes. Just wagons, buggies, plows, and hay rakes - all pulled by horses and mules. If you took a bale of cotton to the gin, the mules went with you - and pulled the wagon.

If you rode to church or to town, the horse went with you-and pulled the buggy. And while no money had to be paid for all that horsepower, those animals had to eat. So that kind of farm life was just one big happy family: members of the human family, the horses and mules, the cows, pigs, sheep, bees, chickens, ducks, and geese - each living in its own living quarters, each doing what it was there to do. And that's not a bad way to live. I know. That's the way we lived.

Off to one side of our house was a barn, living quarters where each horse and mule had its own private bedroom. The lady cows all slept together in their room; a lean-to on one side of the barn formed a room where the pigs could lounge around when they were not in their private out-door play pen where they rooted up the ground for no other reason than just because they wanted to. A shed on one side served as

parking place for the one-horse buggy, the two-horse surrey and various wagons. Inside on the ground floor was a corn crib. The

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upstairs kept the hay for the animals. Between the house and barn was the hen house.

The smoke house was closest to our house. Not because it was handy for somebody to go out and have a smoke. That wasn't what it was for. It was, as most folks know, a place to smoke bacon and hams over a smoky fire of hickory wood. We didn't smoke ours, because we liked bacon and ham better than we liked the taste of smoke. But, anyway, we cured all our own meat in the smoke house. Hams or bacon, when properly cured and protected, could be kept hanging in the smokehouse as long as three years - although that was not likely in a family our size.

The other building was about

a hundred yards away from our house toward Gurley-southward. There's little to say about it. It was small - not quite as roomy as Mr. Givens' little barber shop. It had one regular-sized door, opening inward and fastened on the inside - couldn't be unfastened from outside. Ours was made to seat two people at one time but ordinarily only one was the average occupant.

When one felt he had need to go to that building, one walked to the door. One considered the possibility there might be someone inside. But there was no way to know this until one pushed gently to open the door. If it would not open, one did not figure it was broke; one knew somebody had beaten one to it. In which case, one never called out asking questions of the person inside. One just waited, if possible. Or otherwise, went somewhere else. It was a very useful place; never a place to say much about. Just a place to go to when there was need to go to the bathroom. Bad chaps, at

Halloween, seemed to get great fun out of pushing these little houses over.

There was one thing mother really wanted: running water in her kitchen. Since Ed wanted Effie to have whatever she wanted, he got busy and had some men erect four posts,

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twenty feet tall, around the well. Then they built a platform up on top of the posts. He had somebody in Huntsville make a galvanized iron tank that would hold five or six hundred gallons and ship it to Gurley on the freight train. Ed sent a wagon to the depot to bring the tank home. Then came the hard part: getting the tank up on top of the poles. But with a gang of neighbors, ropes, poles, and pulleys - and lots of grunting and silent cussing - just before dark, they finally got the thing up there and battened down so it wouldn't blow away. Then in only a few days Ed installed a pump in the well and a gasoline engine with a big, heavy fly-wheel to run the pump. He added pipes to carry water up to the tank, and some more pipes to bring the water back down, to run into mother's kitchen. Of course all the water was cold water, not hot. But mother didn't mind. Her cook-stove had a large tank on it which warmed all the water she ever needed.

Father allowed that if he'd known how little trouble it was to put running water in Effie's kitchen, he would have done it a long time ago.

Taking a bath in those days was no great problem. It did, however, depend on who was being bathed. Kids of low ages

were bathed by their mothers. And those kids liked it immensely. Was the most fun they had. Sloshing water all over themselves, the floor, and their mother. Very little fun was generated for the mother, which was why she taught the child, as soon as possible, to bathe its own little sweet self.

Not all farm work was thought of as toil. Lots of it was fun, and we undertook it with enthusiasm. We kids always looked forward to the coming of the threshing gang. They only stayed for one whole day, but they brought great excitement. We'd watch for their coming every July, or sometimes August, when the wheat was ready to be threshed. It had been cut a few weeks earlier by our own binder machine, which cut down the standing grain. The binder, pulled by two of our mules, mowed the stalks down, gathered them together in armful-sized bundles, then tied the bundle with strong twine into a bow knot. Just think of a machine doing that! A man by the name of McCormick had thought up how it could be done.

Mr. Ed would tell us which day the threshing crew would arrive - always early in the morning.

We would hear them coming a mile or so before they got there by the loud clanking of the large iron wheels of the steam engine on the gravel road. A man would be sitting on a high seat, steering the thing and pulling the string which made the steam whistle scream out every few minutes. That was for the excitement of the kids in the neighborhood. A man always walked close behind the engine, poking in large sticks of fire wood to keep the steam up. He had no trouble walking fast enough to do that. The thing couldn't travel very fast. The engine pulled, in tow, a long, red contraption called a threshing machine. The other two men of the crew sat on top of it, enjoying the ride and watching us kids enjoy their parade.

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chine off the road onto our wheat field. Finding a good place to set up, the crew unhooked the threshing machine from the steam engine. The two machines were placed about forty feet apart, facing each other and lined up so that a long, wide belt could be placed on a large power wheel on the steam engine and a similar-sized power wheel on the threshing machine. The belt made the whole operation work. The steam engine turned the wheel that pulled the belt, which turned a wheel that moved the working parts inside the threshing machine, which threshed the wheat.

Our wagons would start hauling the wheat from where it stood in shocks all over the field. A shock is about a dozen or so bundles put together in such a way as to shed water in case of rain before threshing day.

The bundles were fed into the threshing machine and the grain separated from the rest of the

wheat stalk - the chaff. The machine caused the grains to go into a large bag. When it was full, one of the crew sewed up the top with needle and coarse thread. The chaff was spewed out all over everywhere.

The crew members always had dinner with us at noontime. That itself was always interesting to us kids. And everybody was as hungry as bass fiddles, kids and all. The threshing business makes lots of work for all. And gives all a big appetite.

Of course, we kids would go back to the field with the crew for the rest of the day and watch them undo all the machinery and get their show back on the road.

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Weird, Strange and Wacky News

- After robbing restaurant manager Janice Head at knifepoint and taking her purse, the assailant called to ask her out. Police arrested the thief when he arrived for their date.

- The London Times has reported some serious breaches of health regulations in British hospitals, including the finding of dead cockroaches in the food served at the Royal Free Hospital in Lancashire. The catering manager of the hospital apologized for the problem but explained that the insects posed no health risks, as long as they were cooked to the correct temperature.

- When a British schoolboy was unable to remove a vase that was struck on his head, he was rushed to the hospital on a city bus. According to reports, in an attempt to make the boy look more normal to the other passengers, his mother placed his school cap on top of the vase.

- In Crown Point, Indiana, po-

lice have re-opened the case of a man who died from 32 hammer blows to his head. The cause of death had been ruled a suicide, in spite of the County coroner's opinion that a man simply could not remain conscious long enough to hit himself in the head 32 times.

- Albert Collins, a 66-year-old apartment manager in Kansas City, went to the apartment of a tenant to complain about the noise being made. Collins reported to police that he told the

tenant he had had "an earful" of the excess noise. Replying that he would "fix that", the angry tenant seized Collins by the hair and bit off part of his ear.

- Police in San Mateo, California, arrested a man for stealing a 400-pound safe from a restaurant less than a block from his home. Alert officers simply followed the gouge-marks the safe left in the concrete as he dragged it home.



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The Seven Year Itch

by Tillman Hill

In the early years it was not as easy to keep clean as it is now. You had to heat your water and put it in a number 3 wash tub to take a bath. The men and boys could go to the barber shop and take a bath. There, a bath cost a nickel and then they went up to a dime. But the women had to use the number 3 wash tub.

It was not uncommon for someone to have lice, bedbugs or the 7 year itch. A health nurse would come to school and everybody's head. If you had lice you went home and got rid of them.

We never had lice or bedbugs. I will never forget my mother each morning as she made up the beds, pulling the ticking down on the edges of the mattress and looking for bedbugs.

Today I never go to a zoo and see a mother monkey pick up her little monkey and start looking in his fur for fleas that I don't

think about how my mother used to grab me every time I got close enough for her to grab me and look my head over to make sure I did not have lice.

I said my family never had lice or bed bugs but we all had the 7 year itch. One time in par-

ticular I remember my mother had us to rub down in sulfur and grease. A few years earlier, my uncle had gotten killed in an accident at Lowe Mill. He had 3 kids and one of the teenage girls had come to live with us. She could be hell on wheels sometimes.

Back to the 7 year itch. My mother had just gotten us all cured of the 7 year itch

with sulfur and grease when my cousin threw a mad fit and went to stay with some friends of ours over on Lincoln Avenue. Unfortunately, they had the 7 year itch and my cousin brought it back to us.

The process you went



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through to get rid of it is well remembered. You had to wash all your clothes and the bed sheets. Then everybody took a hot bath and rubbed down in sulfur and grease.

This one particular time, it was cold winter. One by one the water was heated and put in the number 3 wash tub. After one of us would take a bath, the tub was taken to the back yard and dumped. More water was heated and one more of us would take a bath and be rubbed down in sulfur and grease. My daddy was the last to take a bath.

As I said it was very cold so we took our baths in front of the wood cook stove in the kitchen. We had the most beautiful cook stove I have ever seen. It was

white porcelain with a big warmer on top and a water reservoir on the end. It had a beautiful chrome rail in the front of it. We cooked on it up to the 1950s.

When we moved from Barrell Street to Meridian Street we got an electric stove. I don't remember what happened to the wood cook stove but I would give anything to have it today. I can close my eyes and still see every detail about that stove.

Well, back to my daddy getting rid of the itch. My daddy was built just like I am. He had a big chest, big shoulders, good arms but a skinny butt. He was standing up in the tub drying off with a towel, bent over and bumped his butt on that beautiful chrome rail on the front of the stove.

He started to holler and scream and everybody ran into the kitchen. There he stood, buck naked and very mad. Needless to say he gave my cousin hell for bringing the 7 year itch to our home.

Many years later, we had many a laugh over the incidents of that day.



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Memories of The River Bridge

by Georger Swartz

(from a 1931 interview)

As the river bridge (bridge on South Parkway) is nearing completion (1931) and will soon be dedicated, I believe it is fitting that the present day generation should know something of this site's early period of importance to the Tennessee Valley, especially Huntsville. John Ditto, in the fall of 1802, came down the Watauga trail from some point in Virginia, stopped where the present site of Huntsville is today, and built a lean-to pole shack against the river where General Cook's army is shown to have crossed at John Ross ferry, where Chattanooga is today. He was also enroute to the Creek country, touched the Coosa River at Ft. Armstrong, and down the meanders of the river to where he joined Jackson at Littalichee above Ft. Strother on the Coosa in the eastern Mississippi territory, now eastern Alabama.

James White established a salt house at a point where the present bridge heels on the north bank of the river today. This was about 1828. He was called Salt White, because of his salt trade, by the early steamboat men. Capt. Mathew Mohan married Betty Cooper in 1830. She was a daughter of the proprietor of Cooper's tavern, then located at the point today where the Hunts-

ville city hall stands. This property was the first sold by the commissioners of Huntsville and bought by John Reed, who paid \$715 for it. Later a tavern was built and run by the Coopers. Miss Cooper was in Roes Seminary on Roes Mountain, now Monte Sano since given that name as a development project. Capt. Mohan had learned the shoals trade as a flat boat pilot beginning in 1812. He met the girl at the tavern. As these shoals pilots would come up the Watauga

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trail from the point where it branched off the Natchez trail at Colbert's ferry, they would stop at the tavern. After Capt. Mohan married he took his bride to Ditto's Landing, and was warehouseman for James White for several years. After steamboats were built he ran on the river above the shoals. He went on them and was the first flat boat shoals pilot to qualify as a licensed pilot by the steamboat inspection service from Ditto's Landing to Eastport Landing, Miss., at the foot of the shoals. This was in 1852 after Congress passed a bill Aug. 30, 1852 compelling all officers of steam vessels serve three years and qualify to get licensed. Capt. Matt K. Mohan, son of Matthew and Betty Mohan, lives today at Hartselle, Ala., and is 92 years of age. Hence, the above information.

I have known two early and steamboat men who knew John Ditto personally, Capt. Tom Miller, and Jesse Allison. These men told me much about Ditto's Landing in 1807 and 1809, and the first steamboat over the shoals in 1828. She sank on Bird Iron shoals two miles below Ditto's Landing in the early 1830s, was raised and rebuilt into the steamboat Enterprise at John Ditto's boat yard on the river bank below the present ferry boat landing today.

Ditto's Landing road was an important thoroughfare and much traffic was engaged over it, taking all products from Huntsville to the river to be shipped south. Flour was a big item shipped in via Ditto's Landing

road. There was an inspector kept at Ditto's who in those days was called a flour inspector, really was a surveyor of customs in a simple way. Hunter Peel's map of 1825 shows the Ditto's Landing road, which is now called the Whitesburg Pike, since the landing took that name about 1833.

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Allow to set until the soap is cool and hardened.



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A Lady of Dubious Distinction

Clarissa Douglass, a lady of dubious distinction, was up before Squire Figg yesterday on a charge of stealing clothes from Huntsville's merchants.

Miss Douglass' downfall was her penchant for fine clothing which she said, "is necessary for a lady in my changed position," hence she began a monologue describing why each article of the purloined clothing was essential to maintain her position in our fair city's society.

She found her purse would not withstand so heavy an outlay, but the clothes must be had. Recalling the raids of the late war, she decided to undertake one of her own, and if successful, would be clothed as well as the best of them.

Her raid ended on a sour note when she attempted to leave a store with three dresses in an egg basket, and two hats perched daintily upon her head.

She was brought up before the august presence of Justice Figg, who after hearing evidence of the state, bound Clarissa over in a bond of \$100.00. No one appearing to endorse for her, Clarissa went down to the corner of Clinton and Green streets to board until the court is held.

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Personal Reminiscences of Civil War Times

The following article was read May 9, 1911 by Mrs. Lila Greet at a meeting of the Virginia Clay Clopton Chapter, United Daughters of the Confederacy.

Recalling those four years of horror meted out to us by the enemy who were devastating our fair land. I wonder we did not succumb to fear and despair. Meager details of the battles reached us through the Yankees only and were invariably misrepresented. Often we were given statements of numbers slain without the names and were left in horrible suspense for months.

Huntsville was invaded by General Mitchel, April 11, 1862. Many citizens were refuging, having left their homes at the approach of the enemy. Gen. Mitchel's first act of oppression was to arrest twelve prominent citizens, namely: James Donegan, Robert Fearn, Dr. Banister, Rev. Mr. Robertson, Wm. McDonald, Dr. Thomas Fearn, George P. Beirne, Alex Lacy, Samuel Cruse, Governor Chapman, Ed Betts and a man named Lanier, who was a negro trader. After the others were released Mr. McDonwell and the Lanier man were sent to the

penitentiary in Nashville and Judge Edward Betts was kept in jail here for weeks and was tried for his life, being saved by the evidence of a Col. Hickman, a Yankee sympathizer who testified to Judge Betts being an invalid and not at the time in Communication with the Southern Army.

Col. McDonwell's health was terribly impaired while in prison in Nashville. Indeed his death has always been attributed to peas and pumpkin in the pen.

Our Reverend and very dear old friend, Mr. Robinson of the Episcopal Church, who was ever more truthful and polite, enraged the authorities here to such an extent he was not only ordered out of the lines, but his grey hairs were insulted by his being sent across the river in a chicken coup.

The terrors of our situation were added to by the "home-made" Yankees and other camp followers who donned the blue

coats and searched and robbed houses. One of these marauders was a man named Kinch Britz, a native of this country. He was the terror of the community.

He made his appearance one night demanding admittance at the front door of the Scruggs home near town where I was visiting. Not realizing my danger, I threw open the door and defied him to enter telling him I knew he was nobody, but old "Kitchen Bricks" and I would have him arrested. After storming and threatening, he left saying we would see him again, but this was the last of the Kitchen Bricks, for in an attempt to invade the Robinson home a few nights later, he was killed by Doctor Mel Robinson. Every citizen breathed a sigh of relief when they heard of this demon's death.

We in the country always hid our valuables at the approach of the Yankees. Once when they came to our home purposefully to search for fire arms, my aunt

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Mrs. Mills, stuffed all the knives, forks and spoons in her bosom, being a portly lady they projected at all angles. Notwithstanding there being so in evidence, she swore to the Yankees that there were no firearms and not even a silver spoon in the house. This being so absurd the leader winked at his companion and said, "Well, lady you are such a fine old liar, we'll spare your spoons this time."

The climax of my war experience was reached when I went with the men who were deputized by Gen. Forrest to burn a railroad bridge near my home. With my own little brown hand I applied a torch. The burning of this bridge detained the supplies for a whole division of the Yankee Army.

Near the close of the war Miss Carrie Hentz (the governess in my uncles's family) and I were arrested and brought to Huntsville, where she was being tried as a Confederate spy. We were made to walk between two files of mounted soldiers several miles to the railroad station at Madison. We reached Huntsville

about 12 in the night. We were taken to headquarters which were in Mrs. Rice's house now occupied by Mrs. Whitten. All night we listened to the tramp of the guard passing our door. Miss Carrie, being a very timid spirit and dreading very much some impudence of tongue on my part, spent the night imploring me to be silent, asking me questions and in the next breath telling me to shut my mouth.

Twice a day we were carried

to the court house, and subjected to a rigid cross-examination. My appearance in the court room at the Calhoun building caused a ripple of amusement. Being a tall, leggy girl I was arrayed in my diminutive grandmother's black silk gown made with parried waist and full skirt. My puppy having chewed up one of my shoes and one of my grandmother's, my feet were shod in a kid boot and a cloth gaiter. On my head was a Nea-

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politan skyscraper tied under my chin with a huge bow of royal purple.

Regardless of strict orders to hold no communication with the prisoner, I rushed up and embraced my poor old Uncle Elisha, whose hair had turned white and whose clothes had become ragged and unsightly from his long imprisonment in a filthy jail.

Before the end of my Uncle's trial and acquittal, I was stricken with typhoid fever and was removed from Headquarters in the Donegan carriage to my aunt's home, Mrs. Bradley. The Yankee doctor allowed dear old Dr. Sheffey to assist in caring for me during this illness and I am quite sure my only nourishment for six weeks was slippery elm bark which had lain in Cooper's drug store ever since the war had begun. I didn't fatten on this diet but got well enough to go back to my uncle's home.

One of the officers who accompanied me taunted me with our defeat, which he declared was an assured fact.

I contradicted him flatly telling him as sure as there was a nose on his face it was not true.

This man's nose beggars description. I will say briefly that Cyrano De Bergerac's was classical symmetry in comparison.

Having a sense of humor, Mr. Yankee replied, "Just as sure as it is a very defective nose, it is true."

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News From 1911

- Ike Lee Arrested - Deputy Sheriff N. L. Pierce yesterday arrested Ike Lee, of Dallas Village, on a charge of an assault with a knife.

- West Holmes street concrete bridge is nearing completion. Its opening to public travel has already relieved the West Clinton street congestion.

- Wanted - to rent a gentle driving horse for the summer. See H. S. Bradford, 119 Washington St.

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News From The Year 1912

News From Huntsville and Around The World

Titantic Survivor Examined

Passenger says there were not enough life boats

New York, May 2: Senator Smith, of the Titanic Investigating Committee, today examined a first steerage passenger of the Titanic. He swore positively that the ship's officers made an effort to lock the steerage passengers on their own deck following the collision. Steerage passengers who protested were knocked down by the deck steward, but they later smashed the gate.

The witness was Daniel Buckley, aged 21, who emigrated from Cork Ireland, and is now living with relatives in the Bronx.

He declared that the first the steerage passengers knew of the accident was when, the water began rushing into their quarters. They were in bed.

He said: 'We rushed upstairs but could find no life preservers. Not one of us had any. After the gate was smashed, we had as good a chance for escape and rescue as any of the passengers but there were not enough boats.

When we launched the sixth boat, a few of us got in, as there were few women left. An officer ordered us to get out. A woman whom I afterward learned was Mrs. John Jacob Astor put a small shawl over me. I stayed in the bottom of the boat and was saved."

Local News

Huntsville - The Huntsville Chamber of Commerce, headed by J.P Cooney, announced today that it is raising membership dues to \$1 per month.

- Horace Deavers reported shooting a hog thief yesterday near New Market. All persons are warned to be on the look out for a tall light-haired, thin white man dressed in overalls and carrying a healthy load of buck shot in certain parts of his body.

Mayor and Newspaper Editor in Fist Fight

Huntsville - Huntsville Mayor, R.E. Smith, and J. Emory Pierce, editor of the local newspaper, were involved in an altercation yesterday after meeting on the streets and exchanging insults.

The Mayor had taken exception to certain articles recently printed in the newspaper, and after meeting Emory on the sidewalks in front of the courthouse,

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took the opportunity to voice his displeasure.

One witness claimed the mayor made certain remarks about Emory's ancestry, whereas the editor promptly begin thrashing him with a walking cane. The pugilists were separated by on-lookers before either could inflict serious injury.

The mayor fined himself ten dollars in city court the next morning for losing his temper.

Madison County Grand Jury Makes Report

Huntsville - The Madison County Grand Jury investigated county properties before making their annual report.

The Pest House on Athens Pike was found to be in satisfactory condition with only six smallpox patients in residence.

The county Poor House near New Market has 23 inmates living in six double log cabins, with a mess hall and keepers quarters.

Overall, conditions at both facilities were found to be adequate with the Grand Jury's only recommendation being that inmates be required to work.

Income Tax Becomes The Law

Washington, D.C.: Despite fiery opposition from Southern lawmakers, Congress today passed the 16th amendment, making a Federal Income Tax the law of the land.

Lawmakers were finally swayed into voting for the amendment after receiving promises that the new law would only affect the top two percent of the population.

"The average working man," said a New York Senator, "would feel absolutely no effects from the tax. The burden will be put entirely upon the wealthiest two percent who can most afford it."

Leaders from both parties gave assurances that the tax rate would never be increased and that the money raised would be spent entirely on reducing the deficit.

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Tips From Liz

Household Advice, Beauty Tips
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- Raw chicken breasts are easier to cut up if you freeze them, start to thaw them out and use-sharp scissors instead of a knife.

- For a different taste in your hot tea this winter, try using a spoonful of strawberry jelly instead of the sugar, or add a slice of lemon that has been studded with a couple of whole cloves.

- If your kid's shoelaces always come undone, try dampening them before tying.

- If you are going to be out and have no way to brush your teeth after eating, carry some mint tea bags with you to nibble on - they will make your breath smell sweet.

- For a deep-cleaning mask, try stroking on some Milk of Magnesia, leave it on for 10 minutes, but avoid the eye area. Rinse with warm water.

- Remove paper that is glued onto wood surfaces by rubbing on some olive oil.

- When you wake up in the middle of the night with a bad leg cramp, immediately flex foot or feet upward towards your head.

- If your windshield wipers smear, clean the windshield and

the wiper blades with rubbing alcohol.

- Avoid storing different cakes, cookies or bread in the same container - they affect each other and will get stale much faster.

- Be sure and store your nuts in the fridge or freezer - often times they will get rancid if stored at room temperature:

- If you love to steam vegetables, like I do, pour the leftover liquid in the bottom of your pan into containers and freeze. That way, when you are making soup or need vegetable broth, you will have it ready.

- If the electricity in your office makes your skirts or dresses cling, just go the bathroom and wet your hands at the sink - rub your legs lightly with the water and you will see no more cling.

- If your belts are all in a mess in your closet, simply buy some of the common-cup hooks, screw them into the bottom of a wooden pants or coat hanger, and put your belts on the hooks.

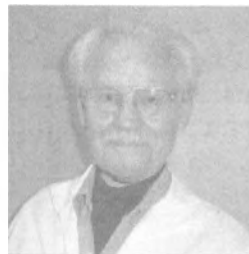
Whiskey

from 1861 newspaper

Old Joe Commons has been a great smuggler in his day; and has been very fortunate in eluding detection - he white washed everything over so well that few were suspicious of him.

Officer Palmer, however, caught him at his tricks, selling whiskey without license and Joe was compelled to pay \$35 plus costs to meet the demands of His Honor Mayor Davis.

Another Negro named Long, who lived near Pinhook Bridge, was up for a like offense and was allowed to contribute the same amount to the city finances.



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Memories of Brahan Spring

By Phillip Johnson

"The Spring" was what we Village boys called it when we referred to Brahan Spring. I recall that the mill company owned and maintained the spring. A single cinder-covered lane at the end of Ivy Avenue led up to the spring. Automobile traffic was discouraged by a cattle guard and locked field gate. A wayside entrance was constructed for the convenience of the villagers who wanted to pasture their cows, and a barbed wire fence enclosed the pasture that surrounded the spring. Another gate and fence separated the pasture from the cultivated field of corn, cotton and soybeans. A swamp laurel oak lowland lay just north of the spring, which gushed out from under a hill and ran off in a stream before entering Huntsville Spring Branch about a mile to the south.

The mill had placed a concrete enclosure using railroad cross ties for the spillway. An earthen dam was built across the lowlands encompassing the run-

off branch. A six foot chain link fence complete with barbed wire overhang had recently been constructed to encroach intruders like ourselves.

Some weeks during the summer months the mill would open the gates for fishing and picnicking. We would simply slide under an eroded washout as various locations around the fence. We caught brim, bluegill and shellcracker if we were lucky - we all loved to fish back then.

There was lots of algae cov-

ering the top of the water, which posed an obstacle for us boys. Wayne Quick concocted a technique by using a long cane pole, twine and a hook. We would tie the twine to the pole, then a hook to the other end of the twine, then finally apply a fat red worm to the hook. We would loft the pole into the air, slinging the line out and over the algae. We caught so many dark, fat brim this way, I lost count. We also had some good times frog gigging around the edges of the spring.

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Some of the older guys who were residents of the village fished at the spring quite often. Abe Daniel and Pete Hammond were two that come to mind. Abe was a member of a very large family, whose father died when he was just a teenager. He had to quit school and go to work to help support his family. He was a loom fixer in the mill, and told me how he would get up every morning for work and take cold biscuits and streak of lean for lunch. A shelf was designated as the location for storing lunches. Abe made use of the same sack for several days, causing the sack to become quite greasy. One day while on his lunch break he noticed a clean brown sack. He thought he would take this one and leave his greasy one but when he looked inside the sack all he found was a hammer and two hickory nuts.

I remember that pigeons were really a nuisance when they roosted under the overhang of the mill. Excrement from the birds caused flies and insects to swarm the window sills and then into the mill room work area itself. The mill management tried all kinds of ways to get rid of them, but didn't have much luck.

I was quite a hunter back

then and I remember how there was a mud flat built up at the spring, caused by the buckbeans that sprouted up there. Wilson snipe frequented the mud flats, flying at low altitudes across the water before coming to a running halt on the flat. We used to hide in the buck bushes waiting for as many as ten of the fast-flying game birds to pass within shooting distance of our hiding place. I remember that Buddy Collett could sit motionless for long pe-

riods of time while we waited for the northern shoveler ducks to fly over. We found so many Indian artifacts in that area near the mud flat - I figured there must have been some Indian homes there at one time.

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My Role Models

by Malcolm W. Miller

In a previous story I stated that my role models in growing up were not celebrities or great athletes who often disappoint us but that my role models growing up were my six older brothers who set examples that were beyond my ability to live up to. In the last story I talked about my oldest brother, Robert, who had just passed away. This time I want to write about my second eldest brother, Joe.

Joe was born Joseph Houston Miller on a farm known as the Spragins place on what is now known as the Fagan Springs area of Huntsville. As was his older bother before him, his life consisted of hard work and hard

living on the farm.

In the late 1930's like so many young men of that day Joe joined the U.S. Army, however he was never happy being away from the farm. At that time you could buy your way out of the military and he saved up his small monthly salary until he had enough money to buy his way out and get back to the farm. He spent almost all of his life in the Ryland community, moving there as a small boy. The only time he was away from Ryland was the one year he was in the army and the two years he lived in the Harvest community. At his funeral the minister, Charles McCay, aptly described him as Mr. Ryland.

In 1938 his good friend Jim Ben Gossett dared him to ask a young lady, Elsie Mefford, to let him walk her home from church as that was the common way of courting in those days since hardly anyone had a car. That

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dare caused the beginning of a relationship that lasted over 50 years until Joe's death on February 20, 1991.

Joe was a man who developed deep and lifelong friendships, such as Bill Mitchell, Jim Barnett, Dawson Taylor, Ulan Golden, Finas Parton and of course Clyde Gossett, the longest and one they passed down to their sons. Clyde Gossett and Joe became friends as little boys, they were as close as twins. They grew up together during the great depression. Their families were both dirt poor share croppers. Bill Mitchell and Finas Parton are the only ones of these friends still living.

Joe had a nickname for everybody, anybody he didn't give a nickname to was somebody he didn't like. His nickname for me in public was 'Catmess', in private you can imagine what it was. The nickname he was given by his friends was 'Rock'. Clyde Gossett's nickname was 'Ox', so together as friends they were Rock and Ox. He loved children more than anybody I ever saw. He loved his family including all of his brothers and their families.

Joe did the maintenance work for Shiloh church free for about 40 years. He looked after Ryland cemetery free the same period of time; cutting the grass, locating graves for people, (sometimes strangers) who had family or friends buried there, dug graves and anything else that had to be done. He knew more about the cemetery than anybody.

Joe helped everybody around Ryland who needed emergency repair work done, some outside of Ryland, usually without charge; pay would be offered but he wouldn't take it. After the tornado that blew his house away on April 3, 1974, he was given hundreds of dollars by an untold number of people who would say

things like, he helped me many times and wouldn't take a dime, now I have a chance to pay him back a little.

People said Joe was a great basketball player. I have heard people who played with him say he would carry people up while making a shot on both arms and score and it was not safe for members of either team to be close to him under the goal.

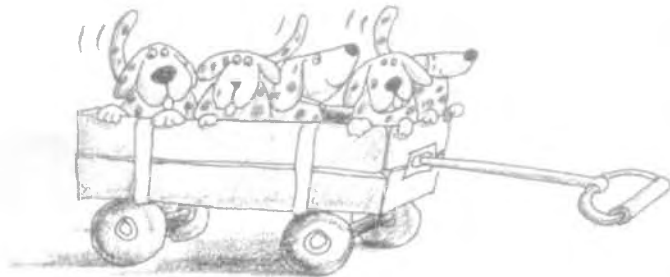
Joe and Elsie raised three fine sons, Austin, Berns and Gregory, all who finished college. To me this is a tribute to the life that he and Elsie lived. One thing will always remain in my memory that the minister Charles McCay said at Joe's funeral, 'If Joe Miller don't make it to heaven I don't have a chance.'

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Memories

by Aunt Eunice

When I was a young girl, we lived on a dirt road between New Hope and Owens Cross Roads. Our home was a log cabin, full of holes between the logs where the chinking had fallen out. I still remember how cold and drafty it was, and being able to look between the cracks and see the stars at night.

I was the middle child of twelve, six brothers and five sisters, and since there were kids younger than me, I had to take care of them to help my mother. With that many children the old house must have been packed full, but I don't remember it that way. The boys all slept in the loft, while the girls all slept downstairs. It was nice because sometimes we could feel the heat from the stove in the kitchen.

As soon as we were old enough able to walk, we would work in the fields, picking cotton. People had large families back then and everybody was expected to work from the time they could walk - either to take care of the other kids or to work in the fields. I remember my mama bringing our baby brother

to the field, and putting him on a blanket while the rest of us picked cotton all day.

When we weren't working in the fields, taking care of the animals or working in the house, we went to school. I remember it was a small frame schoolhouse. In the fall we got out of school for several weeks to help pick cotton. They called it a "Cotton vacation," but believe me - it wasn't no vacation. There were

very few times of leisure. For fun we'd sometimes walk up and down the road near our home, on Sundays, and we'd always be singing songs. I remember the boys would follow after us girls, many a time.


My daddy, a preacher, was very strict in raising us. We were not allowed to listen to music unless it was religious and us girls were not allowed to wear makeup or date. Daddy wouldn't

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put up with boys coming round the house trying to court us.

We didn't ever go shopping, like kids do nowadays. We had a wagon with horses and if we ever went to town, that's how we went. Years later Daddy bought a black Chevy. I think I was 13 or so at the time, and never thought he'd get it, but he did.

We hardly ever got store bought clothes. When we went shopping Mama would buy flour in large cotton sacks printed with colorful patterns. Mama would let us pick the patterns we wanted. After the flour was used up Mama would make dresses and shirts out of the material. Almost everyone who lived in the country did the same thing.

My mother was the sweetest and most warmhearted lady anyone knew. I wonder how many people today could raise twelve kids, work all day in the fields and then go home and cook supper on a wood stove. That was my Mama's life but she never complained. She always had time to hug people, that's probably where I got it from. I can't wait to see her again one day.

What was amazing to me is that no matter how poor we were back then, there was always food on the table for people who were worse off than we were, to stop by and eat. It didn't matter if they were just acquaintances, or friends, everyone was welcome at Mama's table.

I remember Mama didn't measure ingredients or ever use a cookbook, just rolled out dough that she made by just reaching into the bags of flour and throwing it into a bowl and mixing with water or milk. Mama had a really good cold remedy that she swore by - she would mix honey, lemon juice, Wild Turkey and raisins. Those raisins were pretty strong after a couple of weeks but it sure got rid of a cold!



Colored Men Drafted

From 1917 Huntsville newspaper

The local draft board is preparing to send one hundred colored men to army training camps next Sunday. Fifty-nine Negro boys were sent away last Saturday. There has been much clamor among the Colored population since several of their number returned from training camps sporting new uniforms and wallets of greenbacks.

It is not yet clear as to what duty the colored soldiers will perform although there has been much speculation they may be used in the actual fighting in Europe if needed.

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News From New Market

(Editor's Note: In the late 1800s, New Market was a bustling town second only to Huntsville in size in Madison County. Mrs. S.H. Hambrick, whose family had connections with early New Market, in 1968 found a bundle of 17 issues of the New Market Enterprise from 1888 and 1889 in the attic of her home near Manchester, Tenn. Following is the third of a series of articles based on the contents of those eight-page weekly tabloid newspapers.)

by Waylon Smithey

Vol. I, No. 4, July 14, 1888

In Page 1 Local Briefs:

"We regret to learn that our old and esteemed citizen, Mr. W.F. Hereford, was severely bitten on the calf of his leg a few days ago by his viscous jack."

G.L. Terry sent in the largest peach of the season. It measured 11 inches around and weighed 11 ounces.

"Mr. Bradford Smithey, of Hurricane, was here Tuesday and reports crops never better and in finer condition. Large crops of oats and wheat have been harvested and are now in good condition in shock awaiting thresher."

"We regret to hear of the illness of our oldest citizen, Mr. Isaac Cook. Mr. Cook celebrated the 80th anniversary of his birthday last Tuesday."

"Mr. Wm. A. Cochran, of this place, left on the 7'th inst., on a visit to relatives at Larkinsville, Ala. We wish him a rich, rare and racy time."

"Mr. Bradford Hill, an old ex-Confederate member of Col. Russell's regiment, fourth Alabama cavalry, was in town a few

days ago with a large lot of cedar. He owns a valuable lot of cedar and farm lands in the mountains, from which he derives a good living. Mr. Hill accepted the inevitable results of the war, like all good and true soldiers, and has ever since labored for the comfort and welfare of his family and the prosperity of his county, and now subscribes for the Enterprise."

Merchant J.W. Cochran advertised for 100 bushels of peach seeds and 10,000 pounds of dried peaches and apples. The editor added this note, "The demand for dried fruits is practically unlimited in the United States, besides statistics show

that many thousand pounds are annually exported to foreign countries, particularly to England, with whom we exchange many hundred million dollars' worth of products annually. We therefore earnestly request our citizens to utilize every peach and apple of this season's growth. Make full and ample preparations for drying them all by beginning now. We can assure them that their entire surplus can be sold at good and remunerative prices for all their labor and outlay."

Mention also was made of the fact that huckleberries were coming into the market in large quantities. "Mrs. Sharp, of Mint Spring, has marketed 15 or 20 gallons this season. We regret to learn of the failure of the mountain crop of this berry, which will make the supply short. Many



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dollars were added to the family revenue by this crops last year."

Folks were reminded on Page 1 that "the ladies of the Baptist church will serve ice cream today in the front yard of the Hambrick House."

The editor chastised the citizens of New Market for losing a contract to their nearby neighbors in Tennessee:

"Mr. J.N. Martin, of Huntland, Tenn., has a contract for delivering 1,300 cedar poles to the N.C. & St. L.R.R, at the point. We regret that our own people do not reap all the advantages of our railroad facilities. Let us wake up and gather into our own pockets these shekels that of right belong to us. Another contract has been awarded under our nose. It requires eternal vigilance to keep ourselves abreast of these times." Following is the next installment of the History of New Market column:

"Just two miles, in the northwest direction from New Market, a village was established called Hillsboro, containing a few houses and two stores. One was kept by Esquire John Angel, who

was a merchant and justice of the peace. It is still marked on the old maps.

"New Market, however, superseded Hillsboro, and in 1832 the stores were closed up. At this date there were four stores: Patrick & Staples, W.W. Humphries, William D. Hayter, Holding & Echols, and a saloon kept by Peter Turner, a Scotchman. Then Alfred and Albert Johnson, twin brothers, opened a store; then John Ford and Absalom Brown, then Pulley & Criner. Joseph Brown was the tailor, who fashioned the dress coats for the citizens, swallow-tails, with brass-buttons, rolling collar made very stiff and hard; the broad-cloth was imported and first-rate goods; pants were made with a small flap before, elaborately stitched, resembling a trap-door.

"Ezekiel Sluder was the saddle and harness maker; Jesse Randolph, mill-wright; all his time was employed in keeping up Miller's Meals' and

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Shotwell's mills. Jesse Lilly had a wool-carding machine, and made the spinners of thread, taking the cotton, ginning and carding and spinning the thread in one operation. Negro women seldom worked in the field; they made cloth and carpets. The old-fashioned spinning-wheel was heard from sunrise to sunset, with its musical boom filling the air with thrift and profit to the busy household, keeping time to the twittering martins who built their nests in large gourds suspended to a pole.

"These were happy days. Every one kept open house and were profusely hospitable."

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*Plant green beans on Good Friday.

*Plant vegetables that grow underground (potatoes, carrots, etc.) in the dark of the moon.

*Vegetables that grow above the ground should be planted in the light of the moon.

*Collect the first snow of March to take the sting out of burns and other skin problems.

*When chimney smoke goes to the ground, bad weather will follow.

*A ring around the moon means that rain will come in three days.



A Sincere Man

A customer had stopped in one of Huntsville's local beverage stores in order to purchase some wine.

Being rather a talkative person, the customer inquired of the cashier, "What would you do if a

person started away, forgetting his change?"

Replied the cashier, very sincerely, "Why, that's easy. I would tap sharply on the counter with a dollar bill!"

"My husband says I never listen to him. At least, that's what I think he said."

Jan Thomas

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Six Dead Husbands

Murder or Coincidence?

The mysterious happenings that took place in a home near Hazel Green may have been accidental, or may have been violently purposeful. The only sign left of Elizabeth's six husbands was an old hat rack upon which hung six hats - one for each. For some curious reason known only to her, she kept the hat rack in the foyer of her home, in plain view, perhaps as a morbid reminder, or maybe as a warning to the next unfortunate lover.

The antebellum home, recently burned to the ground, was built on the site of an Indian mound about a mile east of Hazel Green. The original log cabin was erected in 1817 in the heart of a 500-acre plantation by Alexander Jeffries, an early Madison County settler. He was an older man, who met and immediately became infatuated with the young Elizabeth.

They married in 1837, and unfortunately for him, Mr. Jeffries died the same year. By this time Elizabeth had experience burying husbands. As a young girl she had met and married in short succession. Her first husband was Mr. Gibbons. They were married for only a couple of months when he died suddenly, and mysteriously. Shortly afterwards, she set her sights on Mr. Flannigan, whom

she also married. Mr. Flannigan lasted only three months before he, too, died of unexplained circumstances. He was in his grave before the neighbors were even informed of the "tragedy".

By this time the young widow was well on her way to becoming a wealthy landowner in Madison County. Not wishing to marry beneath her new-found status in life, she decided to try her hand at politics. Her next husband was Robert A. High, from Limestone County, who was a State Legis-

lator for the state of Alabama. He probably spent much time away from home, as it was almost two years before he, too, expired suddenly and mysteriously at their home.

Having tried politics and plantation life, Elizabeth decided

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to next marry a merchant. Absalom Brown was a wealthy merchant from New Market. After spending most of his fortune on his new wife, he died as well. This came as a shock to everyone, as Mr. Brown was a very healthy and virile man. The unknown malady that he was stricken with caused his body to swell so much that it was necessary to bury him immediately after his death. None of the neighbors ever saw the body.

Not believing in long spells of mourning, Miss Elizabeth Flannigan Gibbons Jeffries High Brown roused herself out of her depression long enough to marry Willis Routt, her sixth husband. Amazingly, he died just like the others in a short time.

At about this same time Elizabeth, or Mrs. Routt, became involved in a controversy with a neighbor, Abner Tate, over loose live-stock and other matters. Tate was completely blind to her beauty, which infuriated her, and had been observing the home and its occupants for many years. He openly charged her with murder. He backed up his suspicions with the hat rack in the parlor that was in open sight, on which hung 6 old hats - the blatant proof of Tate's accusations.

Maybe Abner Tate should have been forewarned of crossing the notorious widow, for shortly afterwards he was wounded by a shotgun blast. Though proof was lacking, gossip had it that Mrs. Routt had hired one of Tate's slaves to do him in. The slave, not having the courage to do the dirty deed himself, in turn hired another man, who allegedly pulled the trigger. Mr. Tate, shortly afterwards, sold all of his slaves.

By this time Tate was furious with his neighbor and determined to see justice done.

When he went to the authorities he was informed that "nothing could be done unless you can find some evidence." Maybe all of her husbands did die natural deaths. Maybe the slave did shoot you by accident. Maybe it's just all coincidence. There's nothing we can do."

Beside himself with rage, Tate was determined that his neighbor would not get away with her dastardly deeds. He began writing a book in which he described the mysterious happenings at the antebellum home. He

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wrote about how the succession of husbands made her prosperous and wealthy and how she would treat them all with disdain, once she had captured them. He noted how the intervals between weddings and deaths became shorter and shorter, as she acquired "more experience and practice."

When the book was published, it created a scandalous sensation in Madison County. Half of the county believed she was guilty, while the other half swore to her innocence. Regardless of opinion, the book was the major topic of discussion any place that people gathered.

Needless to say, the merry widow was not a pleasant lady to be around when she heard news of the book. She immediately drove her buggy into Huntsville where she consulted an attorney and brought charges against Abner Tate for defamation of character.

When the case finally came to trial late that fall, the courtroom was packed. The courtroom became a battleground, with plaintiff and defendant hurling insult after insult at each other. Accusations followed from each of the attorneys, while the judge rapped repeatedly for order.

The crowd of onlookers became so large that it overflowed onto the courthouse grounds. It was said a tavern in town was taking bets as to how the trial would end.

The judge, after listening to

as much as he could stand, continued the case, hoping both parties would calm down enough to be rational. A short while later Mrs. Routt dropped the charges.

Even today, the debate goes on in Madison County. Why did she drop the charges? Was it because she was tired of constantly being the topic of gossip, or was she worried about some new information that Tate's attorney had recently uncovered? Shortly afterwards Mrs. Routt and her son moved to Mississippi. She never again returned to Madison

County. No one knows why she moved, but the day of her departure, witnesses swear that they saw her in a carpenter's shop, getting a seventh peg added to her hat rack.

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Civil War News From Jackson County

Huntsville Daily Confederate,
Feb. 13, 1864

From Jackson County, Alabama. Recent advises 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 Lieutenant,) 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 stick, and only desisted when her daughter, 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.

One of the parties from whom we get our information, represents that he was under arrest at Stevenson and had an opportunity of learning the sentiments of Sherman's Corps on the question of re-enlistment, and they, generally, declared that they would not re-enlist. Another said he did not believe over ten men would sign the enlistment papers again.




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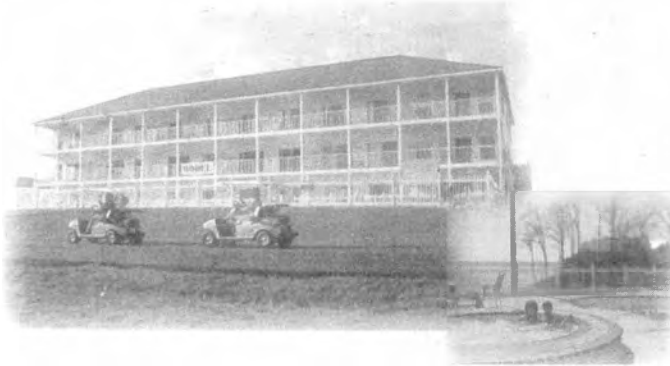
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