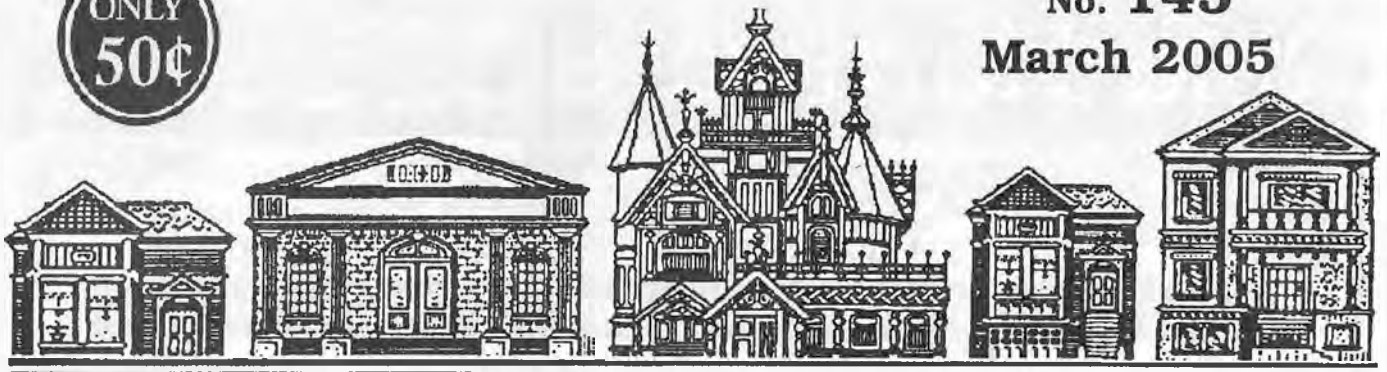


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March 2005



# Old Huntsville

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## Terror in Paradise

People were wandering around, dazed by what they had just been through. I joined a group of men searching the rubble for people still alive but there were only bodies. I recovered the body of a small baby from a mud-filled ditch and wrapped it in a sheet. A European, a vacationer, saw me with the small bundle in my arms and anxiously approached me. He didn't say anything; he didn't have to. The look on his face told everything.

**Also in this issue: "Violence in the Streets"**

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# Old Timer's Sale

# Terror in Paradise

by Glenn Watson

I leaned back in the seat and relaxed as the plane took off from the Huntsville airport. I had been looking forward to a vacation. Business, the city council and the press of the Christmas social season had kept me running almost constantly for the past month. Even during the few quiet moments when I was alone it seemed as if the phone would ring continuously

If there was a down side, it was the fact that I would be spending Christmas away from my family. I made a mental note to call them on Christmas morning and to buy them something really special in Phuket.

I first visited Phuket, Thailand about five years ago. A good friend, from the military, had invited me to go with him and I immediately fell in love with the place. The beaches, with the fine white sand, blue-green water and the swaying palm trees, were something you would only expect to see in a travel documentary. A beautiful golf course was nearby and the water was perfect for scuba diving. The most beautiful thing, however, were the people.

Kind, polite and always with a smile. Willing to take time to help anyone who was having trouble with the language or currency. Even the cab drivers and hotel maids seemed to take a genuine interest in you.

It didn't take much persuasion for me to buy a vacation condo on Kamala beach, about five miles from Patong Beach in Phuket.

Christmas day was spent taking it easy, playing a round of golf and having dinner with friends. I still had jet lag so after calling my family to wish them Merry Christmas, I turned in.

The next morning I had just finished taking a shower and was having breakfast with friends when I heard a lot of yelling coming from the office below the nearby restaurant. Curious, I went down to see what was happening and found everyone gathered around a television. They were highly excited and kept repeating a word I had never heard before. Finally someone showed me a translation book with the Thai word and next to it was the word earthquake. At about the same time we began to feel the tremors. They weren't strong enough to actually cause any damage by themselves but I remember the eerie sight of a door moving up and down, swaying back and forth, as if it had a life of its own.

At about 9:45 I returned to my room on the first floor and was



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putting away my golf clubs when I heard more yelling coming from the area in front of the complex. Although I didn't know it at the time, a few hundred yards from me, John Chroston, a biology teacher from England, was standing on the beach watching the ocean go out. Chroston had studied geology while in college and realized we were about to experience a tsunami. Dropping all inhibitions, he turned and ran toward his wife shouting for her to run. Other people, small children, who were running toward the beach looked at him curiously but ignored his shouted warnings.

Other people had gathered in front of the condos and were watching the ocean. What was normally a beautiful beach with waves gently lapping the shore was now a vast expanse of sand and seaweed, left as the water rushed out to sea. Boats that had been rocking peacefully alongside their moorings only moments before were now stranded as the ocean raced out.

I had just left my room and was walking toward where the people were standing when I

heard the noise. At first it was a low, soothing sound, like a faucet in a bathroom running but then almost immediately the sound became a roar. As the noise got louder I could feel the ground and the buildings begin to tremble.

I started running but the first wave caught me and knocked me down. Before I could get up another huge wave caught me and threw me like a rag doll against a staircase leading to the second floor. Somehow I managed to grab hold of a metal staircase railing. I tried to pull myself up to safety but it was impossible. My body was being pulled and yanked in every direction by the swirling water as I struggled to breathe.

What had been a postcard-perfect resort only seconds earlier was now a deadly nightmare. Automobiles and buildings were being picked up and crushed like match sticks. Beach furniture, building materials and dead bodies were mixed together as the waves picked up everything in their path and hurled them with vicious fury inland, crushing everything in its way.

I fought desperately to pull myself up the staircase and out of the water but the turbulent waves kept dragging me under. Every few seconds a wave would throw my head out of the water for an instant and I would manage to grab a quick breath before being sucked back under the wa-

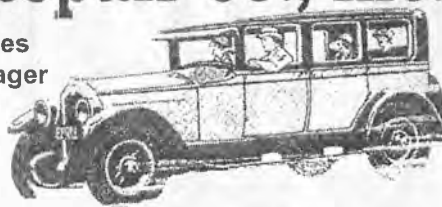
**Now that I'm older, I've learned that the only difference between a rut and a grave is the depth.**

*Joe Thompson, Arab*

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ter again.

I was being pummeled by things thrown by the waves. A beach chair caught me on the back, almost making me lose my grip on the railing. Something else hit me in the face. I remember the horrible screaming of people near me as they were caught in the muddy waves and swept away.

At one point I didn't think I would be able to hold on any longer. I saw a mother and child caught in the rushing water and being swept towards me. I managed to grab the child by his arm and struggled to pull them close to me. The swirling water kept trying to rip him away from me, tossing both of us back and forth against the railing.

I watched helplessly as the mother lost her grip on her child and was swept away by the force of the waves. She looked toward me; I don't know if she was looking at me or her son. It was only for a second but I will see her face for the rest of my life. I believe she knew her son would live and the look on her face was almost as if she was begging me, "You have him, please hold onto him!"

I wanted to help her but I couldn't.

I believe that young boy saved my life. I was at the end of my

**"Now I have that dreaded Furniture Disease - when your chest falls into your drawers!"**

*Liz Jacobs*

strength but, somehow, knowing I was fighting for him too gave me the power to hold on.

The next few minutes were a blur. I saw a body being swept by me face down. The water was thick with mud, getting into my eyes and making it difficult to see. I tried to push the boy above the water so he could breath. I began to swallow sea water and mud. I wondered if I would ever see my grandchildren again.

I don't know how long it lasted. I read later it was only a matter of about 20 minutes. It felt like hours.

I heard voices above me, on the stair steps. Two men were trying to reach for us. I told them to get the boy first because I knew they couldn't hold the weight of both of us. Seconds later they came back and pulled me from the water. I laid on the staircase for a while spitting salt water and mud, trying to breath again. My back and legs were battered and bruised and my body was caked with mud. My clothes were torn and bloody. My nose was broken and still bleeding but somehow all that seemed very trivial.

Normally I would have sought a doctor to get checked out but as I began to understand the impact of that devastation, I realized that what I had suffered was nothing compared to the misery all around me. What had once been Paradise was no more. Minutes earlier it had been a thriving resort. Now, the people, the homes, the businesses and even

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many of the roads were gone.

People were wandering around, dazed by what they had just been through. Survivors began to search for loved ones while others began the grim task of recovering bodies. I joined a group of men searching the rubble for people still alive but there were only bodies. Someone had brought bed sheets from a nearby hotel and we wrapped the bodies in them, trying to give them the final respect they deserved. I recovered the body of a small baby from a mud-filled ditch and wrapped it in a sheet. A European, a vacationer, saw me with the bundle in my arms and anxiously approached me. He didn't say anything; he didn't have to. The look on his face told everything.

I told him it was a Thai baby. His face was a mixture of relief and despair as he struggled with the emotions of not knowing what had happened to his baby.

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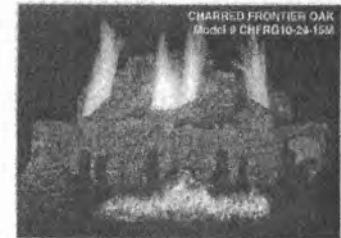
There was a large field nearby littered by cars and trucks that had been caught in the waves. We could see bodies in some of the cars. Some of us started to go there to help but were warned not to. The field was full of King Cobra snakes, driven from their dens by the flooding.

Someone appeared on the beach with a bull horn, shouting for us to evacuate; another tidal wave was about to hit. People immediately stopped what they were doing and began running for the nearby hills. I was with Mel, a friend of mine, and we jumped in his truck and raced toward higher ground. The cars, trucks and motorcycles that were still running jammed the road, blowing their horns, trying desperately, like us, to reach higher ground.

There were hundreds, maybe thousands, of people clinging to the safety of the hill side. The deathly quiet was almost surreal as people stood silently watching the ocean, not knowing what to expect. Many people had tears in their eyes, many were just in shock. Others wandered hopelessly from group to group searching for family and friends.

The warning proved to be a false alarm; the first of many that would occur that day, but many people still refused to leave the safety of the hill side. I decided to go to my condo to see if anything was left. The place was a total

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wreck, furniture smashed, doors caved in and mud everywhere. Luckily, I had put my passport in a safe that just happened to be water tight. Everything else was gone.

I found six bottles of bottled water and used them to wash the blood off my face. There was no food. I had two bottles of warm beer for dinner. Afterwards, I stood in what used to be a street looking at the place I had grown to love. I had been in the military, had been a policeman and had witnessed the horrible destruction of a tornado in Huntsville. Nothing in my life, however, had prepared me for the utter devastation that surrounded me. I felt like crying but tears would not come.

I have never been a deeply religious person but standing on that street that day I felt as if I had been given a second chance.

I spent the night on a lawn chair. I was lucky. Other people spent the night wandering through the ruins, with no other place to go. Off in the distance I could see the flickering lights of the camp fires in the nearby hills

where people still huddled, afraid to come down. It would have been a beautiful night had it not been so horrible.

The next morning was less chaotic but, if possible, even more horrifying. It was like waking from a terrifying nightmare, only to find it wasn't a dream - it was real. I tried to help wherever possible but the sheer magnitude of the disaster was overwhelming. There was no food, water, electricity or sewage and the authorities were telling everyone who could leave to do so. They needed young people, professional rescue people, not older tourists like me who would just be in the way.

A friend of mine owned a restaurant and lounge on the beach. It had been wiped out. A heavy pool table in one of the rooms had been thrown upside down by the waves as if it was a mere toy. I spent part of the morning helping him recover the business' computers from the muddy wreckage. They were ruined but he was driven to do something, anything, to start the process of rebuilding. That afternoon I managed to get a ride to the airport. I wasn't sure if it was still operating; someone told me the tidal wave had hit it too. Fortunately, the water had receded by the time I got there and they were allowing a few flights to land and take off. Hundreds of

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people were milling around the small terminal, waiting for a flight to anywhere that would take them away from the horrors they had just been through.

Somehow I got lucky. I approached an airline desk and told them that I had lost my tickets and all I had was my United States passport. Apparently there was just one seat left on a flight that was about to depart and, without asking any questions, they ushered me through the gate and put me on the plane.

As the plane took off images kept flashing through my mind, images I will never forget. Grief-stricken parents searching for missing children. Fires flickering on the hillsides. An old man cleaning the sidewalk in front of an empty lot that had once been his home. A woman begging me with her eyes to save her son.

Perhaps the strangest sight was something I did not see. Despite the total carnage of the tidal wave there were no dead animals. It was almost as if some strange sense we can't understand had given the animals enough warning to flee.

A few hours later I was in

Bangkok where I was able to purchase some clothes and clean up. The airport had computers set up where people could contact their families by email. I managed to send a message to my family letting them know I was safe. It was a short message; there were hundreds of people in line behind me waiting to do the same thing.

I don't think the brutal reality of what I had seen really hit me until after I returned home to Huntsville. The next morning I went to Gibson's, on South Parkway, for breakfast. A friend whom I had seen the week before, in the same restaurant, came up to me and, after wishing me a Happy New Year, asked me how I had spent Christmas.

I started to reply, but then I stopped. I didn't know where to begin or what to say.

I am not a writer. If I were, I

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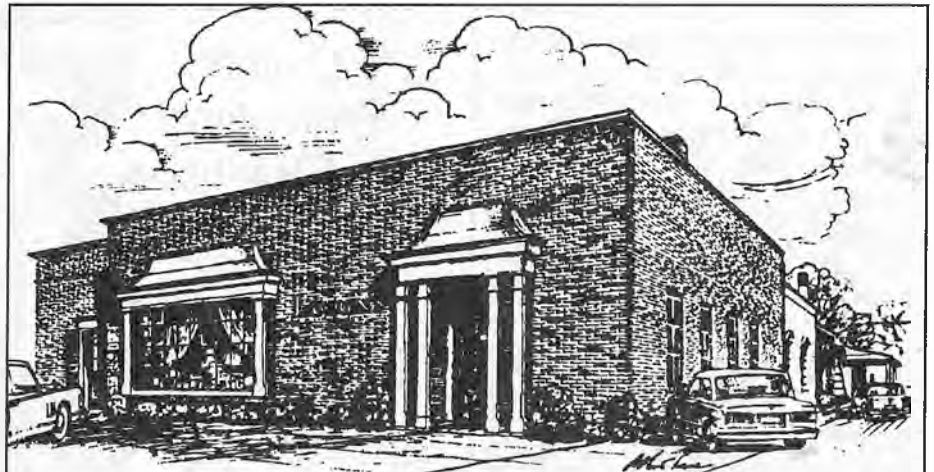
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would be able to truly describe what I saw and felt. As it is, I have to rely on words like devastation, horror and terrifying, none of which can even begin to tell what happened to a small town on the coast of Thailand the day after Christmas.

A disaster of that magnitude leaves a mark on everyone who lives through it. I have learned that many things I once considered important are no longer so. I've realized how precious my friends and my family are.

I've also learned how short, and uncertain, this life on earth can be.



## Phuket Kamala Relief Fund

Glenn Watson, in conjunction with the Huntsville Rotary Club and the Tonkah, Thailand Rotary Club has organized a relief fund to help the citizens of Phuket, one of the hardest hit areas by the tsunami. One hundred per cent of the donations go directly to those in need with nothing taken out for overhead.

If you would like to help please send your checks to "Phuket Kamala Relief Fund, C/O The Colonial Bank, 305 Church Street, Huntsville, Al 35801.

For further information contact [glenn.watson@hsvcity.com](mailto:glenn.watson@hsvcity.com)

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## In Court For Appearing With Lewd Woman

*from 1911 paper*

Harvey Gibson was arrested last night by the police on a charge of appearing in public with a woman of bad character. He was fined in Mayor Smith's court this morning.

Willie Burkley, a boy from Tullahoma, Tenn. claims he came to the city with Gibson and was deserted by him. He had no money and no place to go and applied to the police for aid. His people in Tullahoma were notified and they asked the police to keep the boy until they could send for him.



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# The Freedman's Bureau

by General E.C. Betts

Written in 1909

The Freedman's Bureau, ostensibly a labor and employment bureau, was established at Huntsville some time during the early part of 1865. At first these bureaus were conducted by the federal military authorities, but after the war their management was entrusted to "loyal Union men," or "Carpetbaggers." These institutions, if properly conducted, might have been of inestimable worth to the nation as a whole, serving in a large measure to re-adjust the shattered economic conditions at the South.

The veteran who wore the gray, after Lee's surrender, re-

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

The former slaves, dazed and bewildered as they were by sudden emancipation from work and the necessity therefor as a means of support, deserted the plantation and flocked to the bureau or refugee camps; where they received without charge from the government, food, clothing, shelter and medical attention from which the mortality was great. Thus supported, the negro became a prey to all sorts of vagaries. They were led to believe that when the war was over each would receive, at the hands of the federal government "forty acres and a mule," the property of the former master. Even to this day,

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there may, in rare instances, be found an old ex-slave who is still holding to the dream that this dispensation is yet to come.

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

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

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

Labor could only be employed under the supervision of the bureau. Wage scales were established and enforced by the federal authorities. Such a scale was put in force at Huntsville in 1864 by the "Freedman's Home Colony":

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

In addition to these minimum wages to be paid by the planter, he was required to take care of the young children of the family hired by him; to furnish without charge a separate house for each family, with an acre of ground for

a garden, and without charge, medical attention for the entire family, and schooling for the children; to sell food and clothing to the employee at cost, and lastly, to pay for full time unless the laborer was sick or refused to work.

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

These labor contracts had to be in writing and receive the sanction of the bureau or military au-




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

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

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

So long as these institutions were administered by the military authorities no charge was made the freedman for preparing the labor contracts, and the freedman thought the bureau his best friend. Later, at the close of the war, the bureaus were turned over to the civil authorities and "carpetbaggers" were put in charge. Then a fee of \$2.00 was charged the negro for each contract. This produced among them a revulsion of feeling. They became suspicious and distrustful of the bureau.

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

On the slightest pretext the bureau authorities intervened. Their prejudices were strongly against the whites and in favor of the freedmen. There was, however, no purpose of bettering the conditions, but solely to punish the

whites.

It was of common occurrence that prominent citizens, were arrested, and placed in chains. The former slaves were protected and incited to heap opprobrium on their former masters. Even the law itself was not permitted to take

its course, as for instance: "In 1866, two constables arrested a negro charged with house burning in Tuscumbia, Alabama. Col. D. C. Rugg, the bureau agent at Huntsville, raised a force of forty negroes and went to the rescue of the criminal." Coming up with the officers as they were about to board the train with the criminal, he said, "If you attempt to put that man on the train, blood will be shed. I am acting under the orders of the Military Department. These men are not going to let you take that prisoner away, and blood will be

shed if you attempt it." All this, in order that the culprit might be taken before the bureau agent and acquitted after a mock trial.

In conjunction with the Freedman's Bureau, schools for freedmen were operated. Shortly before the close of the war three

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of these schools were established at the refugee camps in the county. Two of them were in Huntsville; one being on Ex-Governor Chapman's plantation, which was confiscated to the use of negro troops early in 1862, as above mentioned. After the war, schools for the freedmen became very numerous. Another was opened at Huntsville by the "Pittsburgh Freedmen's Aid Commission." All these schools were taught by Northern whites." From this time forward, all sorts and kinds of missionary, educational and benevolent societies and commissions, financed at the North, and projected and authorized by Congress, began to operate throughout the South. There was the wildest desire among the blacks, both old and young, to learn to read and write.

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

One notable instance of this distrust is to be found, when the league at Huntsville refused admittance to one of its meetings in the court house, to a notorious "scalawag" of this community, who had formerly been a respected member of society. Little wonder that even the negroes were unwilling to align themselves with him when we remember that he had represented Madison county in the Secession Convention of 1861, and was chosen to succeed Dr. Thomas Fearn in the Confederate

Provisional Congress, and had commanded a battalion in the war for a short while; only for a short while, however, as his loyalty to his State and his people was of equally short duration. He went over to the enemy and after the war, embraced with alacrity the "carpetbag" government and its principles and returned among his people to aid in the oppressions of reconstruction, and garner his share of its harvest.



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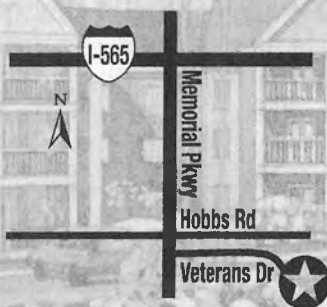
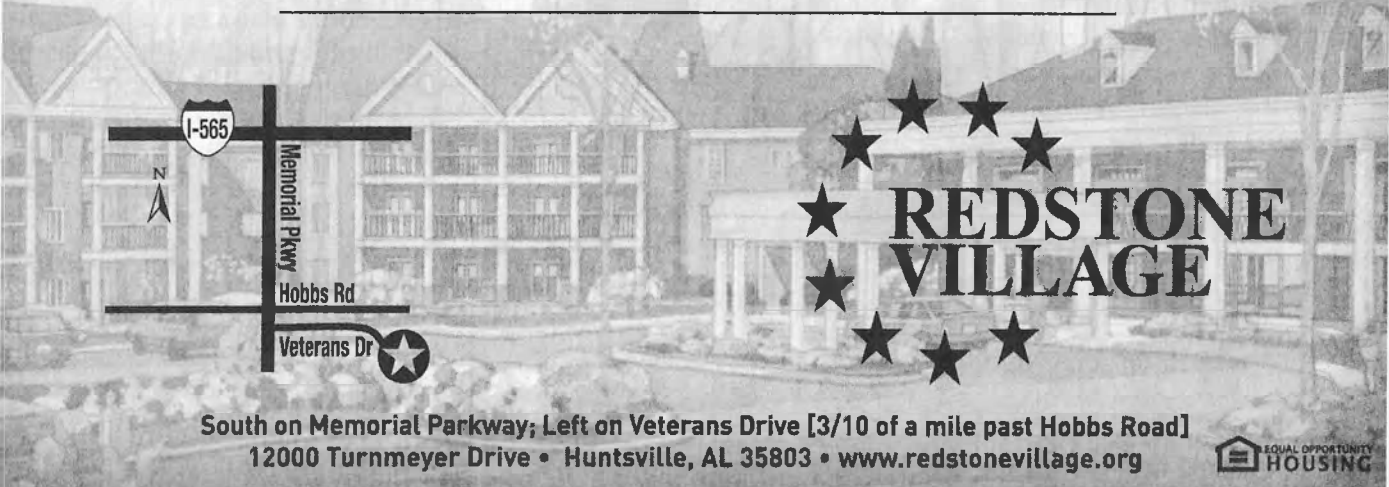
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# Heard On The Street

by *Cathey Carney*



Congratulations to **Jane Toney**, a stay-at-home Grandma from Huntsville, who correctly guessed the Photo of the Month from February. It was **Tallulah Bankhead**, and we had so many correct calls after Jane's, but only one gets to win!

**Linda** and **Bill Drake** hosted a Valentine party at their home in English Village during the month. Guests included the members of **Beta Sigma Phi** sorority and their sweeties. A particular image on a can of air freshener sure got lots of attention.

We were so happy to see **Dr. James Jones**, retired dentist in Huntsville whom many of you remember, when he stopped by the other day with his lovely wife **Martha**. He is doing great and keeping busy working out at the gym.

Our good friend **Martin Alexander** tells us to be sure and say Hi to his friends at WAHR radio.

We were sorry to hear that **Catherine Hunter**, wife of Golden K Kiwanian **Bill Hunter**, died recently. She was much loved and will be missed.

**Donna Hays'** sweet mom

**Mildred White** broke her hip recently and we want to say a special hello to her with wishes that she gets to feeling better really soon!

We talked with **Tracy Wright** recently - she does a lot of good work for young people with her agency called **HEALS**. It's good to know there are people like her out there.

**Cathi Harless**, of Dr. Whitworth's office in Madison, told us her Mom had a bad fall recently while in Corinth, Miss. **Martha Gross** was traveling with her husband **Jack** when she fell. We wish her a speedy recovery and Jack, you take good care of her!

We had a call from our old friend **Donna Lacy** - many of you remember her as the sweet lady who worked for years at Propst Drugs in the U.S. Post office there. She's loving retired life and says to say hello to all her friends!

We saw our buddy **Marie Adkins** last week. She wants to send out a special hello to her friends and family in Michigan. She's lived in Decatur for 5 years and misses her family so badly!

**Bill Collier**, who is a former member of the 279th Signal in the National Guard, sends a big welcome to his Guard buddies who just returned from a tour in Iraq.

A huge Happy Birthday to our good friend **Newman Ward**, now living in the rain in Malibu. He was a postal worker here in Huntsville for many years and often writes about his memories. He just turned a young 89!

It was great to talk with **Ann Gibbs** recently - many of you may remember Ann as the former owner of **Jay's Lounge** on Meridian Street. Ann and her husband **Jerry Gibbs** currently own a heating and cooling company on Winchester road, and their daughter **Dawn McDonnell** runs the show at Color Express printing in Madison.

Our favorite bartender at Sazio's, **Scott Reisenweber**, was looking good the other night. While there we neighbored with **Panda Wagner** & others.

Happy Birthdays to **Bill Ivy**, **Sam Zeman**, **Bill Russell** and **Jim Winning!**

We were so sorry to hear of the

## Photo of The Month

The first person to correctly identify the youngster shown below wins a year's subscription to "Old Huntsville" magazine.

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**Hint:** This young soldier later opened up a successful business on the Parkway that is still going strong.



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death of **J. B. Mitchell**. He was a retired civil service worker here and worked for **Ashburn & Gray** for many years. We send our sympathy out to his wife **Edith Mitchell**.

Our favorite lady **Ann Hill** told us she just made Captain at the Redstone Fire Department. Congratulations to you Ann!

The **Cecil Tiptons** of Ryland dropped by the office to say hello recently. It was great fun visiting with them and listening to the stories of how Huntsville used to be.

Blackwater Hattie's was rocking the other night - we hear they are having Karioke contests periodically on Friday nights. **Margaret Poole** and **Danny George** are the owners, and were hanging out with several of their customers when we dropped by. **Ricky Thomas** was there, along with **Ricky Cantrell** who is a firefighter at Station 16. We also saw **Keith Cox** and **Sandy Martin**, who grew up in West Huntsville and has lots of stories about those days. His Uncle was **Esso McDonald**, whom many may remember.

We saw **Eric Knytych** recently, he works at Mollie Teal's behind the Jazz Factory. He and his wife **Jamie** are expecting their first baby in July. **Melissa Gill** works with Eric and said she thinks she'll be engaged this weekend to her sweetie. They are the best-looking bartenders in Huntsville!

**J. B. Tucker** was in the hospital recently and we want him to know we're thinking about him and want him to get to feeling better real soon. His sweet wife **Margaret** sure takes good care of him, along with their daughters **Linda** and **Sandy**.

Congratulations to **Mildred** and **Basil Banks**, parents of **Danny Banks** of Huntsville, who have been married for 65 years!

Speaking of **Danny Banks**, we saw him recently having dinner with his sweet wife **Jennifer** - they just returned from a cruise - his

first - to Jamaica and the Grand Cayman Islands.

It's fascinating to talk with **Lucille Hines**, a young lady in her early nineties who remembers when Huntsville was a small town. She knows all the answers about Huntsville's history!

**Sandra Galyean**, of Sanders Cleaners, was skiing recently in Park City, Utah when she fell and twisted her knee pretty badly - we're thinking of you Sandra and hope you heal up soon!

It was great to see our favorite folks at **Colonial Bank** recently - **Ann Smith** and **Linda Worsham** are some of the sweetest ladies you'll meet anywhere!

We were sorry to hear that our dear friend **Cecil Ashburn** has been fighting the flu bug. Hurry up and

get well, Cecil!

You all have a great March and we'll see you next month!



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# RECIPES

## Veges and Sweets

### Baked Vidalia Onions

Peel and core onions and place in a greased baking dish. Fill each core with 1 tablespoon butter and 1 tablespoon soy sauce. Cover and bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes. Remove cover and continue baking for 15 more minutes. Allow one onion per serving.

### Green Beans with Feta

1 lb. green beans, tips removed  
3 T. olive oil  
2 T. fresh lemon juice  
1 t. dried dill weed  
3 T. slivered red onion  
1/4 c. crumbled Feta cheese  
Salt/cracked black pepper to taste

Steam green beans til crisp-tender, rinse under cold water. Drain and pat-dry beans, add to large serving bowl. Mix oil, lemon

juice and salt/pepper in small bowl and pour onto beans, toss to coat. Sprinkle on the dill and onion, then toss. Chill in fridge - right before serving, add cheese and toss.

### Rosemary Potatoes

4 lbs. new potatoes, sliced  
1/4 c. rosemary, chopped  
2 t. minced garlic  
1/4 c. olive oil  
2 T. lemon juice  
Salt/pepper to taste

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

### Roasted Garlic Cloves

6 elephant garlic bulbs  
1/4 c. olive oil

1 t. rosemary  
1/2 t. seasoned salt

Cut 1/2" off wide end of each bulb. In a garlic roaster or mini-cupcake pan, place the garlic bulbs cut side down. Drizzle olive oil over each bulb and sprinkle with the rosemary and seasoned salt.

Bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes - it'll smell wonderful. If they look like they are cooking too fast and may burn, turn heat down to 300 degrees. Cook covered, then take them out to cool. On some toasted fresh bread squeeze out each clove and "butter" the bread. This can be habit forming if you love garlic!

### Fried Spicy Cucumbers

You'll need 4 cucumbers, flour, oil, cayenne pepper, salt and pepper.

Peel your cucumbers and slice lengthwise. Dry the slices and

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cover them with flour, cayenne, salt and pepper mixture. Fry in hot oil til brown. Add your favorite sour cream to a tablespoon of horseradish and enjoy!

## Corn on the Coals

6 ears corn

Salt, pepper and butter

Turn husks back from corn, remove silks. Trim tops from ears of corn; turn husks back over corn. Soak corn in enough water to cover for 2 hours. Remove corn from water, place over hot charcoal.

Roast until husks are well browned. Remove husks from corn, add salt, pepper and butter to taste.

## Old Southern Icebox Pie

4 egg whites

1 c. sugar

1 t. vanilla

1 c. pecans, chopped

13 graham crackers, crumbled into small pieces

1 can shredded coconut

Beat the whites til stiff, add sugar and vanilla slowly. Add coconut, pecans, and graham crackers.

Pour in a buttered pan and bake for 30 minutes at 350 degrees. Chill in fridge prior to serving. Your Grandma will remember this one, we bet!

## Peanut Butter Bites

2 c. brown sugar

1/2 c. milk

3 T. chunky peanut butter

1 egg white

Boil the sugar with the milk til it spns a thread, stirring constantly. Add the peanut butter. Beat the egg white to a stiff froth, then add it to the boiling syrup. Make sure you are stirring all the while. Continue to beat til thick and stiff, then drop it by teaspoons onto waxed or parchment paper.

## Grandma's Bread Pudding

1 loaf dried bread

1 t. vanilla

3/4 c. sugar

2 eggs

1 c. warm milk

Mix all in a large bowl, pour into a baking pan. Bake for 35 minutes at 350 degrees.

## Best Dark Fudge

3 c. chocolate chips, semi-sweet

1 dash salt

1 1/2 t. vanilla

1 can Eagle Brand Sweetened condensed milk

1 c. walnuts or pecans, chopped

In a heavy saucepan melt chips with the milk and salt. Re-

move from heat, stir in the nuts and vanilla. Spread evenly over wax-paper-lined 9x11" pan, quickly because it will harden.

Cover and chill overnight - next day turn fudge onto cutting board and remove wax paper, cut into squares with sharp knife.



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# Huntsville Hang Outs

## Part Two

By Johnny Johnston

In December we reviewed several places where we ate, talked, ate, talked, and had fun. I began to think of others and then certain business places, which held part of our history.

Mr. Pizitz owned a dry goods store on Jefferson just off the Court House Square and was considered one of the best merchandisers in Huntsville. His son, Norman, told me this story which I cherish.

One fall during harvest time Mr. Pizitz was gathering clothing and supplies for a Hazel Green farmer. He had placed his order on the counter while gathering other items to complete the purchase. He had completed the order and Mr. Pizitz told him \$30.50. The farmer started walking, he walked through the store and came back to the counter. Mr. Pizitz was sure the man was trying to get a cheaper price so the second time he walked up he said how about \$28.50. The farmer did the same thing, walk-

ing through the store, coming back in a minute and standing in front of Mr. Pizitz. This time he said how about \$27.50. The man started walking again only this time he went outside the store stopped at the curb then came back in. He said, Mr. Pizitz, the price was OK the first time. I just had to find a place to spit my tobacco juice! The next day Mr. Pizitz had a Spittoon sitting by the counter.

Most of us wound up at Guntersville Lake at one time or many. I fished there with my brothers and father. I can remember going to the Dam and taking a boat up close to the rushing water. My number one trip was the Butler High School Sneak day of May 1955. We decided on the day before to slip out, can't remember who was the instigator, probably Jimmy Butler the Class President. We left the school very early and drove to Hatfield Lake. When we found that to be dry we decided to return through Huntsville and go to Guntersville. The day was going well at Guntersville Lake. Norman Stephens and I were riding an old Harley Davidson, which needed lots of work and had no license plate. It had only a seat for one: since I was the pilot I got to ride the tank. During the day several girls (who I was afraid to speak to because of shyness), asked for a ride on the Harley. I found myself popu-

lar for the first time and really didn't know how to handle it. Along mid afternoon I saw from a distance several local police glancing at where the license plate should have been. I gathered up Norman and we watched from a distance until the police went down to the

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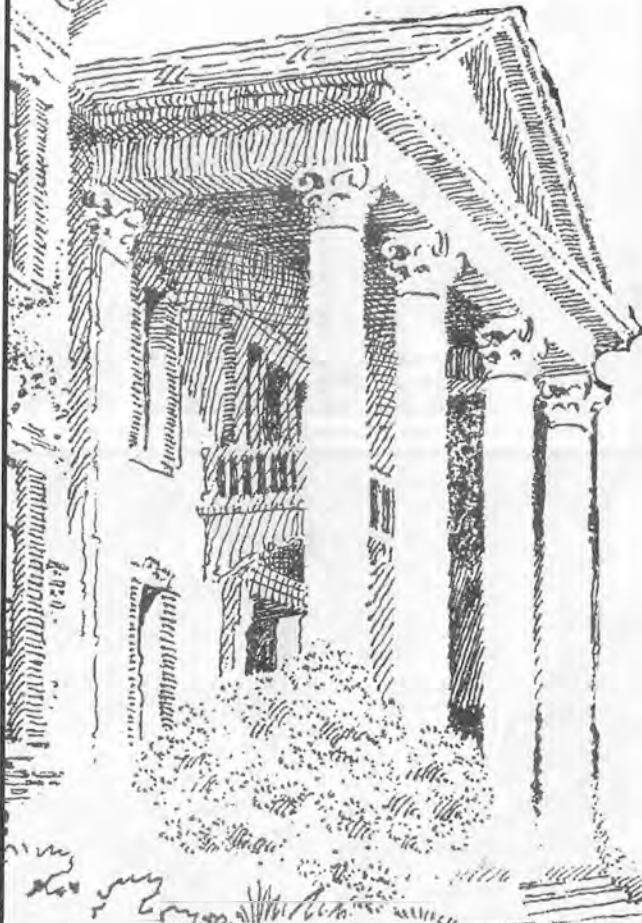
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water trying to find who was riding the Harley. Norman was in his swimsuit with his clothes in hand. We saw our opportunity and headed out on the Harley.

In those days the State of Alabama had portable truck weighing stations consisting of a strip of concrete about 50' long with a crossways ditch about 10" deep where the portable scale was placed. I pulled off the road so Norman could put on his clothes. Sideways we went into the hole, damaging the exhaust system and taking some skin off Norman's foot. He got his clothes changed; we found some scrap wire to tie up the exhaust and took off. The exhaust came loose several times and we stopped to repair it. When we got to Big Cove the chain broke. No fix for that. I called my Dad to bring my old 46 Chevrolet Van and pick us up. The truck quit on him going up Monte Sano. He got that taken care of and got to us maybe two hours later. We had a really hard time loading the 800-pound motorcycle into the van and somewhat damaged it again. We started back only to have a blow out at Fifth Avenue (Gov. Drive) and Seminole drive. Another delay. When we finally got home and got off the Harley, I told Norman I would get Mom's car and take him home. For the life of me I can't imagine why he said, "No thanks, I'll just walk to Lincoln."

Hatfield Lake, now there was a wonderful place to hang out.

The lake was an improved natural lake with diving boards, concrete sidewalk and a very nice roller skating rink. At times during the fall of the year a carnival would also be stationed alongside the Lake. The Carnival operator was one of those characters who wanted to see what limits us macho guys had when it came to riding on The Tubs or other nauseating things. Of certainty I told him not to take me off until I said uncle. That came about thirty minutes later. Don't remember ever being that sick in my life.

The lake had a natural bottom; it was about 15' deep and a wonderful place to dive. The water was clear and cool, just right. I couldn't name the number of times our class went there from Butler or after getting a drivers license went alone. Actually that was the first date with the lady I married.


Monte Sano Mountain, especially the State Park, was a very favorite place of mine. When I moved back to Huntsville about 20 years ago I was extremely surprised to see an admission charge on the park. I had been going there since I was maybe 5 years old. Church gatherings, family picnics, and

school activities. Just a double date with friends after high school. There were so many times and there are so many memories I have trouble separating them. The horse stable, that was my favorite. I still remember my favorite horse, Maude. She would get lazy and stubborn. I learned early on that if I just reached up and broke off a twig, she heard it and moved at a good pace. The horse trail roamed over to the left of the Picnic area of the park down to a ledge and back again. I think maybe that it was two or three miles long. There were about 8 horses kept at the barn. I loved to spend time there and help feed the horses.

My favorite thing to do was get someone who had not ridden a horse and put them on one for the trail. Leroy Cunningham was

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one of those people. After about a mile Leroy fell off. Just as Norman never rode another motorcycle, Leroy, I think, never rode another horse.

When Dr. Burritt was living, he allowed us plain people to drive into his yard and look off the bluff. The home was available to glare through the windows at his right side drive Plymouth or sit on his steps. He was not afraid to drive his car up hill from the outside however when he was driving down the hill he wanted to be able to see the side of the road. In those days two cars barely could pass and it was a dirt road.

A long time friend, Joyce Manning Robinson, sent me an email and said I should mention Butler Grill and the Try Me. The Butler Grill was run by Aunt Eunice and was just across the street from Butler High. Joyce and her closest friend would watch out the window for their boyfriends to show up from Huntsville High. On one occasion the boyfriends showed up on their motorcycles. They were to be joined by these two friends from Butler. Before an

effort could be made to slip from school, one of the boy's fathers found them with Eunice and took them back to Huntsville High. It worked out ok. They were later married and raised four children before his death in the late 1980's.

The Try Me drive-in at 601 7<sup>th</sup> St.. (now Triana) was a favorite place for lunch by the Butler students. Looking for someone late for class, look at the Try Me. It was the typical 50's place with the jukebox, formica top tables and plastic covered chairs. The floors were colored squares and there seemed to be adequate parking. That is where I learned the water glass trick. You place a napkin on top the water glass, ease it over on the table top and slide out the napkin. The glass, upside down and full of water is resting on the tabletop. One of my friends did that one evening and was proud, he hadn't spilled a drop. The only way you could empty the glass was to slide it off the tabletop, hopefully into a container. The waitress was tired of our tricks I guess. She said "Are you through with this?" and slid it directly over

my friend's lap and dumped the water all over him. He was through with the water trick after that.

On a warm summer day the Municipal Swimming Pool in Big Spring Park was full of kids having the time of their lives. Coach Berry was in charge of the pool



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for many years and didn't put up with any shenanigans. The number one thing I remember about the pool is the cold, cold, water from the shower. A monitor stayed in the locker room and saw that everyone took that shower. After that, the pool water was always warm.

I remember walking from Lincoln with my older sister to spend a day in the pool along with friends like Mike Christian (Vietnam War Hero), his sister Pat, the Woody children and so many other friends. It was a gathering place for sure. This was at least the second of the swimming pools I remember at that location. The area where the Hilton Hotel is now was a wooded area suitable for family picnics and company employee gatherings. Further toward the Colonial Bank was a natural pond where many people in the thirties and forties would swim.

On the way from Lincoln to the pool we would pass by the ice-house (now Utilities Office), and just across the street and lagoon from that stood the Curb Market. We walked past the Russel Erskine Hotel with its hustle and bustle. It was always interesting in the early days to go by the Bus Station. The front of the garage was on Washington, the back on Jefferson. The busses would pull in from Washington, get their passengers and pull out on Jefferson.

About the only thing left in that area from those days is Lewter Hardware.

In West Huntsville you found most of the kids at the West Huntsville YMCA. The building consisted of the gymnasium where a basketball game was just about always in progress. John and Bill Childress could be found there since their Father was the YMCA Director. In the same building was an area for gatherings and parties. A Piano in the East Side was available for your school party, or just a bunch of friends having clean fun. Out side near 7<sup>th</sup> (now Triana) was an empty field just right for a pick up game of football.

That's what it was all about. Friends, having fun, getting together in a great atmosphere. We were never worried about drugs, dangerous fights or the police coming around. They had no reason to; we never caused a ruckus.

Maybe that's why the 1955 graduates of Butler High still get together on a weekly basis. We remember the good times in youth and cherish them to this day.



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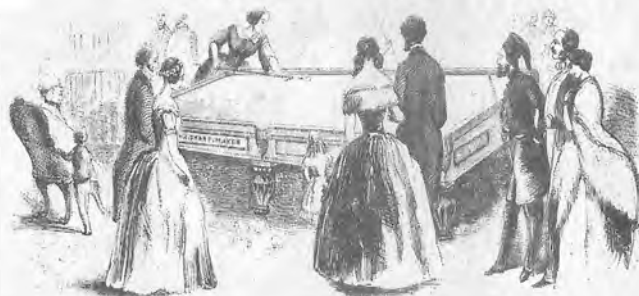
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# Violence In The Streets

In mid July, 1934, after months of mediation and agitation, nearly 4,000 Huntsville cotton mill workers went on strike as part of a nationwide walkout that quickly ensnared America's entire textile industry.

The strike brought violence to the streets in the form of killings, kidnapping, assaults, shootings, and bombings.

A cloud of fear hung over Huntsville like poisonous vapors seeping into the hearts of the populace. No man, woman, child, home, or business was safe. Living here was dangerous.

Mill owners across the nation refused to negotiate, threatening to hire strike breakers to quell any riotous activity by the strikers.

Then on July 17, the Fletcher Mill opened at the regular hour of 6 a.m., but was forced to close within three hours. Noisy strikers were clamoring in the street outside the mill and it appeared that major violence would erupt at any second. Sensing the severity of the situation, the non-union employees chose to leave their jobs rather than confront the raucous pickets.

Police and deputies armed with tear-gas rifles and machine guns were called to the scene as the strikers grew more unruly, but the crowd dispersed when the officers arrived.

Merrimac was the next mill to close as strikers, under the leadership of state union organizer Albert Cox, went through the building telling workers to leave. The mill emptied in minutes.

Lincoln and Dallas mills closed that same morning when the night shifts came off duty.

John Dean, representing the

United Textile Workers of America, urged strikers to maintain picket lines and prevent the mills from running.

Carloads of strikers, armed with shotguns, pistols, knives, baseball bats, and anything else that could serve as weapons, cruised the streets shouting and waving their weapons, intimidating anyone who might have had thoughts about going to work.

A meeting of the Dallas Mill workers was held at the old Methodist church on Humes Avenue.



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Monroe Adcock, president of the Dallas local union, presided and urged that no destruction of mill property take place during the strike. He also pleaded that all union members refrain from using intoxicating liquors while the strike was in progress.

The following day reports of trouble sent police racing to the Admiral Braid Company. A crowd of a few hundred men had gathered outside the plant when it was reported that an attempt was going to be made to move a load of merchandise. The report was false and the crowd dispersed without incident.

On July 30, special deputies guarded the Tennessee River bridge between Decatur and Huntsville as rumors indicated that a motorcade of more than 500 striking textile workers from Huntsville were enroute to Decatur in an effort to urge the textile workers there to join the strike.


The deputies managed to turn the strikers back but everyone knew that it was just a matter of time before violence would explode.

Earlier in the day, three union men were attacked on a street

comer near the Goodyear fabric plant in Decatur. The aforementioned union local head, Monroe Adcock, was shot in the leg, and Isaac Bullard and Bumice Rigsby were injured in an altercation with three unarmed men. Special guards were placed around the Goodyear plant.

Early Sunday morning, August 6, John Dean, leader of the strike in Alabama, was kidnapped from his room on the sixth floor of the Russel Erskine hotel by four men and taken at gunpoint to Fayetteville, Tenn. During the ride he was beaten about the head with a pistol. His abductors, in a bizarre move, then registered him at the Pope Hotel where he managed to, according to the porter, initiate a call to his friends in Huntsville. In less than an hour a dozen automobiles, filled with armed men, arrived in Fayetteville to

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rescue their leader.

Instead of returning to his hotel, Dean went into seclusion at the home of George Davis on F Street in Merrimac Village. Armed guards were placed around the house to prevent further kidnapping.

During the time of Dean's abduction 400 angry men, most of them carrying guns, gathered near the Russel Erskine Hotel. They had heard of the abduction and were seeking the men responsible. The mayor sent a large contingent of police to the hotel, preventing the mob from getting out of hand.

Strikers set up roadblocks at each road leading into Huntsville. Automobiles going in and out of the city were stopped by strikers brandishing weapons who said they were looking for the kidnapped man, not knowing that he had returned and was in hiding.

The situation was becoming serious. Many citizens were afraid to leave their homes. Gangs of armed men roamed the town looking for would be strike breakers and terrifying everyone with whom they came into contact. Sometimes as many as eight carloads of strikers would slowly caravan through downtown.

With strikers demanding that

the city take action, solicitor (district attorney) James Price announced that the Grand Jury would meet the following Monday and that a warrant had been issued in the kidnap case. Fearful that the crowd would take the law into its own hands, the sheriff refused to name the persons involved until the arrests had been made.

Monday morning found a large crowd assembled downtown awaiting the day's events. In an act of bravado, Dean drove in from Merrimac and casually breakfasted at the Central Cafe downtown while armed bodyguards patrolled the sidewalks out front.

Meanwhile, the Grand Jury returned an indictment against

James Conner, a mill worker. When word spread that the owners of the cotton miles might have been responsible for Dean's kidnapping, the pent-up fury of the strikers exploded.

Rumors that downtown stores were going to be dynamited caused additional deputies to be brought in, but the day passed without incident.

Threats against the indicted Mr. Conner caused guards to be placed at his home. They were called off that same afternoon when it was realized that Conner had left town for parts unknown.

Cars were not permitted on streets where union leaders lived, unless permission was first obtained from the strikers. Armed guards were maintained through-

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out the night and augmented the following morning by additional strikers.

The Thomas Mill, forced to shut down when the strike began, reopened despite threats from the strikers.

Before the plant could begin operating at full capacity it was invaded by a gang of strikers from Merrimac Mills and Erwin Mills, despite protests by the foremen. The workers were quickly assembled and ordered by their leaders to quit work and leave the building by the spokesman of the strikers.

William Fraser, manager of the Thomas Mill, later identified the leader as Henry Parmlee, the union leader at Merrimac. Fraser said the strikers ignored the "posted" signs displayed at the entrance to the mill.

On August 13, the kidnap charge against Conner was stricken from the docket of the Grand Jury and a lesser charge of "whitecapping" was entered. Whitecapping was defined as loan act to prevent and punish the formation or continuance of conspiracies and combinations for certain unlawful purposes. "Trial was set for Nov. 28, but was continued until Feb. 19, 1935, when the matter was dropped.

Random acts of violence continued. No one was safe.

On Sept. 3, three charges of dynamite damaged the grocery store of Mrs. R.W Atkins on Pike Street in Merrimac Village. The explosion brought a crowd to the scene.

Shortly before daybreak, strikers were brought out of their beds by bugle calls and gunshots. Armed strikers rushed into the city from Lincoln Village after being told of trouble at the Fletcher Mill. They returned home when everything was found quiet.

A group of young women decided to ignore the picket line and return to work, but they were pushed to the ground by the angry strikers. Ignoring the girls' screams of protest, the strikers produced a pair of scissors and

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proceeded to roughly cut their hair.

A short while later, residents of Lincoln watched the strange sight of four bald-headed girls being paraded down Meridian Street.

The same day, gunshots were fired into the store front windows of businesses downtown who were suspected of being sympathetic to the mill owners. An automobile belonging to a union organizer, was burned while it was parked in front of the courthouse.

City officials, frantic by this time, asked that a federal mediator be brought in. Something had to happen. Huntsville could not continue living under a cloud of terror.

Judge Petree, mediator, and his staff arrived in Huntsville and immediately went into a conference with union leaders. After the meeting at the Davis house, where John Dean had established his headquarters, Petree then conferred with the officials of the Erwin Mill, which had been trying to reach an agreement for several days.

On Sept. 22, before the mediator could work out a compromise, the great textile strike ended. National Union leaders had reached a settlement.

Peace had returned to Huntsville.

No charges were ever filed against anyone for the hundreds of acts of lawlessness committed during the strike. "It was," as one old-timer remembers, "as if Huntsville just wanted to forget."

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# Old Tyme Remedies

\* When you have a sore throat, there's an exercise that will help. Stick out your tongue for 30 seconds, put it back in your mouth and relax. Repeat 5 times in a row, this will increase your blood circulation and help heal you.

\* If you have a toothache, buy some oil of cloves or whole cloves. The oil should be soaked in a wad of cotton and placed directly on the aching tooth. But be sure and see your dentist soon.

\* For the Ladies only: PMS tension can be relieved by several ways. 2 capsules of garlic daily will help immensely. Camomile tea is a superb tension reliever and nerve relaxer. Increase your calcium intake - this prevents leg cramps and cramps of all sorts.

\* If you have thin hair with no body, add 2 egg whites and the juice of 1/2 lemon to your shampoo. This will give your hair more body and volume.

\* If you have a bad cough, cook the juice of one lemon, 1 cup of honey and 1/2 cup olive oil. Stir vigorously for a couple of minutes and take one teaspoonful every 2 hours.

\* For asthma a good remedy is to eat 3-6 apricots daily. This promotes healing of all lung and bronchial conditions.

\* If you know someone with bad body odor, suggest zinc. 30 mg. a day will make anyone begin to smell like a rose.

\* For painful shingles, make a paste of Epsom salts and water. Place it directly on the affected area and repeat as often as possible. Also, drink 1 1/2 quarts of celery water daily, should improve in a week.

\* A good remedy for hiccups is to mix a teaspoonful of apple cider vinegar in a cup of warm water. Then drink it from the far side of the glass. You have to bend far forward to do this in order to keep from dribbling all over yourself.

\* For bad diaper rash on your baby, fresh air does wonders. Also try honey on the rash.

\* Mild ginger tea is great for kids with colic and gas.

\* For those of you young enough to have blackheads, before going to bed rub lemon juice over the blackheads. Wait til morning to wash off the juice with cool water. Repeat this several evenings in a row and you'll see a big improvement.

\* Insomnia bothers many of us. Some remedies for this include:

Steep 1 teaspoon of camomile tea in a cup of boiling water for 10 minutes and drink it right before bedtime.

Mix a cup of warm milk with 1/2 teaspoon of nutmeg and 2 teaspoons of honey, drink it down.

Press the center of the bottoms of your heels with your thumbs. Keep pressing as long as you can - at least 3 minutes.

Exercise during the day, not right before bedtime.

Try using an extra pillow. Spray it with lavender scented spray.

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# News From The Year 1959

## News From Huntsville and Around The World

### CASTRO TAKES CUBA

#### United States Recognizes Revolutionaries

Jan 16. Cuban revolutionaries have completely supplanted the government of Fulgencio Batista, replacing him with rebel leader Fidel Castro's choice of Manuel Urrutia as provisional President. The Cuban leader resigned to "prevent further bloodshed" and has sought refuge in the Dominican Republic. While Castro and his men have seized power, they will remain on "war footing" until they are sure the remaining members of Batista's junta accept the change of leadership.

When news of the change in power reached the masses, people stormed into the streets to celebrate. The red and black flag of the rebels was displayed on buildings and cars. In some areas, violence broke out, and the office of El Tiempo, a newspaper owned by a close friend of Batista, was set ablaze. People in Cuba are both elated and scared by the success of the revolution.

The first official order of the new administration was to lift the suspension of constitutional rights imposed by Batista during the two year rebellion and to allow freedom of the press. President Urrutia and Castro, who was named to head the military, also claim that they intend to restore Cuba's economy, refurbish its democracy and oppose dictatorships in Latin America.

The United States government moved swiftly in recognizing the new government; within days of Castro's takeover of Havana on the 1st, the State Department sent a note of recognition to President Urrutia. Normally, America waits for a new nation to become fully established and for several Latin American countries to recognize a new regime first. But upon hearing that the Cuban regime will honor international agreements, United States officials apparently felt no need to delay.

### U.S.A. Launches Monkeys Into Space

May 28. Two monkeys were picked up alive from the Atlantic Ocean today after a 1,700-mile space trip that took them to a height of 360 miles in the nose cone of a Jupiter rocket. The monkeys' flight is a prelude to the first manned United States space flight, expected in about two years.

Today's trip was made by a seven pound rhesus monkey named Able and a one-pound squirrel monkey named Baker, both heavily wired to gather data about the effects of space flight on living beings.

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# Edsel Auto Becomes History

**Nov 19.** Ford has discontinued production of the Edsel, a revolutionary car whose time has not yet come - if ever. The Edsel was introduced last year to compete with medium-priced autos such as the Oldsmobile and De Soto. When sales lagged, its price was reduced, but fewer than 100,000 were sold.

The Edsel had as much chance as any Ford. Its name (Henry's son's first name) was test-marketed. The publicity photos were dazzling, highlighting discrete sections. But the Edsel has a fault: progress. It has push-button automatic transmission, narrow horizontal taillights, a detailed grill and other futuristic features. In other words, it's ugly.

Today, Ford announced discontinuation of the auto, stating a steel shortage hastened the decision. At the same time, Ford offered to sell two million more shares of stock.

# Rock & Rollers Dead In Plane Crash

Feb 3. A small plane carrying rock-and-roll singers Buddy Holly, J.P. "Big Bopper" Richardson and Richie Valens crashed early today near Mason City, Iowa, killing all three and sending millions of teenaged fans into mourning.

The aircraft, headed for Fargo, North Dakota, where the performers were scheduled to appear tonight, took off in light snow at about 1:00 a.m. It hit the ground within minutes, also killing the pilot. Authorities blamed weather conditions for the crash.

The singers had each scored million-selling hit records in recent months: Holly, 22, with "Peggy Sue" and "That'll be the Day"; Richardson, 24, with "Chantilly Lace"; and Valens, 17, with "Donna" and "La Bamba."

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# A Child of the Depression

by Helen D. Fulton

As a child of the Depression era, with no siblings, I was often lonely. My earliest recollected joy was catching lightning bugs in a jar. I found them fascinating and could sit for long periods looking at these strange bugs and wondering how they could do what they did. I was totally mesmerized by their luminous display and actually still am. When my mother called me in the house to get ready for bed I reluctantly opened my jar and left it on the porch where I knew from experience they would be gone in the morning. Getting ready for bed included a good scrub down with a rag latched with enough lye soap to kill most anything. Every Saturday, however, I was stripped naked and placed in a tub of water on the floor, near the fireplace if it was chilly, for a much dreaded bath and head scrubbing.

By age 10, my entertainment increased tremendously, thanks to getting a step-father, a mechanic at a local garage. Occasionally he was allowed to drive one of the shop's cars home. The rationale was "to be certain that the knock under the hood at a certain speed had been eliminated." If we were fortunate enough to have a car on a Saturday, we would drive around dusk to an area on West Clinton Street, where

we would park the car and listen as the residents in the nearby neighborhood gathered to sing Negro spirituals on their porches and in nearby yards. My grandmother had sung something like a spiritual which I believe was called Old Black Joe. It included a few words I still remember: "I'm coming, I'm coming for my head is bending low; I hear those gentle voices calling, 'Old Black Joe.'" Even at that early age, the words tugged at my heart. Then there was "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot", a favorite to this day. Apparently these songs touched my soul so that after some 60 years, I get tears in my eyes when I hum or sing the few words I remember. (Just as I am doing this very minute recalling them.)

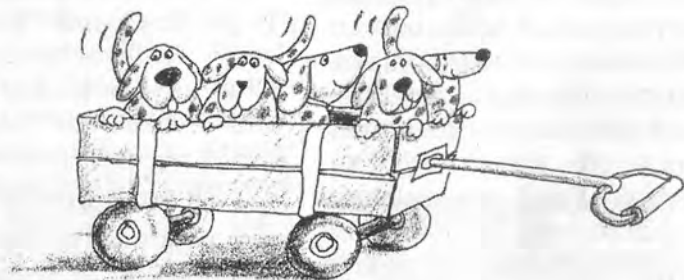


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Occasionally, if, for some reason, there were no spirituals to listen to, we would drive downtown and park on the square where we would watch the people go by. That's right. We just sat there looking at the people passing by, sometimes making a comment to each other such as "I think she forgot to iron that dress" or "Looks like he's already had a few sips out of his pint." Even though it cost only a few coins to get in to see the 'picture show' we didn't have even that much to spend.

Radio finally got to our house when I was about 10, and what a joy it was to get scared silly with that creaking door which announced the arrival of "The Shadow"! "Fibber McGee and Molly" was another favorite. We could not, in our wildest imagination, consider that some day we would sit in our living rooms and watch a college football game being played in another state or a show called "The Price is Right" where people spin a gigantic wheel and win money by answering questions correctly.

These days, like those by-gone days of my childhood when I would fall asleep before the singing on Clinton Street was over, I sometimes find myself dozing off before the 10 O'clock news is over. That's okay. I don't have to wait until next Saturday night to catch it. The newspaper will be on my front porch (or maybe in the nearby shrubs) when I wake up in the morning.

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# A Class Act

by Larry Groves

It was a little sad to see that For Sale sign out front the other day as I drove by the place. It was one of the most elegant eateries I'd ever seen in my life. When I first saw the inside of that restaurant, I wasn't sure if I was in the right place. Mrs. Yvonne Gannon assured me that I was.

The whole place exuded a certain type of charm and grace. A huge chandelier hung over the dance floor, while various antique items stylishly adorned the premises. Several original oil paintings hung from the walls, and a wood carving of Buddha sat behind the bar. According to Armon, the bartender, it was considered good luck to rub that guy's belly.

I first came to Mr. C's in October of 1995. Yvonne was managing the place by then and thought it would be a good idea to start serving made-from-scratch yeast rolls. That's what I did: I made yeast rolls from scratch. I was primarily a baker and had never really worked on the line as a cook, but before I knew it, that's exactly what I was doing.

People who have never worked in a restaurant might have the tendency to think it's easy. From first-hand experience, I would have to disagree with that assumption. When the orders start flying and the waiters start screaming, things can get pretty hectic.

The restaurant was famous for its prime rib. I learned to cook that dish, compliments of Frezzel Patton. Frezzel was an older black man who became the head cook shortly after I started. Almost 60 years old, he was no stranger to

hard work. A bricklayer by day and a cook at night, even though he didn't really need the extra income, I think he just stayed on at the restaurant out of a sense of loyalty and to keep the rest of us out of trouble.

I'd always thought it was a good idea to add a little rosemary to the prime rib while it was cooking. It sort of had a way of mellowing out and enhancing the flavor. Frezzel disagreed, but I always used it on his days off.

Cecil Stanfield was Mr. C, but you rarely saw him at the restaurant unless something needed to be repaired. Cecil was a builder. He'd built the restaurant in 1984 as a tribute to his wife, Betty. Some people said he was crazy to open a restaurant on South Parkway, saying it would never make it on that side of town, but on opening day, they were so busy they ran out of food and had to turn people away.

Cecil was a man of unconven-

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tional wisdom. I'd always thought he looked a lot like a shorter version of Leslie Nielson. When he decided to open the tavern, just behind the restaurant off Meadowbrook Drive, several residents started a petition citing local zoning ordinances prohibiting a bar to operate in that residential neighborhood. He solved that problem by building a breezeway between the restaurant and the tavern, making it all one building with its address officially listed as South Memorial Parkway.

From time to time, I'd worked on a few of Cecil's construction projects. He was the kind of man that if you had to dig a ditch, he'd have a shovel in his hands and be in that ditch with you.

Every year he let me grow a garden on the land by his warehouse on Fisher Street, just across the road from the apart-

ment complex that the family also owned. One Sunday morning, a couple of friends and I were checking my watermelons, but they weren't quite ready. When Cecil saw what was going on, without a word, he left and returned a short time later, bringing us back a huge Black Diamond to munch on. He was a class act and the world is a lesser place without him.

Jack was Cecil's nephew. He was one of the managers and always had a hand in whatever was going on. Over the years, he and I became pretty good friends and he always treated me better than I probably really deserved. When a colony of wild bees moved in at the apartments, he was ready to call the exterminator, when I told him that I'd always wanted to be a beekeeper and pointed out they were good for the garden. He let

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me keep those bees, at least during the remainder of that growing season.

Mr. Kelly was a waiter. Along with Armon, who'd started as a busboy and eventually became the manager, he had been at the restaurant since day one. Gerald came on a short time later and remained a permanent fixture till the end.

Mr. Kelly never wrote anything down, but he always got his orders right. He used to amaze the customers with that ability and often times they would ask for him personally, just to see if they could stump the guy. To my knowledge, few if any ever did.

Virginia ran the tavern. I was in charge of the happy hour food we sent over there every night. I always tried to go all out and give those guys a pretty decent spread of vittles. I liked it because it gave me a chance to experiment a little and try out a few of my own recipes.

Things were never the same after we lost Yvonne, and I think her ghost still strolls the premises. She had been working on a novel about the place when she died. I regret she didn't have a chance to finish. I'm sure it would have been quite interesting, to say the least.

The lady was a retired English teacher and had managed a restaurant in the Shoals area. At

Jack's request, she took over operations at Mr. C's shortly before I arrived. You wouldn't have known it to look at her, but that old lady could move at warp-speed when necessary. I'd always thought she was too stubborn to die and would have lived forever.

I once had her read a short story I'd written about a genetically altered bacterium, threatening mankind to the brink of extinction. She said she liked my style of writing, but didn't really care for end-of-the-world type stories. She was a tough critic and a demanding but fair boss. She always strove for excellence in everything she did and expected no less from anyone else.

She and I attended a restaurant convention in Nashville one summer. We saw

the Grand Old Opry, or what used to be the Grand Old Opry before they moved. She took me to a place called the Bluebird Cafe. I'd never heard of it, but according to her, it was world famous and a place where a lot of country performers had gotten their big break. The old lady always had an obsession for celebrities.

They had live music and the show was pretty good, but the Bluebird Cafe wasn't much on serving food. Even though the place was packed, I didn't see a



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single order coming out of the kitchen the entire night. Yvonne said she would like to turn Mr. C's into something more like the Bluebird. Somehow, I kind of got the feeling, if that ever came to pass, I'd be without a job.

The kitchen staff didn't think too much of her production of the Singing Waiters. That was a brainchild of hers that didn't go over too well. While the waiters were up on stage singing, their orders were sitting in the window getting cold. I don't think very many customers cared for that idea either, but you really couldn't fault the woman for trying.

One night about ten minutes before we closed the place, Yvonne got a phone call from a person claiming to be Dolly Parton's business manager. He said that Dolly was in the area touring and that she and her entourage of about forty people were on their way to the restaurant. We couldn't miss em, they would be

pulling up shortly in Dolly's bus.

I suspected a disgruntled, former employee of playing a cruel joke on the old lady, but we geared up, made fresh salads, threw some potatoes in the oven and cooked off a couple more prime ribs.

I don't know how long Yvonne stayed that night after everyone else had gone home, probably till dawn. She never talked about it afterwards. But who knows? Maybe Dolly really **did** show up after all, at least I'd kind of like to think so.



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Adding to the Cove's security were the families who made it their home. The Kennamer's, Paine's, Cross's, Cloud's, Passeur's and Meek's had lived in the Cove for years and were almost all involved in whiskey making.

From earliest childhood, a code of silence had been instilled in the families. Trust no one except blood kin and, above all, have no dealings with the law.

Though feuds, killings and mayhem were common in Cloud's Cove, the law never interfered. If someone shot a relative, the other relatives merely waited for the right time and then took revenge. Since the turn of the century, it

had been an unspoken rule that the law stayed out of the cove.

There was one exception to this, however. Deputy Sheriff Will McMinn was a native of the Cove and was related to many of the families living there. Two of his cousins were reputed to be working for the Kennamer's, who operated several stills in the area. Most importantly, people trusted McMinn not to talk.

It was also widely assumed that Deputy McMinn was the "bag man" for the various county officials who took a cut from the illicit activities conducted in the Cove.


The late '30s, with war clouds on the horizon, saw an increased demand for illicit whiskey. Workers in the defense industry

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were making good money and were flocking to bootleggers in search of a good time.

Traditionally, the whiskey manufactured in Cloud's Cove had been sold in Madison and Marshall counties, but with the increased demand, the families began to spread out. Within a short while the leaders of the two main families had established outlets all across Alabama, Georgia and Tennessee.

This also proved to have other financial benefits for the families. Historically, the families were "taxed" by the local county officials depending on how much whiskey they manufactured. Until then it had been fairly easy for the officials to keep track of production as all they had to do was check with the bootleggers. Now, with the whiskey being sold out of state, the officials had no way of knowing how much was sold and therefore how much to "tax."

According to one witness of the events, Deputy McMinn was placed in an awkward position. Though he had a good idea of the amount of production, and was ordered to collect the "taxes" on it, he was helpless to do anything without informing on his neighbors.

McMinn wisely chose to do nothing, hoping that matters would somehow straighten themselves out.

Unfortunately, many of the moonshiners began losing large shipments of whiskey. Whole

truckloads were hijacked and the drivers left tied to a tree on the side of the road. In Guntersville, a carload of whiskey was seized in broad daylight by an armed group of men.

At first the moonshiners tried taking different roads and traveling at different times. Regardless

of which route they chose, the armed hijackers seemed to be waiting,

Most people assumed the hijackings were part of a continuing feud between the Kennamer's, Cloud's and Paine's. Though their children went to school together, and they attended church to-

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gether, the families were deadly enemies. Members of both families had been the victims of midnight ambushes, and many bore the scars of past bullet wounds.

Both families were extremely tight-lipped. When a gunshot victim was carried to the hospital, relatives would tell the doctors it was a hunting accident. Sheriff Blakemore, after noticing the high number of gunshot "accidents," was later quoted as saying sarcastically, "That Cloud's Cove bunch must be the clumsiest people in the world."

Business sure makes strange bedfellows, though. In July of 1939, three thousand gallons of whiskey were ordered by a distributor in Nashville. This was a larger order than one family could handle in a short time.

Rather than lose the business, elders of several of the families got together and decided to make it a group venture. Needless to say, with all the hijackings, security was a major concern. It was decided to gather the whiskey at a clearing near Turkey Spring, and then transport it to a spot on the Tennessee River where it would be picked up by boat and carried to Muscle Shoals. There it would be loaded onto trucks and driven to Nashville.

All the families had assumed at this time that one of the other families were responsible for the hijackings. Undoubtedly, they probably guessed that by making this load a group enterprise, it would not be hijacked. "No one," they figured. "would rob their own whiskey!"

After the whiskey was loaded on the boat, three guards, one man from each of the leading families, were chosen to accompany the boat downstream. The plan was to leave after dark so as not to draw attention from any other boats that happened to be on the river.

It was still several hours be-

fore dark, so the men idled away the time by sampling their own wares and playing cards. Suddenly one of the men noticed a movement in the nearby woods.

Before he could react, four armed men appeared, all pointing their guns at the hapless moonshiners. Quickly boarding the boat, the bandits tied the men's hands behind their backs and cast off.

Somewhere near Triana, the hijackers steered the boat to a spot near the shore, and after untying the moonshiners, ordered them to swim. By the time they reached shore, the boat had disappeared around a bend in the river.

Though the boat was found several days later at a landing in Decatur, no one had any idea who the hijackers were.

The young lads, after making their way back to the Cove, faced a gruelling examination from the rest of the families. If the men were telling the truth, the only way the hijackers could have known about the shipment was through an informer. Almost everyone in the Cove knew about the load, or had kin working for the whiskey makers. Patiently, the men started going through a list of people in the Cove.

At first suspicion centered on a middle-aged woman whose husband had been sent to prison for shooting a Huntsville man. She was quickly ruled out however, when it was pointed out that her oldest son was involved with the "business."

Within minutes Deputy Will McMinn became the prime suspect. Though he lived in the Cove, he was still the "law" and undoubtedly had knowledge of the shipments. Also working against him was the fact

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that he had been rebuffed while trying to collect additional "taxes." Most people knew he had been under pressure from the county officials, and possibly thought he had made a deal with hijackers in order to raise the extra money.

That alone was enough to pass a death sentence on the deputy.

One of the local men, Alden Adams, had earlier been involved in an altercation with McMinn's son. Though the deputy tried to talk him out of it, the younger McMinn had a warrant sworn out for Adam's arrest.

The warrant itself was not unusual. Many men in the cove had had warrants sworn out for them and simply ignored them. Court officials, in many cases, dismissed the charges rather than get involved.

The warrant for Adams was given to Deputy McMinn who put it in his pocket and forgot about it. He had no intention of arrest-

ing his neighbor for such a trivial offense.

There the matter rested until late October, when the Harvest Ball was held at the school house near Sugar Fork. Traditionally, every fall after the crops were in, the people would gather to celebrate. This was one of the biggest annual events held at the school and people would come from miles around.

Part of the tradition was the selection of the Harvest Queen who would be crowned at the dance held afterwards. Votes were purchased for a penny each, with the proceeds going to the school, and whoever received the most votes became the Queen.

Will McMinn's daughter wanted to be the Queen but as the pennies were counted, it was apparent she was lagging behind, in votes. Suddenly, McMinn pushed his way through the crowd to the judges table and laid two five dollar bills on the table.

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"This, I reckon, is enough for her to win," he said.

There was shocked silence from the crowd. McMinn, already under suspicion of being an informer, now appeared to be flaunting the age-old traditions of fair play.

Suddenly the silence was broken by Alden Adams, who angrily proclaimed that under the circumstances, there would be no dance held afterwards. Adams was a school board trustee and normally had control over such matters.

Unfortunately, Deputy McMinn was also a school board trustee, and after following Adams out into the school yard, demanded that the dance be held.

When Adams ignored the deputy's insistent demands and continued walking toward his car, McMinn grabbed him by the arm. Probably believing he was being assaulted, Adams lashed out at McMinn with his fist, hitting him in the mouth.

The blow brought a small trickle of blood from McMinn's mouth, who seeing the sight of his own blood, became infuriated. A crowd of onlookers had gathered around the combatants, and as they watched, McMinn pulled the old wrinkled warrant from his pocket, and informed Adams he was under arrest.

There was a hushed silence, broken suddenly by a gunshot. Seconds later, Deputy Will McMinn fell to the ground dead.

Alden Adams, startled as everyone else was, quickly looked around to see where the shot came from. All he saw were blank faces showing absolutely no expressions. He knew instantly it would do no good to ask who fired the shot.

Will McMinn had been executed in accordance with the same code of silence that had protected Cloud's Cove for well over a century.

Though Adams was arrested

for first degree murder, and bound over for trial, no one seriously expected him to serve any time. Everyone knew he was innocent.

On November 21, 1939, the trial began. The state produced witnesses proving that an altercation had taken place between Adams and McMinn. Another witness swore the deputy was trying to serve a warrant when he was shot.

Though most of the witnesses were friendly to Adams, they were simply telling the truth without realizing they were hurting his case. It soon became apparent the state had a strong circumstantial case, and Adams' only hope was for someone to produce the real killer.

This posed a dilemma for the families in Cloud's Cove. Though they knew Adams was innocent, the only way to prove it was by giving up one of their own.

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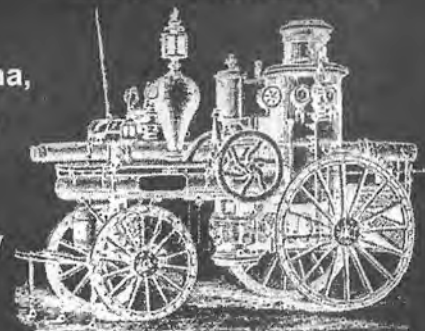
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agreed, was to let the trial take its course and hope Adams would be found innocent. Also agreed, was that no one else would give evidence for the state.

Over the next several days the trial was delayed numerous times while Sheriff's deputies searched frantically for missing witnesses. The few who did appear in court were so intimidated that their answers were reduced to "I don't know," and "I don't remember."

The fact that they were faced by almost two hundred spectators, many of whom were from Cloud's Cove, made the situation extremely delicate for anyone brave enough to take the stand.

Regardless of the witnesses' reluctance to testify, Alden Adams was found guilty of first degree murder. The judge, evidently having an idea of what had happened, overruled the verdict and found him guilty of second degree murder, sentencing him to 15 years.

Ironically, the hijackings, which had plagued the moonshiners and caused McMinn's death, continued for months afterwards. It was apparent to everyone that the wrong man had been killed.

For the first several years of his sentence. Adams wrote people in Cloud's Cove almost daily, pleading that they turn the killer in. For a while many people wrote back to him, tactfully ignoring his pleas, writing instead of the weather and family matters. This only served to infuriate Adams more, and his letters became more insistent.

Many of his friends and relatives, not knowing what else to do, simply stopped writing.

In 1949. Alden Adams was released from the state penitentiary at Kilby, Alabama. He moved back to the Cove and began gathering evidence to clear his name.

Times had changed in the Cove by then. People no longer bought the whiskey the way they once did and jobs were scarce.

Many people were having a hard time making ends meet.

Realizing this. Adams spread the word he would pay a reward of \$1,000.00 to anyone who would provide him with evidence of McMinn's murderer.

Somebody must have realized the money might be too tempting.

A short while later Alden Adams heard a car pull up in front of his house. When he went to see who It was, he was met by

a hail of gunfire. He died instantly.

Once again. Cloud's Cove had taken care of its own.

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# My Mother's Apron

from Billy Joe Cooley

I remember my mother's apron being used in many ways. Sometimes I wish they were still a normal item to wear because they are so handy for so many reasons. One of the reasons that my mother liked her apron was because it kept her dress clean - and an apron was easier to wash and quicker to iron than a dress.

I feel very nostalgic remembering mother and her colorful aprons.

Some of them were made from flour sacks, while others - the fancier ones - were store-bought and used mostly when company would come. The principle use of her apron was to protect the dress underneath, but along with that, it served as a holder for removing hot pans from the oven; it was wonderful for drying children's tears.

From the chicken-coop the apron was used for carrying eggs, fussy chicks, and sometimes half-hatched eggs to be finished in the warming oven. When company came those aprons were ideal hiding places for shy kids; and when the weather was cold, grandma wrapped it around her arms. Those big old aprons wiped many a perspiring brow, bent over the hot wood stove. Chips and kindling wood were brought into the kitchen in that apron. From the garden, it carried all sorts of vegetables. After the peas had been shelled it carried out the hulls. In the fall the apron was used to bring in apples that had fallen from the trees.

When unexpected company drove up the road, it was surprising how much furniture that old apron could dust in a matter of seconds.

When dinner was ready, mother walked out onto the porch, waved her apron, and the men knew it was time to come in from the fields to dinner. It will be a long time before someone invents something that will replace that old-time apron that served so many purposes.

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# The 1939 Boy Scout Trip

by Doyle W. Ramey

Some time in the early afternoon of May, 1939 a bus load of happy campers left Lincoln Village. Actually, Scout Troop 29 on an Odyssey that would take them through Alabama, Florida and return through Georgia, back home. Needless to say, it was an indescribably fun trip for a bunch of mostly 12 year olds. Partly it was the anticipation of seeing the ocean and camping out. All those nights that caused all the excitement; it certainly wasn't the food.

Our food consisted mainly of pork and beans, apple butter and fruit cocktail. Plus, peanut butter. Our beverage was usually a fruit punch. We stopped each day to purchase our food needs.

Several adults accompanied us on this trip. We younger ones were happy to have them, since they raided the food store every night; and in order to keep us quiet about it, they fed us as they fed themselves. With those kind

of appetites, I guess you can wink at the scouts' honor code at least for a few times.

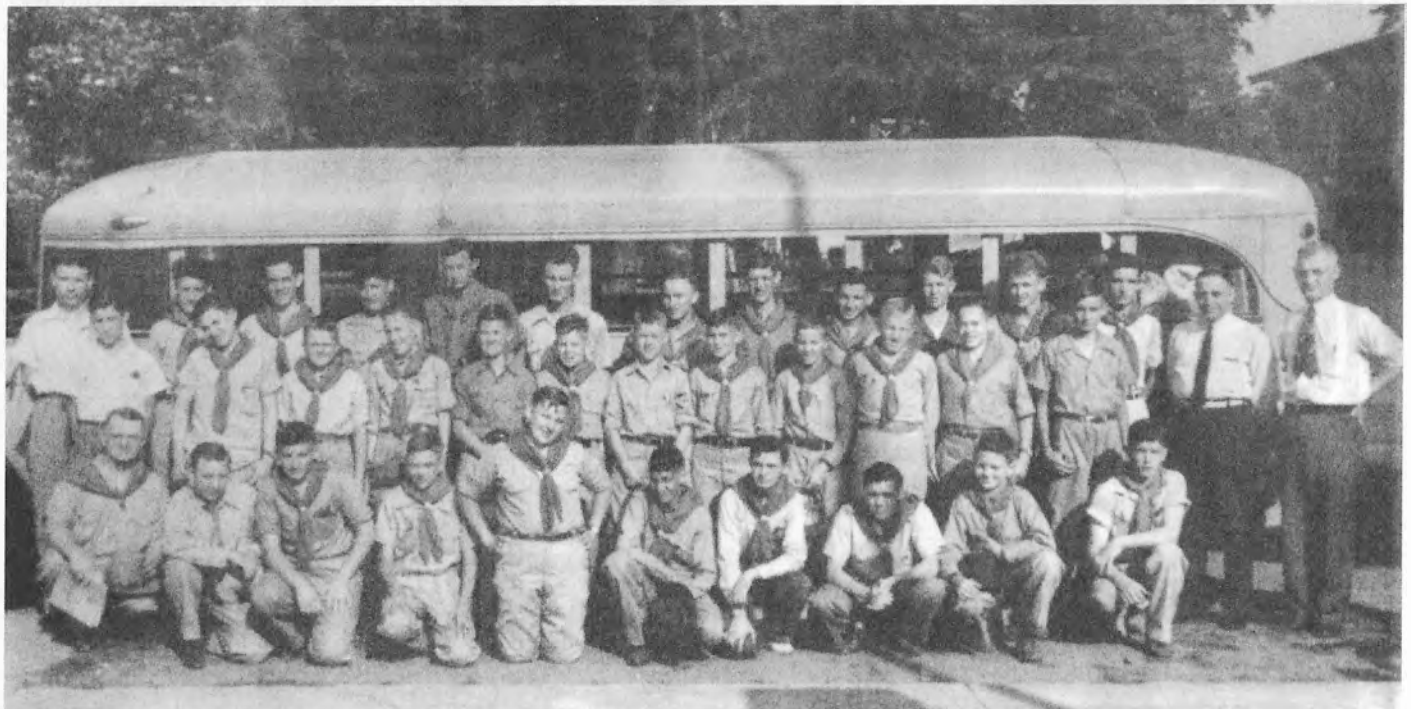
I was not quite 12 at the time of the trip, so my best friend, James L. Anderson of Scottsboro, whose father was the scout master and principal of the high school, asked his father to let me in early, so I could make the trip with the troop. Mr. Anderson approached my father about me taking the trip. The cost was two dol-

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Back row, left to right: Kermit Mathison, ?, ?, ?, John Hill, James Micher, Bill Daniels, ?, B. C. Carrol, Ed Newton, Basil Boggs, Lonnie Witt.



lars, plus one dollar for spending money. My dad said, "Sure, if he raises the money." Two dollars was nothing for me to earn, for I always had two jobs, plus two paper routes.

The trip was to take about ten days. Our first stop was in Oneonta, Alabama. We all jumped off the bus to buy a soft drink and probably a snack of some kind. This was the Trail Ways Bustop; so we were also able to use their facilities. Our first overnight stay was in Prattville, Alabama, which was the birthplace of Mr. Anderson. We used our bed rolls to sleep on the floor of the local skating rink. My friend James was able to spend the night with his grandparents, and he missed all the fun of camping on the floor.

From there, we passed through Birmingham, where we had a chance to look at a steel mill smelter. From there we headed for Pensacola, Florida, where we saw the ocean. We undressed in the bus and put our bathing suits on, and headed for the ocean. I got a little too far out into the ocean and was caught in the undertow, which was terrifying. Like Jonah, when the big fish belched him up onto the beach, I was like-wise propelled up on the beach, with a most valuable lesson.

The next stop was Tarpon Springs, Florida, where we were able to go out on a fishing boat; the boat was equipped with a glass bottom, where we could watch the sponges grow.

We were told this was a Greek Town and that everyone was so honest that you could hang a twenty dollar bill in front of one of their stores and it would be there the next day. We didn't try it. From Tampa we headed East for Daytona Beach, with a stop in Plant City, where Mr. Anderson had a relative that had an orange grove. We were allowed to get

off the bus and collect all the fruit we wanted. It was made more exciting by the fact that most of us only got fruit at Christmas time. As you might imagine, we made a real mess when while trying to eat that fruit on the bus; it was very sticky.

We stopped at Ross Allen Snake Farm and then headed for Daytona Beach, where we spread our tent over the bleachers and spent the most miserable night of our trip. It was our first introduction to sand fleas. If I close my eyes, I can still see the fellas out there scratching with both hands, and standing on their left foot, and scratch-

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ing with their right heel.

From Daytona, we headed North to Atlanta, where we camped out near Stone Mountain. Our trip was coming to a close and we headed back to Huntsville where members of our family were waiting in front of the high school. It was a real growth experience for us, getting along with each other over that period of time and enjoying camp fires at night. We also had a chance to work on Merit badges at some point. I didn't get to do many there, but I did at other times. I missed Eagle by five Merit badges.

It was a good thing we had a chance to do that trip then, because World War II broke out shortly thereafter. We would have never been able to do that with all the gas shortages and the like.

**(If anyone can identify the un-named people in the photo, pls call (256) 534-0502.)**

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Mr. H.R. Younger is in town seeking challengers to wrestle his two daughters. He claims his daughters have never been defeated and is offering a prize of \$100 to any man or woman who can stay in the ring with them for five rounds. They will wrestle as a team or individually. The rules are ten minute rounds with no holds barred.

*from 1901 newspaper*

# News From 1923

- Walter L. Harris, who has been associated with the W. L. Halsey Grocery Co. of this city for several years, leaves with his family tomorrow for Fayetteville, where he will represent the Trigg-Dobbs Co. R. B. Searcy has succeeded Mr. Harris as city salesman for Halsey Grocery Co., and has already assumed his duties.

- An automobile wreck occurred last night at the corner of Church and Holmes streets when a Standard Oil truck driven by S. H. Bice and a taxi owned by A. E. Overton collided in which the car of Mr. Overton was slightly damaged. None of the drivers were injured too badly.

- Three cases were docketed in city court Saturday morning. Wm. Jordan appeared and pled guilty and was fined \$10. The other two defendants, Will Ikard and John Kennedy of New Hope, forfeited their bonds and \$10 by not appearing.

- There was only one case in City Court this morning, that of Floyd Wallace, who was up on a charge of disorderly conduct. He pled guilty to hitting a woman in the head with a hatchet and was fined \$10.

- Mr. J. L. Harris of Triana says the recent storm caused four head of his cattle to run away. A reward is offered.

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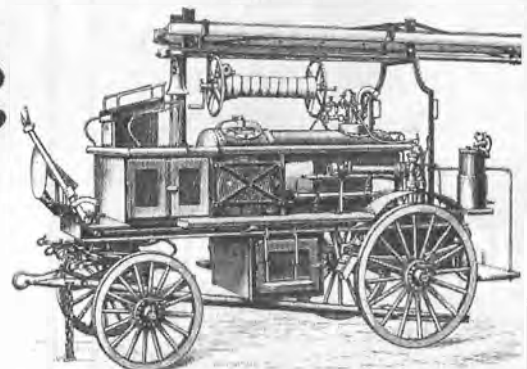
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# J.C. Brown General Merchandise

by Dr. James Jones

J. C. Brown's general merchandise store was located at the corner of Triana and 9th Ave. in West Huntsville. The building is still there and the sign says it was opened in 1898 by J. C. Brown. I did not know Mr. J. C., but my grandfather Jones was a friend. Grandpa said in Mr. J. C.'s later years he would sit in the back of the store where the horse and mule harnesses were hung on a nail keg, and visit with his old friends like my grandpa.

I worked at Brown's, as everyone called it, after school and on Saturdays and full time in the summer. I worked there during WWII in 1943 and 1944. Mr. J.C. was dead by then and the store was owned by his son Bill, who ran it until he died. During WWII Bill was away in the armed forces and Mr. Mert Edger was the manager when I worked there. I was 14 years old when I first went to work there. All the young men were away in military service then and kids like me did jobs they would normally do.

In the summer I worked 73 hours a week, for \$25.00. That was great money for a kid in 1943; I thought I was rich. Cokes were 5 cents and you could go to the Friday night movie at the McCormick YMCA for 10 cents. I think the Lyric downtown was 25 cents. Mr. Edger opened about 6:30 and closed about 8:30 or 9:00, and 10:00 on Saturdays. We closed on Wednesday afternoon as did most all Huntsville stores back then.

A friend of mine I grew up with, Big Ed Cantrell, told me he recently went through the old

building and the stock is still on the shelves just like Mr. Brown had closed for the day. They sold all the usual things you would find in a general store, clothes, shoes, cloth, thread, all kinds of dry goods, groceries, meats, livestock, feed, and supplies, hardware, you name it.

When I first went to work at Brown's I was in the grocery and dry goods. On Saturdays we would have hundreds of orders to fill for delivery. Very few people had cars in that part of town in 1943 and 44 and most of them had their groceries delivered.

During my employment in

that part of the store one of my most vivid memories was selling live chickens. The chickens were kept in small coop and the housewives would point to the chicken they wanted. I would reach in, grab both legs and with the wings flopping, remove the chicken, tie the legs together and weigh the whole live chicken. You never heard such squawking! I don't remember what the price was but you could be sure the chicken was fresh. These were all barnyard chickens allowed to run free and feed natural. Today, chickens like this are called range chickens.

After a short while I was moved to the meat market. I remember the butcher who was manager, Mr. Brazelton. Everyone called him Butch. He was an old timey type butcher who would go to the local livestock

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sales and buy most of the beef and pork that we sold. He was an expert at selecting choice meat.

Brown's had the reputation of having the best meat market in town and we had customers from all over Huntsville. All beef and most of the pork was custom cut. If you ordered t-bone steaks we would go get a loin and cut them while you waited.

Brown's was well known for the hoop cheese we sold. People from all over the county would come just for the cheese. When it was time to put a new round of cheese out, it came in a round wooden box, Mr. Brazelton would look through his supply and pick the one with the most mold on it. He would not sell one that was not properly aged.

Next to the meat market was the business office and it had a walk-up counter where people would pay their accounts. The store phone was on this counter. Miss Gertrude Nash was the office manager. Mr. Edger would allow the women whose husbands were away in the armed services to call their husbands on this phone and charge it to their

grocery bill. In West Huntsville, in 1943 and 44, very few people had telephones and many of them had never talked on a phone. I remember well Miss Gertrude telling them "you don't need to talk loud into the phone just because he's way off, just talk normal!"

Some of them would shout so loud you could hear them all over the store. I remember one woman when her husband got on the phone she shouted, "Henry this is Melvinney."

I had one experience in the market that I have thought about

**c o u n t l e s s** times over the years. There was a lady that always wanted me to wait on her. I don't know why but if I was busy with another customer she would wait. She was a rather large woman, not fat, just tall and big.

I noticed there was always this same man that seemed to be with her. He was small and always stayed at least twenty feet away and

when she left the market to cross the store to get her groceries, he would actually run to get out of her way.

In the middle of the store there was an old timey chest type soft drink case and there would always be several cases of soft drinks stacked in the area. Back then the drinks were all in glass bottles and wooden cases. One

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day he was standing in this area and in his haste to get out of the way he knocked over a whole stack of soft drink cases.

I asked Butch about this one day and he laughed and said, "That's her husband. They live in Booger Town and she makes him stay out in the coal house and feeds him on the back porch. She sets his plate on the porch and he stands on the ground and eats. The only time he comes in the house is when she tells him he can."

Over the years when Martha, my wife, gets after me, I think about this and tell myself, "I'm better off than the coal house man!"

After I came back to Huntsville to practice dentistry Mr. Brazelton's daughter was a patient of mine and I kinda kept up with him. He died when he was 84 years old. She said it was on a Saturday and he had worked 14 hours at Brown's, came home ate his supper, went out on the porch, set in his rocker and just fell over dead. Some of those old timers were tough.

I feel like I was very fortunate to have worked at Brown's as a part of my life's experience. I have many fond memories of growing up here in Huntsville during the 30's and 40's.

**"There are many intelligent species in the universe. They are all owned by cats."**  
**Mo Phillips**

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# Lewter's Hardware Store



In 1928 our great-grandfather, D.A. Lewter, and our grandfather, J.M. Lewter, started the family business in a small store on Washington Street. They believed in offering fair prices, treating each customer with special respect and giving great service.

A hand saw cost \$2.50, a padlock 8 cents and a hammer could be purchased for 85 cents. A lawn mower sold for \$6.50 and a 100 lb. barrel of nails was \$2.25.

While our prices have gone up slightly we still provide the same quality service our fore-fathers insisted on. We are the same family, doing the same business in the same location. Stop by and visit with us.

**A Hardware Store....**

**The Way You Remember Them**

*Domie Lewter*

*Mae Lewter*

**222 Washington St - 539-5777**

# When life was simple...



As hard as it may be to believe, Huntsville almost became an automobile manufacturing center. In 1947 the Keller Automobile Company leased a building on Redstone Arsenal, hired 130 employees and began operations.

The Keller Super Chief, a subcompact station wagon, was to be sold for about \$900. The production line was slated to produce 16,000 cars the first year and 72,000 each year thereafter.

Unfortunately, when George Keller suddenly died, most of the financial backing collapsed. Only 25 to 30 cars were actually produced before the company folded.

*Those days are long gone, but the folks at Propst Drug store still believe in offering the same dedicated, personal service that makes our city a special place to live.*

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