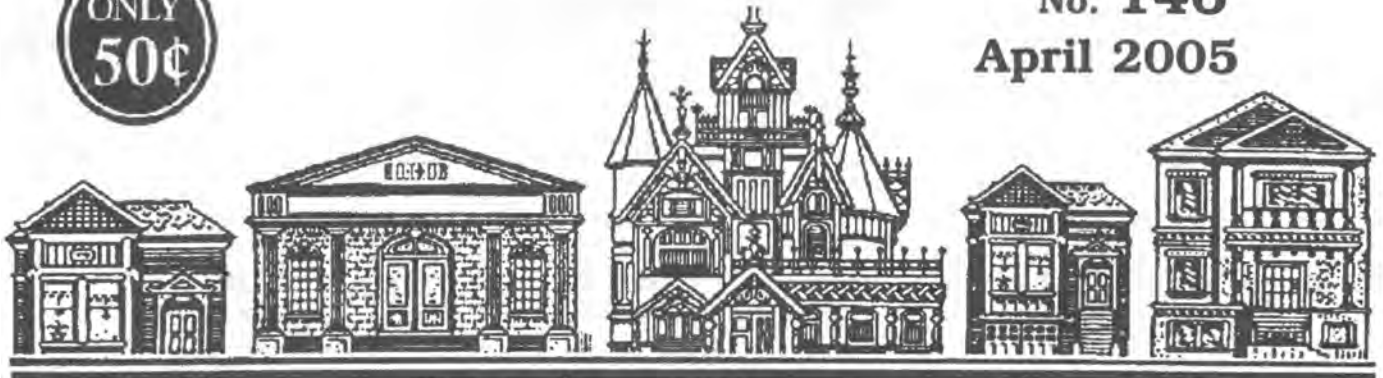


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## The Life of Howard Weeden

The easy life Howard and her family knew ended abruptly in her sixteenth year, when the Civil War erupted. Her three brothers enlisted in the Confederate army, leaving Howard, her sister Kate, and their mother to guard the house.

Howard contributed to the household income in the only way she could – by putting her artistic ability to use. She painted cards for special occasions such as weddings and parties, as well as cards of condolence. Soon she began composing short verses for the cards.

**Also in this issue: "A Visit with Tallulah"**

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# The Life of Howard Weeden

by Jack Harwell

At the corner of Gates Avenue and Green Street, in the Twickenham Historic District, stands the home of Maria Howard Weeden. Miss Weeden, who gained international acclaim for her artwork, was born and died here. Yet many people in her hometown are unfamiliar with her. There was certainly nothing of the celebrity in her character, if contemporary accounts are to be believed. Yet Weeden, who died 100 years ago this spring, was something of a celebrity in her day. Her poetry and drawings, created to preserve the memory of a people she genuinely admired, today provide a window through which we can glimpse life in old Huntsville in a way not covered in history texts. For that alone, she is worth getting to know.

Howard's father, William Weeden, came to Madison County in 1832 with his new wife, the

former Jane Watkins, whose husband had died seven years earlier. A widower, William had previously lived in Marengo County. He bought land a few miles west of town and made his home on a low mountain which is known to this day as Weeden Mountain. William made a handsome business selling cotton, and in 1845 he bought a house in the city one block south of the courthouse square. The original lot on which the house was located was much larger than today, with a half-block of frontage on both Gates and Green Streets. Mrs. Weeden used the space for a flower garden which provided her with much pleasure over the years. She filled the garden with peonies, hollyhocks, and her favorite, roses.

Not long after he bought the house, Mr. Weeden died unexpectedly while on a business trip, leaving a wife with four children and a fifth on the way. William Weeden's youngest child, a girl named Maria Howard by her mother, was born six months after her father's death, on July 6, 1846.

Howard's masculine name would raise some eyebrows after she became famous; she regularly received fan mail addressed to "Mr. Howard Weeden." It is said that Howard was the name of a Scottish clan from which her mother was descended and that her parents were expecting a boy.



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But other than her unusual name, there was very little that was remarkable about young Howard and her upbringing. Her wealthy father had provided for her and her siblings in his will, and the children grew up in relative privilege.

Howard was frail as a child and frail thereafter. Years later, visitors would marvel that such a dainty and seemingly unhealthy woman could produce the works of art that were attributed to her. Perhaps it was her sickly nature that led to her interest in art as a child. "I cannot remember when I did not draw and paint," she said later. She was taking lessons from William Frye, a local portrait painter, before she turned ten. Later, she may have taken art classes at the Huntsville Female Seminary or the Huntsville Female College.

The easy life Howard and her family knew ended abruptly in her sixteenth year, when the Civil War erupted. Her three brothers enlisted in the Confederate army, leaving Howard, her sister Kate, and their mother to guard the house, along with the black servants. A year later, Union soldiers marched into Huntsville, and the Weeden house was commandeered as their headquarters. The Weedens were forced to move into the slave quarters in back. But Mrs. Weeden soon found this situation intolerable, so one night,

a horse and carriage were slipped out of the stable, and the Weedens and their servants packed some clothes and left. Their destination was Tuskegee, where Howard's sister Jane and her husband were living. There they would remain for the remainder of the war. While the family was in Tuskegee, Howard received further art instruction at the Alabama Female College. She became closely acquainted with Dr. George W. F. Price, whose daughter Elizabeth would become Howard's closest friend and greatest admirer.

After the war, the Weedens returned to Huntsville to find their house ransacked. Federal officers who had used the house for quarters had helped themselves to the household furnishings, leaving the Weedens with nothing with which to start over. Thankfully, all three of Howard's brothers survived the war, but even with her husband's inheritance, Mrs. Weeden had difficulty feeding her family during those first few post-war years.

Howard contributed to the household income in the only way she could - by putting her artistic ability to use. She painted cards for special occasions such as weddings and parties, as well as cards of condolence. Soon she began composing short verses for the cards. By now, Howard was a young woman of 19. During the difficult years of war and recon-

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struction, she never lost her love of beauty, a love which she expressed in her art and in her mother's flower garden, which she and her sister Kate helped tend.

During this time, Howard also held art classes for the young girls of the community. Years later, these women would remember how Miss Weeden would take their badly drawn sketches and "touch them up" to make them more attractive. In this way, the students learned how to find beauty in seemingly unappealing things. One lady in particular recalled how Howard showed them how to make Japanese fans using old paint brushes for handles. When one of the girls accidentally smudged her fan, Howard told her to "just paint a butterfly over it" — thus turning a mistake into an adornment.

In 1881, Howard and Kate's mother Jane passed away, leaving the responsibility for maintaining the household on the two sisters. They continued to tend their mother's beloved flower garden until 1890, when they were forced by economic necessity to sell part of the land on which the garden was located. Even then, they kept flowers planted on what was left in her memory.

Howard continued to paint, copying poems in longhand and producing pictures to go with them. One day, while looking for a poem to use, she came across a verse titled "De Massa ob de Sheepfol", which was written by

Sarah Pratt McLean Greene and published in 1884. The poem was written in dialect as though it contained the words of a former slave. She recalled what happened next in a letter written years later: "I transcribed it and illustrated it in water colors with pastures and sheep galore and then in afterthought to indicate that it was a negro poem, put on the cover, an old negro head."

She set the work aside and thought no more about it at first. But not long afterward, she showed the little booklet to some visitors "of much travel and culture," as she described them later. They cared little for the picture she had painted to accompany the poem, but the portrait on the cover delighted them. So true-to-life did they find the picture of the old slave that they suggested Howard should throw out her colors except brown.

Howard didn't realize it at the time, but she had found the specialty that would define her career. It was obvious that she had a talent for painting the heads of the blacks she saw around her home, rendering them in rich detail using a brush which contained only three hairs. She had the talent, rare among portraitists, of capturing moods and feelings as well as faces. She was also intelligent enough to realize that she could use her gift to create not just pictures, but an historical record.

"There was a time," she wrote in 1904, "when I painted everything indiscriminately, like a mis-

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led amateur, until I woke one day to the fact that there was right around me a subject of supreme artistic interest, the old southern ex-slave, who with his black weather-beaten face and picturesque figure was rapidly slipping away." Howard was a great admirer of the stories of Joel Chandler Harris, whom she believed preserved the antebellum black culture in words with his Uncle Remus stories, and she resolved to do the same thing with her art.

So she decided to make another booklet to consist entirely of "negro" heads and poems to go with them. Painting the pictures was no problem, but she could never find another poem which she considered the equal of "De Massa ob de Sheepfol". So she began composing her own verses, all in dialect. Some of the poems included in that first volume were "Mother and Mammy," about someone who sees in heaven the faces of the two women dearest to her - her mother and her Mammy; "The Old Boatman," about an old slave who looks forward to going to heaven where his former master has already gone; and "Too Late," in which an eld-

erly former slave laments his inability to enjoy his newfound freedom, because his beloved wife is no longer with him. "Too Late" is truly a love poem, for the speaker recalls his former days with fondness, because he still had the woman he loved. The poem ends with the words:

So when dey talks 'bout being free,

An' I don't seem to heed 'em,  
You may jes' know my heart's brimful,

An' tears has drowned freedom!

In her writing, Howard Weeden used expressions and language that sound offensive to 21st century ears, and that might be off-putting at first glance. But it should be kept in mind that in her day such language was common, and not necessarily considered pejorative. She wrote her poems that way because that was the way her subjects spoke; she was simply recording, in words and pictures, what she saw and heard of a culture that she felt would otherwise be lost to future generations. She seemed to regard her subjects with genuine affection and respect; it was simply the way

she was.

A couple of instances from her life will illustrate this last point. In 1893 Howard visited the Columbian Exposition in Chicago, taking a few of her paint-

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ings to display. While there, she had occasion to see paintings of blacks by two other illustrators, both of whom portrayed their subjects in the clownish, minstrel-show style which was the stereotypical view of the former slaves at the time. Howard returned from Chicago with a newfound determination to paint the blacks as they really appeared, and not as the comic characters that many whites saw. She also had a number of orders for her paintings which the appreciative fair-goers in Chicago had placed with her.

Howard never had trouble finding subjects for her portraits, for they were all around her. She liked to go to the courthouse square on Saturday when blacks from the county came to town. As Elizabeth Humes Chapman noted in *Changing Huntsville 1890-1899*, Saturday was "Negro day" downtown, and the black citizens would gather to trade and visit all around the square. No white person without a compelling reason to go downtown would do so on Saturday, yet Howard regularly mingled with them, according to Chapman. As the blacks congregated in small groups, "Miss Howard loitered around the stores where these meetings were taking place, making notes of whole conversations and studying the difference in the old and young in

speech, manners, and dress."

Just as her portraits of the blacks were faithful renditions of their faces, Howard's poems were based wholly on their words. One hot summer afternoon, she heard voices through the open window on the west side of the house, facing Greene Street. Two older black men were there, engaged in a long, casual conversation. One of the men mentioned that he was going to Virginia for a visit; the other said that he had some news he wanted to send to family there. "What news is it?" his friend asked. "Well," said the man, "jes say - I sends my howdy-do." Howard wrote a poem entitled "Important News" that repeated this conversation almost verbatim.

But Howard could also use her poetic talents to deal with subjects of a more serious nature, as in "Too Late," mentioned above. Other examples were "The Borrowed Child," in which an older black woman tells of her child who has been dead more than forty years, and "The Worst of War," about a slave who accompanied his young master to war, and then had to break the news to his parents that he had been killed. "An' dat," the poem concludes, "was de worst of war!"

One of Howard's biggest supporters during this time was

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Elizabeth Price, the daughter of Dr. George Price, president of the Tuskegee Female Methodist College which Howard had attended during the war years. By the 1880s, Dr. Price had moved to Nashville and founded the Nashville College for Young Ladies. Elizabeth had kept up with Howard, who was eighteen years her senior, and despite the difference in age, they became the best of friends. Elizabeth owned many of Howard's paintings and enjoyed showing them to visitors, particularly the prominent people who visited her father's school.

In 1895, Elizabeth Price went to Europe to study music and took twelve of Howard's paintings with her. At a friend's suggestion, she showed them to Edward Schulte, owner of a popular art gallery in Berlin. Herr Schulte was delighted with Howard's work and immediately asked to display the paintings in his gallery. The paintings were immensely popular with Schulte's aristocratic clientele, although Elizabeth frequently had to conceal her amusement at some be-ribboned Prussian army officer in full dress uniform trying to read the dialect poems out

loud.

Up to this time, only a relative few had enjoyed the experience of seeing Howard's work, as her paintings and poems were seen only in galleries, like the one in Berlin, and in the homes of friends and others who had purchased copies of her work. Then, sometime around 1894, she was visited by William O. Allison of New York, who worked for the Dallas mill and had heard about Howard's art. When Allison saw the prodigious amount of work that Howard had produced, he asked if her pieces were insured. "You should not only insure them, you should copyright them," he said. "If you will permit me, I shall consult a publisher for you."

Howard, whose talents did not extend to the legal realm, was happy to let Allison arrange for the publication of her work.

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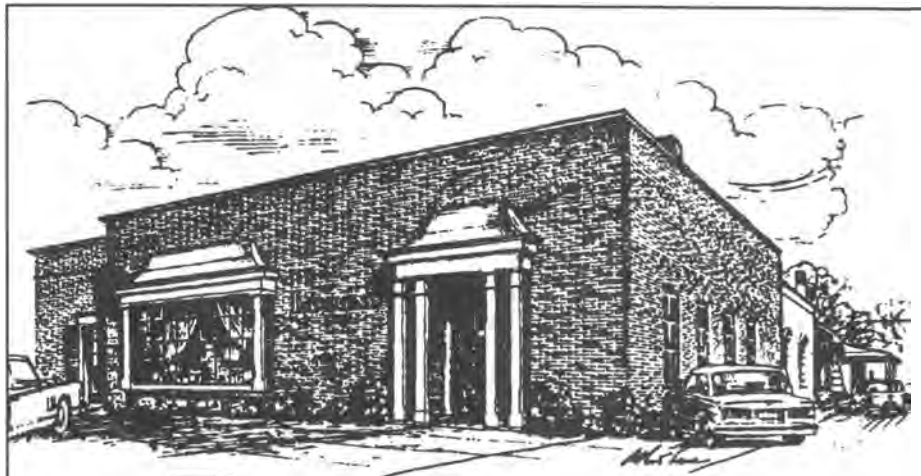
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Allison offered to take Howard's verses and paintings back to New York, where they would be published. "This he did," Howard wrote years later, "and when I saw them again, they were in the form of a slender little gray and gold volume entitled 'Shadows on the Wall.'"

*Shadows on the Wall* contained twelve of Howard's poems, including the aforementioned "Mother and Mammy," "Too Late," and "The Old Boatman," with accompanying artwork. The artistic world was thrilled, many learning therein about the culture of black Americans for the first time. The book was praised in the Southern press, but also in northern newspapers such as the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. Most gratifying was a piece done for the *Atlanta Constitution* by Joel Chandler Harris, which described *Shadows on the Wall* as "a book in which pictorial art of the strongest and most vital kind is carried hand in hand with a soft and gentle accompaniment of song."

The first edition of *Shadows on the Wall* was published by D. Appleton and Company of Boston. Twelve hundred copies were printed and were placed on sale for one dollar each. They sold out almost immediately, despite the fact that Howard's exquisitely rendered heads were in black and white. In Atlanta, there was a long

line of customers at the one book store which was fortunate enough to secure a few copies for sale. A second printing was quickly ordered to meet the demand. Then, there came a potentially disastrous incident - the publishing house was destroyed by fire. Among the losses were Howard's paintings and verses, as well as the plates used to print the book.

Although undoubtedly saddened by the financial loss, Howard did not brood for long. She set about producing more art and poetry for publication. The fire had one unexpected benefit - it led to Howard's work being turned over to a larger publisher, Doubleday, McClure and Company, for future publication. The demand for her work was simply too great for a small firm to handle. Her second book, *Ban-*

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*danna Ballads*, came out in 1899. It contained all the poems and pictures from the first book along with eight new pieces. The introduction was written by Joel Chandler Harris himself. He praised the book for presenting the former slaves as they really were – no more, and certainly no less.

Orders for Howard's paintings came from all parts of the country, and she did her best to meet the demand in spite of her delicate health. Writing to Elizabeth in the spring of 1898 she confessed, "I don't do anything but race and when night comes I go to bed as tired as if I'd been running . . . I got so behind with my orders the two weeks I was in Nashville and the time I lost after, before I could work, that it is hard to catch up." Still, she found time for some travelling (she was a frequent visitor to Nashville, where Elizabeth lived), and in October 1900 she visited Atlanta where she was introduced – finally – to Joel Chandler Harris.

In spite of all her sudden no-

tority, Howard Weeden did not live the celebrity life, preferring to spend her spare time at the old house at Gates and Greene. The walls of the lower floor were covered with her paintings, and guests dropped by frequently to meet the artist and view her works. She was said to be most gracious with unannounced visitors. Her sister Kate kept busy in her mother's flower garden, which Howard frequently mentioned in her letters to Elizabeth Price. "Our little garden is already a bower of roses and wisteria," she wrote to Elizabeth in Berlin. On one of her final visits to the Weeden home, in the summer of 1904, Elizabeth spent time in the garden with Howard in a memorable visit which she recalled for a newspaper interview years later. "Miss Howard Weeden is always charming, but most so when in the setting of her own quiet parlor at Weeden Place or in the sweet old-fashioned garden, where one wanders with her and her sister, who is also a woman of delightful conversation and sympathy . . . There are several seats about in this dear old garden, and surely the dearest spot is under a bower of roses where one can sit and talk through the quiet fragrant twilight with these two charming women."

Never a healthy person, Howard was destined for a short life. Her eyesight was poor, and she suffered from frequent headaches. Still, she managed to com-

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plete two more collections of poems and paintings, *Songs of the Old South* (1901) and *Old Voices* (1904). Howard fell ill for the last time in January, 1905, and passed away early on the morning of April 12. She died in the front parlor of the old house, the same room in which she had been born 58 years earlier.

Tributes to Howard continued long after her passing. In 1910, the Daughters of the American Revolution placed a bronze plaque on the house, in which Kate was still living. A memorial service at the YMCA featured musical renditions of Howard's poems. April 12, the anniversary of her death, was proclaimed Howard Weeden Day in Alabama, and was marked by appropriate exercises in public schools. The date was observed in Huntsville's schools for over thirty years.

Elizabeth Price kept the memory of her dear friend alive for the rest of her life. As a living link to the poetess, she was much sought after for interviews. In 1935, she chaired an exhibition of Howard's work at the Parthenon in Nashville, playing a role similar to that which she had carried out in Berlin forty years earlier. She lived well into her 90s, dying in 1959.

Shortly before her death in 1918, Kate Weeden deeded the house to her nephew, John Patton Weeden. When he died in 1955, the property went to his daughter. In 1956 the house was sold at public auction, the first time in more than a century that it had been out of the Weedens' hands. Eventually, the house came into the possession of the Huntsville Housing Authority.

Today, the Weeden House is operated as a museum. Its caretakers have kept it as close as possible to its appearance when Howard and Kate lived there. Inside, you can see the parlor where Howard was born and died, the stand where she did her painting,

and, as then, the wall covered with her paintings. Walking through the old house, it is easy for the visitor to imagine what it must have been like when the two sisters lived there, particularly on late fall afternoons, when the evening traffic on the street outside has died down. You can look out the window onto Greene Street, where Howard overheard the conversation between the two older black men that inspired the poem "Important News."

Finally, out back of the house is the garden that is still planted with flowers as it was all those years ago. There, it's possible to imagine that you are one of Miss Howard's visitors, and are enjoying her company in the midst of her mother's flower garden. If she were there with you, she would certainly enjoy the experience as much as you.




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# A Haunting Melody

by **Chuck Yancura**

The story began in 1862 during the Civil War when a Union Army officer, Capt. Robert Ellicombe, was with his men near Harrison's Landing in Virginia.

The Confederate Army was on the other side of this narrow strip of land. During the night, Ellicombe heard the moan of a soldier who lay mortally wounded on the field.

Not knowing if it was a Union or Confederate soldier, the captain decided to risk his life and bring the stricken man back to his camp for medical attention.

Crawling on his belly through gunfire, the captain reached the stricken soldier and began pulling him toward his encampment.

When the captain finally reached his own lines, he discovered it was actually a Confederate soldier, but the soldier was dead.

The captain lit a lantern. Suddenly, he caught his breath and went numb with shock. In the dim light, he saw the face of the soldier.

It was his son.

The boy had been studying music in the South when the war broke out. Without telling his family, he had enlisted in the Confederate Army.

The following morning the heartbroken father asked permission of his superiors to give his son a full military burial despite his enemy status. His request was partially granted.

The captain had asked if he could have a group of Army band members play a funeral dirge for his son at the service. That request was turned down, since the young man died fighting for "the enemy." However, out of respect for the father, they did say that they would give him one musician.

The captain chose a bugler. He asked the bugler to play a series of musical notes he had found on a piece of paper in the pocket of the dead youth's uniform. The wish was granted.

The music was the haunting melody Americans now know as "Taps," used at all military funerals.

## Searching for Parents

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# Huntsville Happenings in 1907

- An older man, too drunk to walk, was arrested this afternoon by Officer Bullard on a charge of drunkenness. The old man was too intoxicated to walk alone and he was hauled to the city lockup in a delivery wagon.

- A Negro by the name of Sharpe appeared in the recorder's court and complained that while driving his mule along East Holmes Street last night his mule ran into a pile of brick, the presence of which was not disclosed by any sign of warning. His mule broke its leg but was not shot.

- The city street force and Superintendent Murphy are making improvements in various portions of the city. California Street is being graded and put in good condition. Granitoid pavements are being laid with the promise made by the realty firm that developed the property further out this street.

- Good use is being made of the street force, and the convicts who are sentenced to hard labor are required to do the good work.

- The raid made by the police last night on the disorderly house produced good results. Mary White, Remy Wales and Jenny

Humphrey were fined \$100 each with the option of working out the fines at the rate of .50 cents the day. Charlie Mason, a young man who was caught in the house was fined \$100. Mary Davison, an inmate of the house, was given 24 hours in which to get out of the city and unless she is gone by that time she must pay a fine of \$100 or begin a term of 209 days labor. Four young men who were caught in the same raid were discharged.

- Dave Pointer was fined \$5 for

using profane language in the presence of females.

- John Sutherfield for drunk and disorderly and for carrying a pistol was given a term of 60 days.

- Mary Macon fined \$10 for assaulting her husband.

One of the nice things about getting older is that you can whistle while you brush your teeth.

Paul Firenzi

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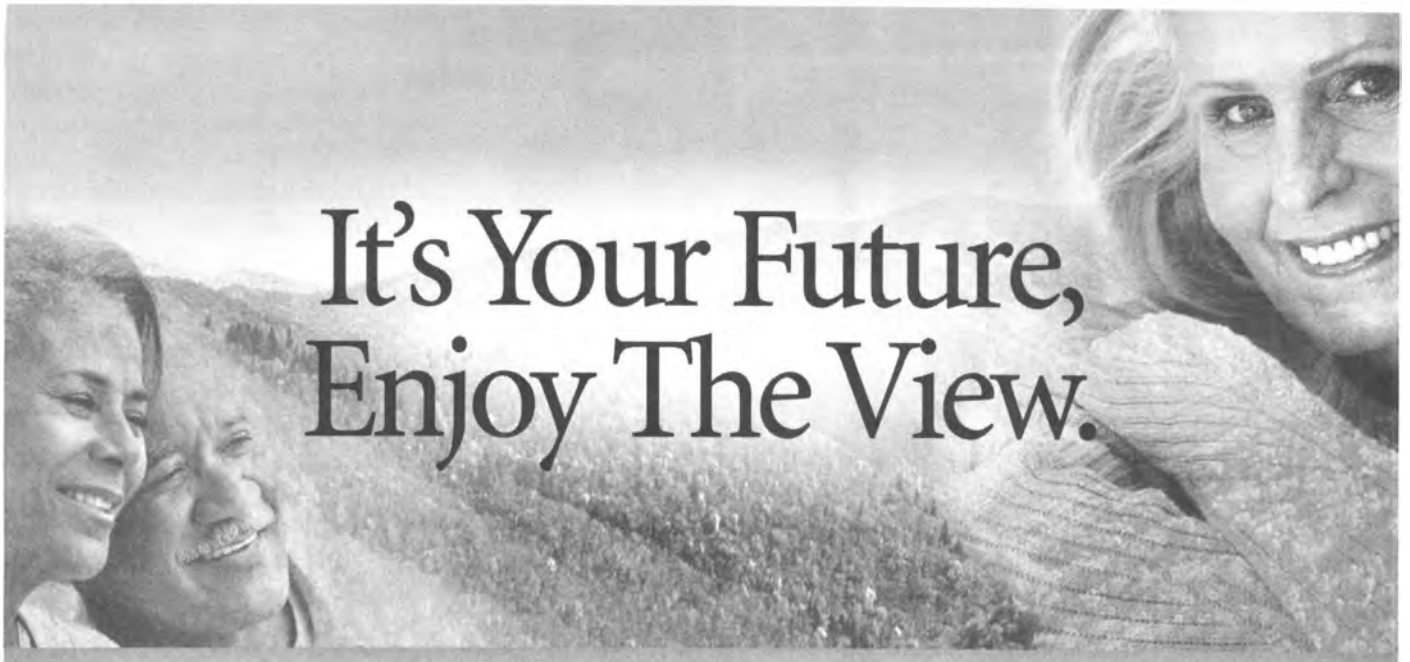
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# Heard On The Street

by *Cathey Carney*



Congratulations to **Donna Gurley**, of CVS, who correctly guessed the Photo of the Month for last month. It was none other than the handsome **Joe Reid**, of Reid Hardware, taken when he was serving in the military. We had many calls on this one, but only the first one wins!

It's hard to believe that **Russ Letson** is 60 years old! He works at Hewlett-Packard Co. here in Huntsville, and his children threw a surprise birthday party for him at the Monte Sano Lodge. The proud kids who pulled off the surprise are **Marie Bourland, Kevin Letson** and **Monique Cannon**.

**Chuck Chambers** says to tell everyone Hello! Many may remember his parents, **Erskine** and **Margaret Chambers** who lived on East Clinton Avenue for years.

**Bob Ward** has not been feeling well lately, and we wanted to tell him we're thinking about him and hope he's feeling better really soon.

Huntsville welcomes a sweet new family to the city - **John** and **Stefanie Troup** are now living here along with their sweet children **Hannah** and **Evan Troup**. Great-grandparents **Chuck** and **Annelie Owens** are especially

happy they're finally here!

We hear that **Rosetta Fuller's** grandfather **Dale Dugan** is really sick. We are saying prayers for him so he gets better really soon!

A special hello to our friend **Hallie Kilpatrick** from Gurley. She'll be 90 years young this October, having been born on Whitesburg Pike, and says hello to all her friends in Gurley and the Hurricane Creek area.

Our buddy **Richard Van Valkenburg** sure is in the social scene lately! Every time we turn around he's in the paper again!

Happy birthday to **Brandon Owens** of Murfreesboro! Proud parents **Ken** and **Diane Owens** hosted a fun birthday party for him recently and he partied along with his lovely wife **Susan**.

We got a call from **Opal Tabor** last week. She worked for **Wernher Von Braun** for 27 years as his receptionist, and will be 84 this month. She is currently at the Madison County Board of Education, still working!

We are excited about an upcoming series the **Huntsville Times** is working on to celebrate

Huntsville's 200th year anniversary. Some of the very talented writers working on the project are **Kay Campbell** and **Steve Doyle**.

**Linda Hamlin's** stepmom **Betty Hamlin**, of Crystal River in Florida, has been under the weather lately, and we send good wishes to her on her upcoming move.

The former Thiokol employees recently held their annual breakfast at the Senior Center. We met with so many who remember the good old days at Thiokol - people like **Sam Zeman, John L. Williams, Bill Stogner, Nita Boyd, John D. Brown, and Barbara Plonka**.

Congratulations to **Ann Collins** who recently moved to Redstone Village. She says she loves not worrying about yard maintenance and home repair anymore!

We had a great talk with **Helen Acuff** and **Faye Jones** recently. They remember the good old days in Huntsville and graduated from Butler High with **Johnny Johnston**.

## 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: He's retired now but was well known around the courthouse for years.



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**Nita Boyd's** granddaughter **Ella Boyd** is so sweet! She's 2 years old and loves to dance and sing and performing in general.

A big Happy Birthday to **June Maples** who is going to be 70 years old in May. She sure is a sweet lady!

We talked with **Jerry Barksdale** of Athens recently. He just finished a novel and we understand he's working hard on another one. He sure is a nice guy and has many friends in this area.

Speaking of writers, we hear that **LeeAnna Keith** of New York is writing a book about the Calhoun family of Huntsville. She is very talented and her proud dad is the famous **Sam Keith** of 5 Points.

**J. B. Tucker**, Mayor of Hurricane Creek, has been ailing lately and we hope that he gets to feeling better really soon. He loves fresh veges and can't wait to start gardening!

We recently spent time with **Diane McWhorter** who was visiting here from New York doing research for a book about Huntsville. She is a very impressive young lady whose last book, "Carry Me Home", about Birmingham, won a Pulitzer prize.

We got together with some old friends of ours recently and had a ball! **John Rader**, **Dewitt Uptagrafft** and **Frank Smith** were all recalling events that happened years ago at Hewlett-Packard Co.

It was good to see **Bill Russell**, **Deane Herbert**, **Tom Bryant**, **Don Royston** and **Bob Presto** recently.

We met the "Master Bird Dogger" of all time last week in Black Water Hattie's - none other than **Jerry Pylant**. When he's not bird-dogging, he raises cattle in Morgan County!

A very handsome couple were there as well - **Aubrey Sealy** and his fiance **Cha Cha Martinez**. She says he's going to marry her but she hasn't told him the date yet -

maybe this summer.

**Trudy Long** was lots of fun to be around recently - she rides a Harley and her advice to everyone is to "Be Happy - Ride a Harley!" Jane Yoakum was there also.

We were so sorry to learn of the death of former U.S. Representative **Tom Beville** recently. He was a good friend of many and will be missed.

Happy Birthday to **Tom Gurley**. Eat a big piece of cake for us!

A big hello to Ollie White who is one of the sweetest people we know!

Boy, it's a long time off but people are already talking about the next mayor's race. We hear people are already talking about raising money. Won't everyone be surprised if **Loretta** decides to run again!

Well, that's about all for this month. Just remember how lucky we all are to live in a place like Huntsville, Alabama!

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# RECIPES

## Helion Lodge #1 Favorites

The following recipes are a sampling of just a few favorite recipes from the members of the first and oldest Masonic Lodge in Alabama - which got its start in the city of "Twickenham" (later Huntsville) in 1811 as Helion Lodge #21. It later merged with another lodge and became Helion Lodge #1, 409 Lincoln Street, in 1834.

### The Master's Pie

- 2 lbs. Jimmy Dean hot sausage
- 1 lb. Bryan hickory smoked bacon
- 1 - 32oz. can mixed greens
- 1 - 32oz. can speckled butter beans
- 1 - 16oz. can purple hull peas
- 1 - 16oz. can white acre peas
- 2 - 16oz. Cajun Veg-all
- 2 lbs. Sharp Cheddar cheese, finely shredded
- Cornmeal

- 2 eggs
- Buttermilk

Fry bacon and set aside, reserve drippings for cornbread mix. Brown sausage. In a large Dutch oven, combine beans, peas, Veg-all, sausage, crumbled bacon and top with cheddar cheese.

Make your favorite cornbread mix. I use bacon drippings with cornmeal mix, eggs and buttermilk. Pour over the contents in dutch oven and bake at 350 degrees until cornbread is done and golden brown.

*Jim Henley*

### The Steward's Rotini Salad

- 1 pkg. tri-colored rotini noodles
- 1 - 32oz. jar Cheese Whiz
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup

2 cans sliced water chestnuts  
Cook rotini til tender, about 8 minutes. In a large saucepan combine soup and cheese whiz and heat til cheese has melted and is well mixed. In a large and deep casserole dish combine all ingredients and bake at 300 degrees for 20 minutes.

*Jim Henley*

### The Tiler's Treat

- 2 - 8oz. cream cheese
- 2 cans crescent rolls
- 1 c. sugar
- 1 egg (separated)
- 1 t. vanilla extract
- Topping:**
- 1/2 c. sugar
- 2 t. cinnamon
- 1/2 c. chopped pecans

In a 13x9" baking pan, add one layer of crescent rolls to bottom. Mix all ingredients til creamy. Spread over the layer of crescent

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rolls. Top with another layer of crescent rolls, brush on egg white. Mix topping ingredients together and sprinkle all over top. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes. Let cool, then serve.

*Jim Henley*

## Steve's Famous Cherry Crunch

### **Crust:**

- 2 sticks butter
- 2 c. plain flour
- 1 1/2 c. pecans, chopped

Melt the butter, mix with flour and spread over 9x13" pan evenly. Press the pecans into the dough, bake at 300 degrees for an hour.

### **Filling:**

- 1/2 box powdered sugar
- 2 drops lemon juice
- 1 - 8oz. pkg. cream cheese

Blend these ingredients together and mix with 1 large container Cool Whip.

Top with 2 cans of cherry pie filling. There won't be any left!

*Steve McGlocklin*

## P-Nut Butter Pie

- 3 egg yolks
- 3 c. milk
- 1 c. sugar
- 1/2 c. cornstarch
- 1/4 t. salt
- 1 c. extra crunchy peanut butter

- 2 t. vanilla
- 1 baked graham cracker crust pie shell
- 1 med. Cool Whip
- 1 pkg. chopped peanut topping

Combine egg yolks and milk in saucepan, blending well. Combine sugar, cornstarch and salt; stir in egg mixture. Cook, stirring constantly til thick.

Pour hot filling in large mixing bowl and cover with waxed paper. Chill an hour. Whip chilled mixture until creamy and add p-nut butter and vanilla. Beat til smooth.

Pour filling in pie shell and spoon on Cool Whip, then top with sprinkling of chopped nuts.

*Jim Henley*

## Tater Crunch Casserole

- 1 bag frozen hash browns Southern style
  - 8 oz. sour cream
  - 1 c. cheddar cheese
  - 1 can Cream of Mushroom soup
  - 1 can Durkee's baked onion rings
  - Salt and Pepper
  - 1/2 c. milk
  - 1 can Cream of Chicken soup
- In a 9x13" baking pan pour slightly thawed hash browns, salt and pepper to taste.
- Blend soups and sour cream;

pour over hash browns and repeat layers. Bake at 375 for an hour uncovered for the last 15 minutes, then top with onion rings and bake for final 5 minutes til golden brown.

*Jim Henley*

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# We Shall Not Be Moved

by Ruby Crabbe

When I was a youngster growing up in Dallas Village, so many things happened it would be hard for me to remember them all. But some events I'll never forget, like the "Famous Strike" at Dallas Textile Mills.

The picket line in front of the mill was long and the strikers were tired. Some of them carried large banners proclaiming the strike and warning people not to cross the picket line. I can't remember who all took part in cooking food for the strikers but I do know that my mother, Josie Allen, did. My stepDad, Mr. Lonnie Allen, took part in the cooking also.

Every day at noon he and

Mama would fix hamburgers and coffee for the strikers. Now when I say hamburgers - I mean it would be such a large sack full it would be hard for us kids to even carry. Plus, we carried a pot that held three or four gallons of hot steaming coffee.

I remember one night several of the union members had a meeting at this certain house. During the meeting someone spoke up and said, "Boy, what would I give right now if I had all the good fried chicken I could eat!" At that remark the lady of the house got up and excused herself from the meeting.

It wasn't long before the odor of good fried chicken just filled the house. It appeared that three good-sized fryers had been roosting on a water pipe right outside the back door. Don't know whose chickens they were but they were never seen again on the roost.

I remember the union members and the nonunion members having a little get-to-together on 5th Street, now known as Andrew Jackson Way. The union members were on one side of the street, the nonunion members on the other. On the union side a large platform had been erected, and on top of it was what appeared to be a machine gun. Don't know if it was the real thing or not, but a lot of the people didn't hang around long enough to find out. And on top of that platform

stood Bill Jaco. He was singing loud and clear "We shall not be moved." That song generated a lot of angry offensive yells, but did that bother Brother Bill? No, it only made him sing louder and louder, "We Shall Not Be Moved!"

**A very diplomatic husband to his wife: "How do you expect me to remember your birthday when you never look any older?"**

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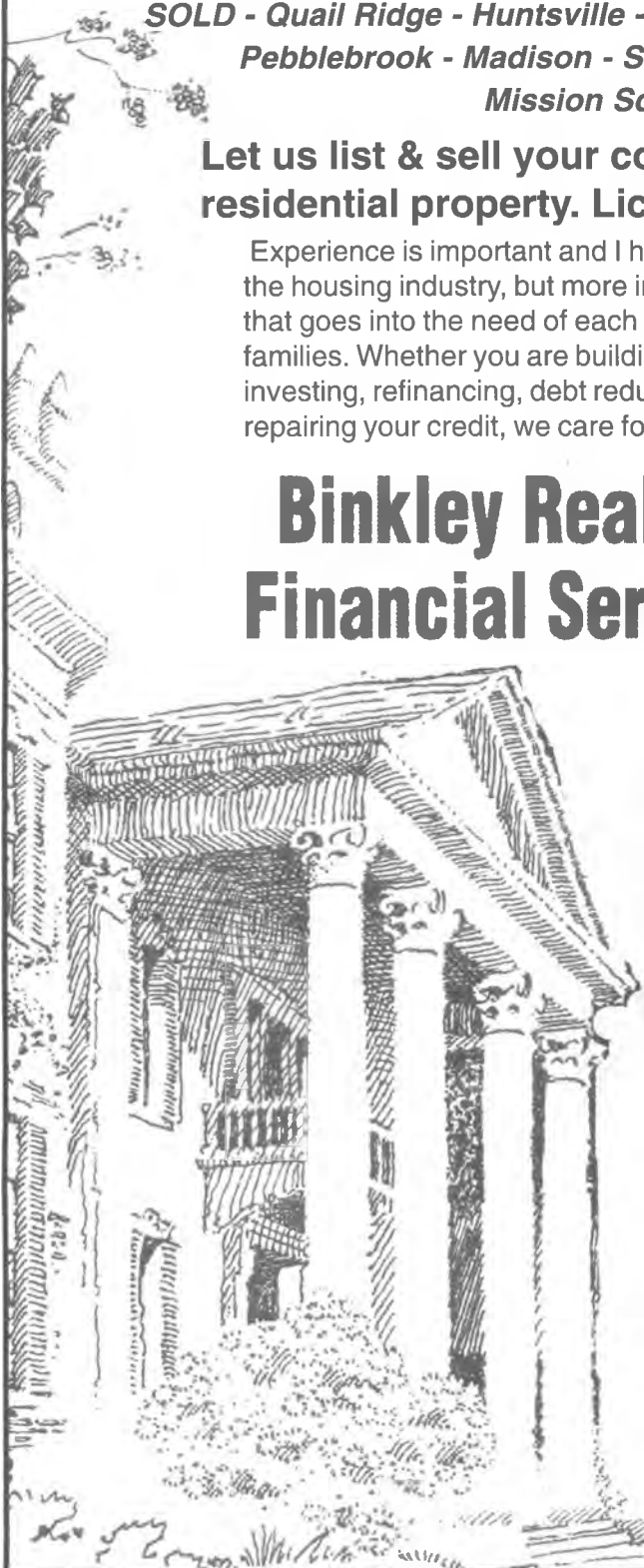
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# Memories of the Terry Family

by James H. Terry  
(Written in the 1960s)

The Terry boys about whom I write were the sons of Mary Darwin and George Lee Terry, and were born and raised on a rocky farm in N.E. Madison County about 4 miles from the town of New Market, Al. They got their early schooling at the only school in New Market, and walked to and from school at an early age. Syd, who was the oldest boy at home had to quit school to help with the farm work. When he became old enough he went to work in one of the general stores in New Market.

In the year 1880 Syd decided to leave New Market and try his luck in the city. He went to Birmingham, a fast growing new town of about 10,000 people. The first job offered him was with a butcher shop, and he was told to be at work at 4 a.m. the next day. Arriving late he lost his chance of becoming a butcher and he told me later that he was never late again for an appointment.

He moved back to New Market after working at various jobs in Birmingham. He went into the general store business with one of the older merchants with whom he later formed a partnership and

married his boyhood sweetheart, Miss Elladee Podgers. This was in 1884. She later bore him 4 children, 3 boys and 1 girl.

Syd's brother, Tom, next to him in age, finished what education he could get in New Market and went to Huntsville where he worked for several years with K. Klaus & Co. on the north side of the square and also part time with Darivint Pulby on the south side of the square.

Syd and Tom got together and decided it was an opportune time for them to set up their business in the city. Dad then moved to Huntsville with his wife and four children and they rented a store on the east side of the square in the Holding Block. This was in the year 1892. They stocked their store with general merchandise and so the Terrys were on their way. Syd rented a house on the road east of town just beyond Maple Hill cemetery overlooking vacant fields to the

north up to the cotton mill village of Dallas Mill. Syd rode a bicycle to and from work. He and Uncle Tom prospered and later had two of their younger brothers come down and work for them. These last two boys were Doc and Jeff, and both were to become successful businessmen in Huntsville.

The father and mother of the Terry boys also came to the city to live, and Jeff stayed with them on Randolph St. By hard work and application the Terry boys prospered and about Christmas time of 1896 Tom made Syd a proposition. "Syd, we have enough goods to start two stores. I'd like for us to divide our stock and as we both have good credit we can buy other goods in the markets. Instead of taking stock, I'll take one side of the store with all goods in it, and you take the other side. I'll keep Jeff with me and you take

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Doc." So they separated and Uncle Tom moved his part of the goods to the south side of the square, where he lived and prospered until he died in 1948. His son Ira took over his dad's store and continued in the same location until 1963.

Uncle Tom had amassed quite a fortune and left Ira a wonderful business. T. T. Terry's store operated in this same location on the slogan "Great Is The Power Of Cash", and Tom and Ira operated 3 or 4 buildings adjoining the business with openings from one store to the other. They continued operation in this location for 70 years.

Uncle Tom was a great and spectacular merchant. Back in the early days he advertised a new addition he was opening to his chain of stores to be held at 2 a.m. on a certain night, and spread the news all over the county and surrounding territory. He said he would give one silver dollar each to the first 100 people to come in the store. People came in droves from all around and the doors had to be locked, and people let

in a few at a time to keep from breaking in the floor. I was there and saw this. He had a jug band playing and served food and soft drinks to all. Soon after, Syd and Tom parted as partners. Syd and Doc moved to Jefferson St. and opened business there and that's where they were when the Spanish War was going on. This is where these two were from 1895 until about 1903. Kleber Rodgers was taken in to the firm of the Terry Bros. Kleber was my mother's first cousin. They stayed in the location and prospered.

The Spanish American War was over in 1898-99. About this time 3,000 soldiers were sent to Huntsville before being mustered out. Captain John M. Pershing was here and in charge of a negro regiment and it is said this is how he got the nickname of "Black Jack." This large encampment brought lots of extra money into our city and the Terry Bros and Rodgers did well. During this time they bought an uptown lot at the corner of Washington and Clinton and erected a large building (still standing) and occupied by

Dunnnavants department store. We had by then outgrown our first home so dad (Syd) had our own home erected on the corner of E. Holmes and White Street. By this time there were two more boys added to the first four children. We were just a short distance from the East Clinton public school,



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teaching 1<sup>st</sup> grade through high school. This was the only public school for whites in huntsville. All of the boys and girls in our neighborhood used to meet under the gas lights in summer nights on our corner and play hide and seek and other harmless games. There were no movies then, or radios or TVs, so we had to amuse ourselves in the only way we could.

I remember as we would sit out on our front porch just before dark, a boy would ride by on a pony, and with a torch in his hand, would turn on and light one of the first street lights in town, a lantern on an iron post at our corner.

When we had outgrown this house - there were now six children - dad (Syd) bought a large frame house on Meridianville Pike. We had a seven acre lot on which we raised much of our food. We kept cows and horses, and chickens. We did all of our farm work, and sometime we would plant watermelons and when they got ripe we older boys would peddle and sell them around town from a small wagon pulled by a horse. Dad would let us keep all the money we took in.

This small farm of ours was about 2 miles from town and school, but we walked to and from school and sometimes to and from the store in town. We kept horses and buggy to use when

needed. There were now 8 children, six boys and two girls.

We lived and worked and grew on this little farm until about 1906-07. Dad decided to sell his interest in the store of Terry Bros and Rodgers - also our little farm home. This decision to leave Huntsville was because dad worked too hard and didn't get enough rest or recreation, so we packed and shipped all of our belongings and moved to San Marcos, Texas, a small college town about midway between San Antonio and Austin.

Upon arriving in San Marcos, I bought a half interest in an insurance agency and remained in this business for several years. My dad bought a wholesale feed business so I sold my interest in the insurance business and started in to work for dad. I helped in the store and calling on stores in the town and area. In the meantime I met and became engaged

to Miss Emily Stanfield, daughter of Prof. S.W. Stanfield. We were married in San Marcos in 1913 and took a train to Senton, Tx. where I had purchased interest in a real and insurance firm with an old friend

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of dad's. We did quite well until the First World War started in 1913. My oldest son James H. Terry Jr. was born in a San Antonio hospital in 1914. The war played havoc with our business so I sold my interest.

I got a job carrying the mail out of Sinton. I drove a 26 mile route with a horse and buggy or rode it on horseback after rains which would make roads impassible by rig, as the black mud on roads stuck to the wheels so they wouldn't turn.

Dad moved back to his former home in Huntsville in 1916. He bought back the lease and stock of the last place of business he had left in 1906. He sent for me to come back and join him and my brother Sydney. The firm was named S. L. Terry and Sons. In the meantime Jeff Terry, dad's youngest brother, had established his own business at the corner of Jefferson and Holmes, and Uncle Doc opened his own store on the court house square and both were doing good business. In 1924 I sold my share in dad's store back to him and I joined with my cousin George Terry and bought Uncle

Tom's piece goods department which we operated together until I got the wander bug again.

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# Days of Slavery

*The following was written in 1934 as part of the Federal Writers Project*

I am a hundred and one years old, 'cause I was twenty-eight, going on twentynine, a man growed, when the breaking-up came. I'm pretty old, but my folks live that way. My white marster, who was the brother of my daddy, lived to be a hundred and four. Al Carter, my daddy, lived to be very ageable, but I don't know when he died.

Back in Alabama, Mis' Adeline Carter took me, when I was past my creepin' days, to live in the big house with the white folks. They never hit me a lick nor slapped me once, and they told me that they would never sell me away from them. They were the best quality white folks, and they lived in a big two-story house with a big hall that ran all the way through it.

There was a good fireplace for cooking, and on Sundays the mistress would give the niggers a pint of flour and a chicken to cook a mess of vittles for themselves. Then, there was plenty of game for them to find for themselves. Many is the time when I killed seventy-five or eighty squirrels out of one big beech.

Our place was fifteen hundred acres in one block, and besides the crops of cotton, and corn we raised in the bottoms, we raised

vegetables and sheep and beef. I couldn't hardly eat fresh beef, but mostly we dried beef on scaffolds we built. I used to tend the beef as we were drying it out. But best of anything to eat I liked a big fat coon, and I always liked honey. Some of the slaves had little garden patches they tended for their own use.

I used to tend to the nursing thread. When the slave women were confined with the babies having to suck and they were too little to take to the fields, the mammas had to spin. I would take them thread and bring it back to the house when it was spun. If they didn't spin seven or eight cuts a day, they would get a whupping. It was considerable hard on a woman, when she had a fretting baby, but every morning, those babies

had to be taken to the big house so that the white folks could see if they were dressed right. They was considerable money tied up in those little nigger young-uns.

When my marster and the other mens on the place went off to the War, he called me and said, "Cato, you is always been a 'sponsible man, and I leave you to look after the womens and the place. If I don't come back, I want you to always stay by Miss Adeline

We thought, for a long time, the sojers had the Federals whupped to pieces, but they was plenty bad times to go through.

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The young mens in the grey uniforms used to pass so gay and singing in the big road. Their clothes was good, and they looked so fine, and we used to feed them the best we had on the place. Mis' Adeline would say, "Cato, they is our boys, and give them the best this place 'fords." We took out the hams and the wine, and we killed chickens for them. That was at first.

Then, the boys and mens in the blue got to coming that way, and they was fine-looking mens, too, and Mis' Adeline would cry, and she would say, "Cato, they is just mens and boys, and we got to feed them." We had a pavilion built in the yard, like they had at picnics, and we fed the Federals on that. Three times, the Federals said to me, "We is going to take you with us." Mis' Adeline let into crying and say to the Yankee gentlemen, "Don't take Cato. Most of my niggers has run away to the North, and Cato is the only man I got by me now. If you take Cato. I just don't know what I will do."

I tell them that so long as I live I got to stay by Mis' Adeline, and that unless somebody forces me away, I ain't gwine to leave. I say, "I got no complaints to make. I want to stay by Old Mis' till one of us die.

My marster came back, and all the others did, too, but he came back first. He was all wore out and ragged. He stood on the front porch and called all of us to the front yard. He said, "Mens and womens, you are today as free as I am. You is free to do as you like, 'cause the damned Yankees done 'creed that you are. Go if you wants or stay if you wants."

Some of them stayed and some went. And some that had run away to the North came back.

They always called real humble-like at the back gate to Mis' Adeline, and she always fixed it up so that they could have a place.

Near to the close of the War, I seen some of the folks leaving for Texas. They said if the Federals win the War, you have to live in Texas to keep the slaves. So plenty of them started driftin' their slaves to the West. They would pass with the womens riding



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in the wagons and the mens on foot. When some of them came back, they said that it took three weeks to walk the way. Some of them took slaves to Texas, even after the Federals done 'creed a breaking-up.

Long as I lived, I minded what my white folks told me, but once. They was a man working in the fields, and he kept jerking the mules, and my marster got mad, and he gimme a gun, and he told me to go out there and kill that nigger. I said, "please don't tell me to do that. I ain't never killed anybody, and I don't want to." He said, "Cato, you do what I tell you." And he meant it. I went out to him and I said, "You has got to leave this minute, and I is, too, I cause I is s'pose to kill you, only I ain't, and marster will kill me." He dropped the lines, and we ran and crawled through the fence and ran away.

I hated to go 'cause things was so bad. Flour sold for twenty-five dollars a barrel, and pickled pork for fifteen dollars a barrel. You couldn't buy nothing 'lessn you had gold. I had plenty of Confederate money, only it don't buy nothing. But today, I am a old man, and my hands ain't stained with no blood, and I is always been glad that I didn't kill that man.

## Railroads Will Not Deliver Booze

from 1913 newspaper

The L & N Railroad Company has declined to deliver packages of any kind containing intoxicating liquors to businesses in Huntsville. Orders from headquarters are to this effect: that no intoxicating liquors shall be delivered by this road in "dry" states and counties. So if you must have "booze," supplies must be brought to Huntsville by some other route than via the L & N Railroad. The Southern Railway has had no instructions to discontinue the delivery of "fire water," however and the Southern Express Company will continue to deliver the usual not to-exceed two gallons for private use.

Several local businesses have been in the habit of ordering as much as two gallons at a time to be delivered by the railroad.

The Webb liquor law, along with other measures is intended to put a stop to the liquor traffic and while it may be a while yet before the local option law may be seriously regarded by a certain element, the time is near at hand when it will be one of two propositions, either stop selling "booze" or take the consequences, and this community has about reached that stage of the game.



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

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

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

Defended by Huntsville attorney Capt. Milton Humes, young Lanier was completely exonerated. The judge announced from the bench, "It is my opinion that he did just

what I or any other man of honor would do, and I therefore discharge the prisoner, and bid him go hence without delay."

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# News From 1907

- For Rent - five room cottage on East Clinton Street, nicely furnished, garden in rear. Apply to Mrs. E. C. Yarbrough

- Delsie Long, a young man from Marshall County, was arrested in the Whitesburg precinct yesterday and brought here to jail on a warrant charging bastardy.

- Lost - on the street between Walker Street and Huntsville Bank & Trust, Co., a star and crescent gold scarf pin with pearls. Gift from husband, now dead. Reward if returned to the Bank & Trust.

- I propose to open a private school for boys at my residence on East Holmes Street on Tuesday, the first day of October, 1907. I will teach whatever is necessary for entrance into the Sophomore class in any college in the state of Alabama. Baseball and football will be in my curriculum, my fee is \$5 per month per student, paid in advance. Charles O. Shepherd

- Sheriff William Mitchell is in correspondence with various parties for the purpose of buying a pair of pet deer for the county court yards. They will make the yard look more attractive. The unsightly pathways will soon be obliterated as the sheriff has placed a number of signs up bordering the pavement forbidding anyone from walking on the grass. Whomever violates this rule in the future will be promptly arrested and fined.


## FOR SALE

*from 1901 newspaper*

Owing to my ill health I will sell at my residence a pack of coon hounds for any reasonable offer.

They are of undaunted courage and will keep a trail faithfully. To a man who does not fear death in any form they would be a great boon. The hounds are tempermental and will attack man or beast if not chained properly.

I will also throw in the chains and a double barrel shot gun which goes with them. I would rather sell them to a nonresident. Apply at newspaper office.



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# Grady Reeves, Johnny Cash, Elvis and me

by Billy Joe Cooley

I was on my way home from the Korean War, my soldiering days far behind, when I stopped off in Huntsville to visit my old radio pal Grady Reeves. It was the summer of 1954 and I was anxious to get back to familiar ground.

Grady had always called me "Boondocks," a reflection on my rural raising, so I called him the Cincinnati Flash, a throwback to his hometown. I stopped by WBHP where he was a record spinner and a parttime show promoter. They told me that he had gone out to the Madison County coliseum on Holmes Avenue. I went out there.

"Come on, Billy Joe, you can help me with the show I've booked in here," he greeted.

The coliseum in those days had no end walls, since it was pri-

marily used for cattle shows and such.

"What kind of show have you got promoted here?" I asked.

Grady explained that a Nashville agent had called and said he had a large bunch of traveling musicians who needed a night's work while passing through here on their way to Tuscaloosa.

"The whole bunch will perform and it's only costing me \$600," he said. "I ought to make a good profit." I helped unfold and set up chairs.

At about 5 p.m. a long Cadillac limousine pulled up and about a dozen people got out. A rack on top of the car contained suitcases, guitars and amplifiers. It looked like a band of gypsies. The car was old, half covered with mud and resembled something that had traveled across a lot of plowed fields in recent days.

The musicians and singers were about my age, so we sat around and gossipped for a couple of hours. They were fascinated with Grady's tales about his days

as a sportscaster.

About an hour before showtime the audience started trickling in. Most were older people. They paid \$2 a person, which was the going rate for a concert in those days.

A few people showed up. Very few.

Grady lost about \$200 on the show. It was the first the I had seen a grown man whimper.

The show was excellent and it was a shame that so few people saw it.

When the show was over I helped the gang get the stuff re-packed atop that old limousine and bade farewell to Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis, Carl Perkins and Elvis Presley. Little did we know that each was to become a super star.

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# News From The Year 1920

## News From Huntsville and Around The World

### Women Win Right To Vote

An 81-year struggle ended quietly this morning with the signing of a proclamation giving American women the right to vote. No women were present when Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby signed the papers certifying ratification of the 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution.

While hailing this final step in the long fight, leaders of the National Woman's Party protested their exclusion from the ceremony, held at Colby's home in Washington. "This was quite tragic," said Mrs. Abby Scott Baker, a leader in the suffrage drive.

Many leaders of the movement had been on watch all night, awaiting arrival of a document certifying that Tennessee had ratified the amendment two days ago, thus meeting the required number of states needed for ratification.

Agitation for suffrage in America dates back to 1839 when Lucretia Mott was denied a seat with her husband at a slavery conference in London. However, it was not until many years later that

Susan B. Anthony persuaded a member of Congress to introduce a proposed constitutional amendment for suffrage. Blocked for years, the amendment was approved by Congress and sent to the states.

Some states have allowed women to vote within their borders for years. Wyoming, with its tradition of strong pioneer women, was the first state in the nation to do so, in 1869.

Today's victory puts American women ahead of their British sisters, who, despite years of militant struggle, have not yet established universal suffrage.

After the world war broke out, British suffragettes devoted their time to the war effort. Recently, they won a limited franchise, and Lady Astor was elected to Parliament, but they are still working for full voting equality with men. The first countries to grant women suffrage were in Scandinavia. In 1906, women in Finland won the right to vote, and in 1913 the women of Norway.

### Prohibition is the Law

As of today beer, wine and liquor have been officially banned by the 18th Amendment. It will be enforced by the National Prohibition or Volstead Act and is nothing new to those 25 states which have already passed their own Prohibition laws. By tomorrow persons who have stored liquor "for personal use only" in warehouses elsewhere must have it moved to their own residence. New York Alderman LaGuardia is skeptical about the law saying that it will take 250,000 police to enforce it in that city alone.

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# Scandal Hits Baseball

Major league baseball has been shaken to its foundations by the indictment of eight Chicago White Sox players on charges that they had conspired with gamblers to fix the 1919 World Series.

Those indicted were "Shoeless" Joe Jackson, left fielder; Eddie Cicotte, star pitcher; Hap Felsch, center fielder; Swede Risberg, shortstop; Buck Weaver, third baseman; Arnold Gandil, former first baseman; Lefty Williams, pitcher; and Fred McMullin, utility player.

The indictments were based on evidence obtained for the Cook County grand jury by Charles A. Comiskey, owner of the White Sox, who immediately suspended the seven players still with the team. If convicted, they face up to five years in prison. Grand jury officials reveal that Cicotte and Jackson have confessed to their part in the fix. Cicotte admits receiving \$10,000 for throwing two games and Jackson says he received \$3,000 of \$20,000 promised by the gamblers.

On his way out of court recently, Jackson met up with a young fan with tears in his eyes, who cried, "Say it ain't so, Joe." But it is.

## Babe Ruth Sold To Yankees

George Herman "Babe" Ruth, a pitcher who is the best home-run hitter in baseball, has been sold by the Red Sox to the New York Yankees for \$125,000, the largest sum ever paid for a player. Ruth, who hit 29 home runs last season, had asked for a \$10,000 salary increase to \$20,000 a year.

## Maple Hill gets Stone Fence

At long last Maple Hill Cemetery has been enclosed. Donations from the public amounting to over \$1,250 were raised to pay the cost of the stone wall surrounding the cemetery. City and County officials provided labor for the project as well as the truck used to haul the stones from the base of Monte Sano.

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# Where Did They Go?

by Johnny Johnston

Last Monday I was driving over to my regular Monday morning breakfast with my high school friends when I thought about the Keel Cafe. It sat near the Railroad tracks on Meridian Street and was extremely small. Keel's sold hot dogs or hamburgers 2 for a nickel. I remember in the late 40's the pictures and signs on the side of the building proclaiming "Hamburgers - 5 cents!" Inflation! I drove over to the spot and sure enough, the concrete slab is still there. I wonder how many businesses including the Keel Cafe and the Little Store have been closed in Huntsville? Like grains of sand on a beach we keep adding to the closed business file.

On that same trip I drove by the former "Smith Pontiac Company" on Meridian St. Sam Smith was a character, he called it like it was. If it was a snake he said snake, not just a pet. I used to visit Sam Smith Pontiac often, especially to drool over the new models when I was a teenager. I remember a good friend of mine who ordered a new white Pontiac Chief and sure enough, I saw it on the truck before my friend did. Sam ventured into other makes of automobiles called the Vauxhaul. The Vauxhaul was manufactured in England and imported into the US when economic competition was needed to combat Japan's imports. Nothing special about the car except it was very small, got fair gas car mileage and was pure- unadulterated Lemon. Yep! I bought one, traded a perfectly good Pontiac for it. When it began falling apart I was a frequent guest of Smith Pontiac. When I was able to finally get Sam

Smith's attention he said "Johnny I didn't sell that car to you, you just came in here and bought it and I ain't gonna fix it."

Some businesses we should be so happy have closed. Many years ago, before the expansion of sewer lines, most of the city was covered with septic tanks, cess-pools and the like. My father, John F. Johnston, was in the plumbing business back in those days. All field lines, holding tanks, everything having to do with plumbing was dug by hand. If that were so now, you couldn't afford the labor charges to dispose of your human waste.

That brings me to the business which we should be happy is gone.

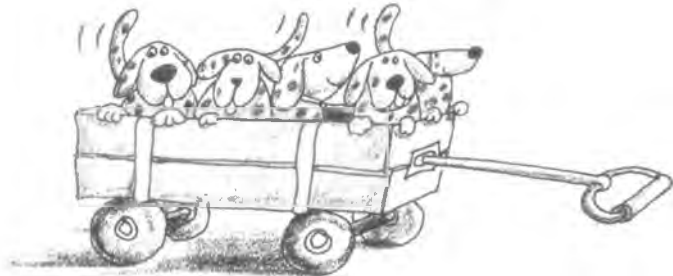
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papers on route number one of the Huntsville Times which started at the Old First National Bank, went down Fountain Row, out to the Hospital and covered most all of the slum called "Baxter Bottoms:" (long disappeared from the history of Huntsville). The point is: I was several hours pedaling my bicycle along this long route. The downtown area of Huntsville pretty much closed down at around 5pm or so. Now getting back to human waste. We had a gentleman in Huntsville who made his living with an old truck which had a tank mounted on the back; it held several hundred gallons of fluid. When your septic tank over-flowed, he was the person to call. He would make a visit, pump the contents from your tank into his truck and be on his way. After a busy day, when the town traffic had slowed down, he could be seen at the bridge on Clinton St. and guess what he was doing.

Grady Reeves used to say "Good Morning from WBHP radio on the beautiful banks of the (slight pause) Pinhook Creek in Huntsville." Now you know why Pinhook Creek was called something else by the old timers.

That is correct, believe it or not. The gentleman in the septic cleaning business pulled his truck onto the Pinhook Creek Bridge just beside Meadow Gold Dairies and dumped his load into the Pinhook Creek. I personally witnessed that operation many times.

Speaking of the paper route. About half-way down Oak at number 508 (now Fountain Row) was Lucy Hice Grocery. A tiny little building maybe ten feet wide and 40 feet long. I couldn't wait to get there on a hot day. Mrs. Hice always had a kind word for me. She kept an ice water filled soft drink box with the coldest drinks in town. I would choose a Nehi Grape, or maybe a Double Cola, find a nickel from my paper collections to pay for it then pause for a few minutes just cooling down and passing the time of day. She was a tough-talking lady with a soft heart who maintained current information on local civic and government activities. Maybe that's where I got my first interest in these subjects. She kept a loaded gun just under the counter and claimed to have used it several times. Just past Lucy Hice Grocery was the Royal Funeral Home, which was always so very clean and well organized. Mr. Hundley owned the business and what a neat and friendly person he was. I was in

there a few times to collect, when someone could be seen laying in a casket. I tried to avoid the crowds during funeral time.

At that intersection, reconstruction began in 1951 of Council Court housing project. Removed from the area was the deprived and delapidated area called Baxter Bottoms. Baxter Bottoms was a neighborhood of dirt roads and half streets, in many areas open toilets still stood years after parts of Huntsville had been modernized. Open brothels and bars located in homes were normal. Then there were also the neat kept homes with clean yards and people who really cared about themselves. How I delivered and collected fees for the Huntsville Times without getting hurt at thirteen and fourteen years old was a blessing.

Just beyond the Royal Funeral Home was a vacant lot where a tent was often pitched for a revival. This occurred in the summer time. I remember one such revival was very popular in town when Little Richard, the singer, was speaking. Crowds were intense during that time. Right in the middle of Baxter Bottoms sitting under a giant oak

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weather to politics, then he eventually got around to showing her blankets he had for sale. How a person could spend so much time trying to sell a blanket, I don't know. During all the years he came around, Mother may have bought one blanket.

It has been a lifetime since I picked up the telephone and someone said, "Number, please!" I remember that so well. Sitting above T. T. Terry's dry good store on the southside of the Madison County Courthouse was a switchboard with 8 to 10 positions. Each position had dozens of wires and plugs and each operator had a very early-styled headset. Her job was to answer each ring by plugging one end of the cord into the caller's line and the other end into the switchboard at a location, which gave the caller the proper connection. It was very strange by

today's standards but sure was personal. Most people who talked a lot learned the operator's voice and name. It was not electronic like it is today. Would you like to know the first telephone owner in Huntsville? Good Year Shoe Store on Jefferson St. had telephone number 1. The Police Station was number 303. The saying was "Don't cuss - call us 303."

John Higdon started the Huntsville News. The first time I met John was when he was Station Manager for Capital Airways. He also started Channel 31, on Monte Sano Mountain. I liked the Huntsville News. I liked Lee Woodward. The greatest item in the Huntsville News was a column by Lewis Grizzard. An airline flight flying into Lexington, Ky. landed at Frankfort, Ky. instead and I'll never forget the remarks by Grizzard. He said "I can't imag-

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ine how he got lost, everybody knows you just go to K-Mart and turn left." Mr. Grizzard and Mr. Woodward have both passed on now. We no longer have the benefit of their talents.

Another sound no longer heard in the city of Huntsville: the whir and whine of a sawmill. Bartee Lumber Company on the east end of Ward Avenue was a place I enjoyed. The Bartee family were longtime neighbors and friends of my mother's family resulting in our visits to the mill on numerous occasions. When we were kids, a favorite place was the sawdust pile which was very high. We could climb to the top and slide down.

We would even go there on our bicycles to play. On occasion we began to spread the sawdust too far from the pile and would be chastised by the manager. The last time I saw Michael Christian was such an occasion. Michael's family was leaving the next day for the winter in Michigan where his father worked. We had a good time that day. Michael's name is well known now since Senator John McCain spent POW time with him in the Vietnam War.

# Bank Night

by Walt Terry

"Bank Night" at the Lyric Theater back in the bleak days of the Great Depression offered chances of sudden riches - as much as \$100 - to a very lucky ticket holder.

For the brief time that these events were held, my parents seldom missed one. Usually, I'd go along with them even if it meant I'd have to suffer through Shirley Temple's "Good Ship Lollipop" or Jennette McDonald and Nelson Eddy swapping halitosis in a musical.

I remember one event with clarity. There was the usual packed house on a night in late spring, or early summer in 1934. There came a sudden swishing sound, accompanied by two big puffs of "smoke" on each side of the stage. Someone yelled "FIRE!" and the crowd exploded into instant panic. My good mother, a school teacher to the very end, stood up on her seat calling out, "Stay Calm! Leave in orderly fash-

ion!"

With the cringing, self-consciousness of a typical thirteen-year old, I felt more embarrassment than fear, especially when it turned out to be a false alarm. The swishing sound and the "smoke" came from the initial start-up of two big ventilating fans. The "smoke" was just dust that had

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collected in the ductwork.

And there was my mother, standing tall in her seat and yelling for all to be calm - I felt like crawling under my own seat.

It wasn't until some years later that I became mature enough to appreciate her levelheaded and responsible behavior.

## Huntsville News from 1885

- Thomas C. Barlett is rapidly improving on the airy and healthful altitudes of Monte Sano after being bit by a rattlesnake last week while fetching water..

- Nine of Mr. J. R. Stegall's fine hogs were impounded this week under the vagrant hog law. Mr. Stegall states that on Saturday night his hogs were closely put up in his lot and on Sunday morning had escaped through the removal of a plank that had been prized off by some person. He claims that

the Ordinance does not apply where the owner of hogs does not intentionally permit them to run at large and has requested the hogs from Justice R. W. Figg for the purpose of testing the question.

- Catch the thief - Stolen last Thursday night from Thomas Gore a black horse mule. A reward of ten dollars will be paid for the return of said mule and ten dollars for the apprehension of the thief.

- A Washerwoman jailed - Matilda Cox, a colored woman, was arrested Thursday on a warrant from Judge Richardson for larceny. It is charged that she received clothes to wash, and sold instead of returning them.

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# The First Time

by Collins (CE) Wynn

Ok, ok, settle down - this is not what you think.

This has to do with a truly grand event, which occurred late on a fall afternoon in downtown Huntsville around 1958 or so. My friend Walt Thomas and I were walking south on Jefferson Street and had just turned east on North Courthouse Square (Randolph Street?) when we spotted a most wondrous thing behind the glass window of a furniture store located on that corner.

It was a color television. Since it was twilight out and the lights in the store were darkened because it was closed, the visual effect was immediate and vivid. A blaze of colors was coming out of a television set - emerald green grass, red and white uniforms, etc. Better still, it was the broadcast of a baseball game but I don't remember the teams. I am certain we had heard of color television before but that was the first time either of us had ever seen one. Even now it is difficult finding the words to describe our reaction. It was absolutely stunning and totally unexpected ("Oh, wow, Man - look at that) along with other expletives, I am sure).

Because it was behind a large

glass window and the store was closed, there was no sound. Walt and I stood there anyway transfixed for a half-hour or so, mesmerized by the ebb and flow of the lights and colors.

My Dad bought our family a black and white television in 1954 or so and it was the first in our neighborhood. Every Saturday morning our house would fill up with kids from what seemed like miles around. I recall the cartoons and kids shows started early and went to noon or so. At the time, if I recall correctly, there were no local stations and we had to rely on stations in Birmingham and Nashville. It seems that CBS was the industry leader at the time and the shows we watched were mostly westerns along with some Walt Disney and Disneyland. (I can still play the Disneyland theme song in my mind). Davvvvy, Davvvvy Crockett - King of the Wild Frontier, was a favorite as well.

After getting to the 5th or 6th grade, my hooligan friends and I developed simple tastes in entertainment. We met our cultural



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needs through two shows - The Three Stooges and Shock Theater. Without knowing specifically, I am reasonably certain that we saw every Three Stooges short ever made. We were watching them constantly and Mike Smith was particularly adept mimicking them (nyuk, nyuk, nyuk), - he had Curly down cold. I read once where Curly made 97 shorts so the others must have made over a hundred since Curly died young (48). Moe, Larry, and Curly were originals who have never been replaced - to me the only current act that comes anywhere near them is the cast of Mad TV. Speaking of Mad TV, what about Mad and Cracked Comics (Spy Vs Spy, etc.) - we all thought these magazines were the most urbane and witty ever printed - but that is a story for another day.

Even years later in high school I distinctly recall watching shows from Nashville in addition to our then local stations. There were 2 shows that came on late Saturday night - live studio wrestling followed by a local live talent music show. The only music act I remember was a guy billed as *Ironing Board Sam* - he was an R&B guy who sang and played a portable keyboard - the guy was wild. I wonder if he ever made it to the big time.

By the time of the 11<sup>th</sup> grade or so, cable was becoming a hot commodity and was the next great leap in television. After that the changes in television came

rapidly and show no signs of slowing down. With the advent of cell phones with cameras and screens we are on the verge of seeing the famous Dick Tracy video watch become a reality - it's now just a matter of putting a watchband on a cell phone.

## The Well Digger

*from 1907 Huntsville paper*

Patrick Hughes took a contract last week to dig a well. After he had dug down about twenty feet down it caved in and filled nearly to the top. Patrick looked cautiously around, and upon seeing no one, took off his coat and

hat and hung them in a windlass, then crawled underneath some dense bushes to await events.

In a short time the citizens discovered that the well had filled in, and spotting Patrick's coat and hat on the windlass, supposed he was at the bottom. With great shouting and energy, and a few hours of brisk digging, they had cleared the loose earth from the well. When they got to the bottom and saw no body, Patrick emerged from the bushes.

He good-naturedly thanked them for relieving him of a sorry job. Some of the tired diggers were disgusted, but the joke on them was too good to allow anything but a hearty laugh, and some gin and sugar which soon followed.

Let's hope he never really has an accident.

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# A Visit With Tallulah

by Dex Nilsson

Some call Tallulah Bankhead "Alabama's greatest actress." Her biographies tell that she was born here in Huntsville, and they tell that she left town as an infant. They don't mention that she ever returned. But she did — for one night.

Here's the story of that visit.

Tallulah Bankhead's father was William Brockman Bankhead, a Huntsville lawyer. He would become a U.S. Congressman, the Democratic Majority Leader and eventually Speaker of the House. Her mother was the former Adalaide Sledge. Will and Ada, as they were known, had a daughter, Eugenia, in 1901. Tallulah was born almost exactly a year later, in 1902. She was born in the family's apartment on the second floor of what is now the I. Schiffman Building on the southeast side of Courthouse Square. Ada, just past 21 years old, got an abdominal infection and died within the month. Infant Tallulah was bundled off to relatives in Fayette.

Tallulah went on to have a fabulous career on stage, screen, radio, and television. She also led a life of sexual liaisons, drugs, and alcohol that pushed the boundaries of the social and moral conventions of the time. By the 1960s

the career was ending. In 1962 Tallulah toured with Estelle Winwood in *Here Today*. Late in 1963 she would be offered the starring role in Tennessee Williams' *The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore* that would mark her last on-stage appearance. In between these two plays, she was invited to Redstone Arsenal to dedicate a building.

The building would be part of the Ordnance Guided Missile School (OGMS). It was to be named both for her father and for her uncle, Sen. John H. Bankhead. So it was that Tallulah returned to Huntsville on May 17, 1963.

My wife, Nancy, was founder of the Huntsville Little Theater and served several times as its president. On behalf of the local theater, she got *two* dozen roses and went to greet Tallulah at the air-

port.

There was a small greeting party at the airport, headed by Col. W.J. Macpherson, commandant of OGMS, and mayor R. B. "Spec" Searcy. Mayor Searcy had *one* dozen roses for Tallulah. The mayor diplomatically suggested that maybe Nancy wait and give

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her larger bouquet to the actress in the lobby of the Russel Erskine Hotel, where the actress would stay.

Nancy, along with the *Huntsville Times* theater critic Alan Moore, left quickly to get to the hotel before Tallulah. Tallulah soon arrived, with escort, best described as a very pretty young man named Skip. He was actually Mobile-born dancer and choreographer, William Skipper. Tallulah had surrounded herself with such men, called her "caddies." She had met Skip in 1939, when he was just starting as a dancer and worked part time for a New York photographer who had him deliver her pictures.

In the lobby Nancy and Alan greeted her. She said, "Oh dahlings, I'm so tired. Come on up."

In one of the hotel's best suites on its highest floor, they all settled into comfortable chairs. The hotel had arranged for champagne.

Tallulah said, "You people drink that. Do you suppose they have any bourbon?" Huntsville wasn't completely dry, but the lone ABC store had apparently closed. Nancy, however, was a teacher at Lee High School, and one of her students was a bell boy at the hotel. Nancy called him, handed him some money, and whispered to go find some bourbon. The enterprising young lad returned in just a few minutes with a fifth of Old Granddad, no questions asked. Tallulah was pleased. And this is how Nancy and Alan were able to spend much of the afternoon with one of the world's greatest actresses.

What interested Tallulah most was that she could see the old courthouse and the edge of the Schiffman Building from one of the windows, and thus Nancy was able to point out to her where she was born. When another visitor came to the door, Tallulah said, "Come in, dahling. Nancy has just

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been showing me where I was born - behind that capital dome."

That evening there was a big dinner - actually the Armed Forces Day banquet - at one of the Holiday Inns on South Parkway. Tallulah asked if Nancy and Alan would be there, but they hadn't been invited. Tallulah said, "Dahlings, you are now. You must come. I know no one else in this city."

Word soon got around the city about Tallulah's presence, and at the motel lots of folks were on hand to see the famous actress arrive. Ropes cordoned off a walkway into the hotel, and people were standing six deep. Nancy and Alan ungraciously fought their way to the front. As Tallulah entered, she waved to them and said, "Come, follow me."

Inside, Tallulah, of course, had to sit at a special speaker's table, and Nancy, Alan, and Skip sat below. After the meal, Maj. Gen. Frank Britton was the featured speaker. Everyone hoped Tallulah would make a speech too. But lots of bourbon had taken its effect, and Tallulah was barely able to stand, wave her arm, and say, "Dahlings, I love you all." She plopped back into her chair. Skip whispered, "I think I'd better go rescue her."

Alan Moore wrote a fine article ("Tallulah Hits Town With Bang") about Tallulah for the *Times*. The next day, the Arsenal dedication went off without a problem. Immediately after, Tallulah returned to New York.

Tallulah died five years later, in 1968.

The Bankhead building at the Arsenal still stands. It's in the school area on the street that runs directly behind what is now OMEMS headquarters.

*Dex Nilsson is the author of "Why is it Named That?" The book tells the stories behind 250 place names in Huntsville and Madison County. Available at Shavers Book Store.*

## Traffic Lights Installed Downtown

*from 1925 newspaper*

Huntsville: In a highly controversial move, the city of Huntsville has installed traffic lights at the corners of Jefferson and Clinton, Holmes and Washington, Washington and Clinton and Randolph, Greene and Holmes.

Merchants are outraged at the novel experiment and have vowed to form a coalition to remove them. Their anger comes from the fear that drivers will spend less time looking at the window displays of the various stores.

A citizens group has joined in the merchants protest claiming that red and green lights will be confusing to everyone.

Among the various proposals the city considered before deciding on the lights were whistles, electric gates and crossing police.

The majority of people seemed to be in favor of crossing police but the cost was deemed to be prohibitive for Huntsville, a city already deeply in debt.

The first accident was reported yesterday while the lights were still being installed. Mr. Orville Roberts of New Hope lost control of his car and ran into the ladder of a workman installing the light on Clinton and Jefferson.

It is hoped the novel experiment will cut down the accidents that seem to occur on a daily basis.

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# Dear Brother

*The following letter was apparently written in 1898 by James Dooley. A special thanks to Margaret Foster for allowing us to print it.*

Dear brother,

I hope these words find you doing well. We finally got our uniforms and we left on the 18th last for Huntsville, Alabama where we are now. We are camped behind a big house and the men say it used to belong to a governor.

So far there ain't much to do in camp cause we don't have no guns yet. All we do now is march, sleep and do nothing. Jim H., is here with me and he got in a spite of trouble for fighting with some Indiana boys. He got extra guard duty but it don't bother him none.

There is a lot of meanness here with the soldiers fighting and drinking all the time. One of the saloons tried not to sell the men drink so the boys tore the place up good. John G., got cut up bad but nothing too bad.

There is a good many negro soldiers here but they are camped some place else. They are a sight to see when they go strutting around town but the people here can't say nothing. No one wants to fight with them for they are fierce fighters and all carry knives.

The men say we are not going to be here long and then we will go to Cuba. They can have it as far as I know. If I had known what this army life was I would have stayed home. I am supposed to be on feed detail but have eluded it every day. When they leave I go back to my tent and play checkers with the men.

There are some fair women here but they

are sassy with all their fine ways and act like they are too good for common men. Jim H., tried to meet one but she wouldn't have it. The men here are not bad but they charge two times for everything and won't give you the time of day unless you pay for it.

There is a fancy house here but they charge too much so a common soldier can't afford them. About the only people who go there are officers and they have plenty of money. There is nothing else going on in Alabama to write about so brother I will close for now.

Your affectionate brother down in Dixie,  
**James D.**

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# He Told The Truth

from 1885 newspaper

Mr. Bacon of Huntsville was courting a lady in Hartselle. She had refused him frequently and he often repeated his suit. At one interview she became exceedingly annoyed at his impunity, and told him that she could not marry him; that their tastes, opinions, likes and dislikes were totally different.

"In fact," she said, "Mr. Bacon I don't think there is one subject on earth upon which we would agree." "I assure you, madam," he said, "that you are mistaken and I can prove it." "If you can mention one thing about which we agree I will marry you," she returned.

"Well," said he. "I will do it. Suppose, now, you and I were traveling together. We arrive at a hotel, and there only two beds for us. In one there is a man and the other a woman; which bed would you select to sleep in?"

She arose indignantly and replied, "With the woman, of course, sir!"

"Well, there you are," grinning from ear to ear he replied, "So would I!"

## Little Loved Long?

A tall Eastern girl, named Short, for a long time loved a certain Mr. Little, who was big. Mr. Little thought little of Short, but loved a little lass named Long.

To make a long story short, Little proposed to Long, and Short longed to be even with Long's shortcomings. So Short, meeting Long, threatened to marry Little before Long, which caused Little, in a short time, to marry Long.

Query: Did tall Short love big Little less, because Little loved Long?

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# Mrs. Gilbert and Helen

by Bill Miller

My story begins in 1948. This is when I first met two of Huntsville's most memorable citizens, Mrs. Gilbert and her daughter, Helen.

I had run an ad in the local newspaper to sell my car, a 1947 DeSoto. Mrs. Gilbert answered the ad and asked that they be picked up early Sunday evening for a test drive. That afternoon my wife and I drove them throughout Huntsville and much of the County. As we finally got near their home I asked Helen if she would like to drive and get a feel of the car. She said yes. Within a short distance I realized she was not an experienced driver. She made it into the driveway but only after side-swiping the shrubbery beside it. As they got out of the car, Mrs. Gilbert remarked that it was a nice car and Helen answered, it sure is and I would like for us to own it. Mrs. Gilbert said they would call Monday afternoon

and give me their decision. Monday morning I went by Bentley Oldsmobile where Monroe Williams was a salesman. Monroe had promised to help me sell the car so I told him about the prospect I had. He began to laugh uncontrollably, picked up the phone and started calling his friends and telling them that Mrs. Gilbert and Helen had landed another sucker. Needless to say, everyone who knew them and me enjoyed my misery. I was thankful when another poor soul took my place.

As the years passed and I reminisced with friends about the Gilbert women, other stories of their antics were told.

Mr. Cecil Hicks told me that he had put a lot of extra miles on his car going the long way to town just to keep from passing by their home. One time they approached his car at a traffic light. Seeing

them coming, he locked his doors just as Helen was trying to open one. Mrs. Gilbert began hollering and making gestures. Finally, as the light changed, Mrs. Gilbert told Helen to let him go, because he was deaf and dumb.

Mr. Hicks' son, also named

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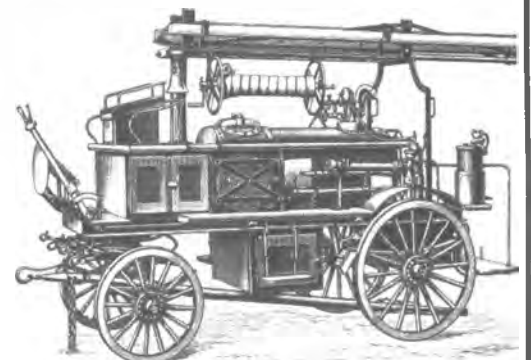
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Cecil, says he had known of them to go shopping at the Hill's grocery store. After the groceries had been bagged, the two women would go to the parking lot, look for a car that was not locked, put their groceries in, then sit in the car and wait for the owner to come out. They would then direct the car's owner to take them home. There were times that they had additional stops to make before going home and the luckless driver, not sure what else to do, chauffeured them on their errands.

Another victim of the Gilbert's was the Roper family who had a number of problems with them getting in their delivery trucks. On one occasion a driver's delivery took a couple of hours. When questioned he told them that he had to take Mrs. Gilbert and Helen

around to various places before they would get out. It was a real challenge not to get caught.

Yet another story was told by Monroe Williams. We had a scheme to set up the Locke brothers who were operating a Gulf service station that was located where the Medical Arts Pharmacy is now. The Locke's were known for their first class service at the station as well as on the road, and deliveries.

Monroe got a woman to call the station and identify herself as Mrs. Gilbert and ask for one gallon of gas for her lawn mower. She told them that they were in a back room and might not hear a knock so it would probably be best to kick the door to ensure that they heard him. One of the brothers got a gallon of gas and went to the door. First he knocked, then after a short wait he decided to kick the door as instructed. As he was making a second kick, Mrs. Gilbert opened the door, started cussing, and charged at him. He ran backwards, fell off the porch into the shrubbery losing the gas can, ran to his truck and back to

the station. It wasn't long until Monroe showed up laughing. He had been hiding in the shrubbery next door watching and listening. After things settled down and the laughing slowed there was a promise to get even.

If there are others out there with stories of Mrs. Gilbert and Helen I would sure like to hear, or read, about them.

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# A Child Goes To War

*The author John M. Doyle was thirteen years old at the beginning of the Civil War and his memoirs provide a rare glimpse into war-time Huntsville as seen by a young boy.*

In 1860 war clouds were looming and men began gathering everywhere for the conflict. New companies were formed and being drilled on the muster grounds, and the boys were taking up military tactics and drilling with wooden guns and swords. I was elected captain of one of the boy companies, and when the first company of soldiers was about to leave for the seat of war, I marched my little company about a mile from town to a deep cut in the railroad and hoisted my confederate flag to cheer the soldiers as they passed in the cars. In a half an hour the cars came thundering along. I formed my boys (with a flag) on each side on the cut and as the cars passed we waved our flags and raised deafening cheers. The soldiers joined in the chorus and the band struck up the old tune "Home Sweet Home" and played on until the music died away in the distance.

In a few months more the country everywhere were filled with soldiers marching to and fro. A brigade of infantry, composed of men from Marshall Blount, and Jefferson counties were encamped at Blue Spring four miles north of Huntsville, and it was called "Camp Jones" in honor of Col. Egbert Jones, the 4th Alabama Regiment of Infantry, his regiment having previously encamped and drilled on the same grounds, but had now been called into Virginia for active service. I had several cousins in the camp at Blue Springs and would go out and spend several days at a time with them in camp. This gave me

a desire to become a soldier, but I was too young (as they all said) yet my services may be needed before the close of the war.

My Father was running a daily hack line from town to camp for the accommoda-


tion of all who wished to pay one dollar for transportation to or from camp, and to keep me from running about, my father put me to driving the said hack. I did very well, until winter. I generally made four trips daily from town to camp.

October of this year, 1861, came and we began gathering our crops hauling it home. The glorious news of victory from the seat of war, now became the password with everyone, every newspaper was sought with eager hands, to glance at the column headed with "war news." In every column thus headed; gave victory and success to our Confederate armies. The people were delighted and celebrating the laurels thus won everywhere. But alas the sad news

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came that Nashville had been captured and occupied by the yankees

On the morning of the eleventh day of April 1862 about daybreak, the sleeping citizens of Huntsville were awakened by the pealing thunder of cannon. The yankees had come. They were everywhere in Huntsville, and were firing cannons at several car loads of sick and wounded Confederate soldiers who were trying to escape. They captured all except one carload that was a little ahead of the others, which made good their escape through the gauntlet of shot and shell. The yankees now occupied Huntsville, and as soon as the place became a little more calm from the excitement I went out to examine the yankees. I found that they did not have long tails or claws like a lion as was reported - especially to the juveniles and negroes - but found them to be real living creatures like myself or anyone else.

The yankees occupied Huntsville until the last of November 1864. During the latter part of 1863, I became acquainted with a young yankee soldier and soon found that he sympathized with the South and seemed to be anxious to desert his army and join the Rebs. Frank C. (the union soldier) and I were nearly always together. He was two or three years my senior and we were good friends. One day I proposed slipping the pickets with him and going to Dixie to join the Rebel Army. He consented, and a day was set for us to leave. A day or two after I met a friend and associate of mine, Hugh M. and informed him of our project. He was as willing to go as Frank and I were. Our

**"Please excuse Sue from missing school yesterday. We forgot to get the Sunday paper off the porch, and when we found it Monday we thought it was Sunday."**

**Seen in local Principal's office**

stable and lot had been taken by the yankees and used for the forage wagon train. I soon made myself acquainted with one of the teamsters - Billie W. and got his consent to let Frank, Hugh, and I go with him in his wagon on a forage trip. As luck would have it the wagon train was going down near the Tennessee River on the very day we had set for our departure, I soon informed Frank and Hugh of the fact and we made immediate preparations for leaving.

When we arrived at the picket post, the officer commanding demanded our pass. Billy told him he would be responsible for our safe return and that we were his



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friends and so we were allowed to pass. We were going through the woods at a very brisk gait, talking of our successful escape from the wagon train, and how we were to cross the river, and of what company we would join, when we were suddenly startled by a loud exclamation "Halt"

We had come upon an unexpected picket post which had been placed there to guard the approaches to the wagon train from molestation. We were so completely surprised that we did not have time to invent an excuse. I mustered courage enough to tell them that we came out with the forage train and was then looking for another plantation where we expected to find an abundance of corn and oats. They did not believe me and said that "He were trying to go to the Rebs" across the river. We were put under guard and carried back to the wagons. The guard told the Captain that we were arrested by them at the picket post near the river and that he believed we were attempting to cross the river to join the Rebels.

We were then kept under guard until we got back safe to Huntsville and Hugh and I were discharged, but Frank being a yankee soldier was accused of an attempt to desert and confined in the guard house for several days.

We had two horses and a carriage left us and a lady was in town who lived in Gunter'sville and wanted to go home. We agreed to take her as far as Deposit on the Tennessee River in the carriage. We arrived at Deposit about sunset and stopped over for the night. Mr. Scott was the owner of the place. The house was located on a high bluff about fifty yards from

the river. The yankees had never been there before. Breakfast was announced by the ringing of a bell. We started to breakfast, and had just reached the yard gate when we saw the yankees coming in a gallop toward the house. I hollered out "yankees coming!" Mr. Scott and old Mrs. Scott who was very large and fleshy came to the door. One glance convinced them of the fact. They told their sons to leave quickly and take every negro with them. They all ran up into the mountain, the old woman following, but she was too fleshy to run fast and the yankees overtook her and assured her they would not harm her and sent her back to the house. The others made their escape.

Breakfast was on the table

smoking and hot and nobody to partake except myself and brother with the yankees. After breakfast one of the yankees pressed one of my horses and had saddled him ready to leave and put his old horse in the stable for me. As soon as he saw that my horse was better than his he drew his sabre and struck his horse on the leg to have an excuse to take mine. I went to the Captain and with tearful eyes I told him of my loss. He asked me several questions and then ordered the man to restore my horse to me. He was compelled to ride his own lame horse and he was afterwards punished for laming his horse with his sabre.

A few months after this (1863) Huntsville was evacuated by the

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yankees. The Rebels immediately took possession of the latter place and captured a locomotive and cars from about two hundred negro soldiers who had returned with the cars to carry off some contrabands that had been left behind.

Thomas Jordan took advantage of the evacuation and raised a company of volunteers in Huntsville. The long wished fortune had come and I had an opportunity to become a soldier and I did so. I went forthwith to Captain Jordan and registered my name on the roll and was sworn in as a soldier. The next day the company was called together to elect officers. We marched to the muster grounds and elected Thomas Jordan captain, William Rison 1st. Lieutenant, Alexander Bently 2nd lieutenant, Jas E. Scat, Sergeant.

We spent the balance of the evening in drilling. The next day at 12 o'clock was appointed for the company to meet and organize and go into regular camp. Accordingly the company met on the square and was formed in a line for inspection, which occupied about an hour. After the officer finished inspection our captain rode around in front and pronounced the Company ready for action, well armed, and equipped with good horses.

I was summoned by a patrol to appear at quarters and prepare for leaving as the yankees were coming. Having been driven from our homes several times by false rumors I did not hurry but took my time when I bid my parents a long farewell. I proceeded halfway to quarters when I met a crowd of citizens fleeing on the street as

if their lives were at stake. They told me the yankees were on the square and my company had left a few moments ago.

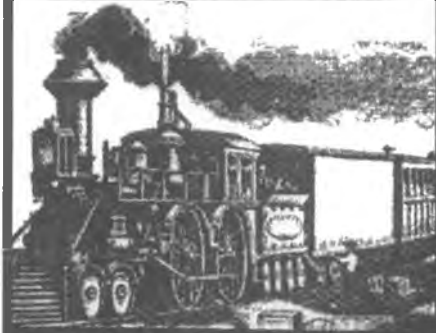
I returned home and told parents the facts and told them also that I intended to leave on foot as I could not get to my horse. They begged me to stay at home, as there was no hope for our independence. Our soldiers were deserting thousands at a time and besides small armies were surrendering every week.

I knew it and felt the truth of it but still I deemed it my duty to linger with our fast fading cause until the last spark of existence had disappeared.

We were at our gate and the yankees were coming down the street. I put my horse in a stable belonging to a widow lady who lived next door to my father, requesting her to claim the horse. In the meantime the yankees were riding on every street and we were completely surrounded. There was no possible chance of escape.

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**"If I'd known how much fun grandkids would be, I would have had them first!"**

**Nita Boyd**



We returned home and donned our citizen's attire and awaited events. That night the citizens of Huntsville passed a sleepless night. They were again subjected to yankee despotism and contempt.

A few weeks we moved from our residence on Madison Street to the northeast corner of the square where we were not so much annoyed by the yankees.

About this time the telegraph lines were flashing the news that Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, had been assassinated. The news spread like wildfire all over the United States. A day of mourning was set for every city, town and village to observe, "strictly," as the yankees commanded. On the day appointed, Huntsville wore a sad appearance. All public buildings were trimmed in crepe. Every business house was closed by order of the military authorities. The citizens did not drape their houses, the yankees did it for them. The citizens seemed more cheerful as they thought there was yet a chance to save the Confederacy.

The next day brought sorrowful news to our downtrodden people, news that General Lee, with all his army, had surrendered.

**Why is it your dog gets mad when you blow in his face, but when you take him on a car ride he sticks his head out the window?  
Sam Keith**

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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**

**222 Washington St - 539-5777**

*Domie Lewter*  
*Mac Lewter*

# When life was simple...



In the late 1940s, Washington Street was one of the main shopping areas for Huntsville's citizens. Saturdays would find the street crowded with shoppers, movie patrons and even sidewalk preachers. A&P grocery store advertised coffee for 44 cents a pound and milk for 21 cents a quart. A few blocks away a full service gas station sold gasoline for 21 cents a gallon. People were amazed when Jack Chambers purchased the first television set in Huntsville. Out in the county the first cotton-picking machine was demonstrated and Gurley experienced a devastating fire that burned five businesses in its downtown district.

*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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