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# Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY



## Murder on the Kelly Plantation

Suddenly, almost as if in a re-run from some horror movie, people began retching and clutching their chests as they gasped for air. Within minutes fifteen people, including two of the doctors, were seriously ill. Although they all eventually recovered, there was no doubt about the cause - arsenic poisoning.

Also in this issue: The Legend of Devil Monroe Evans

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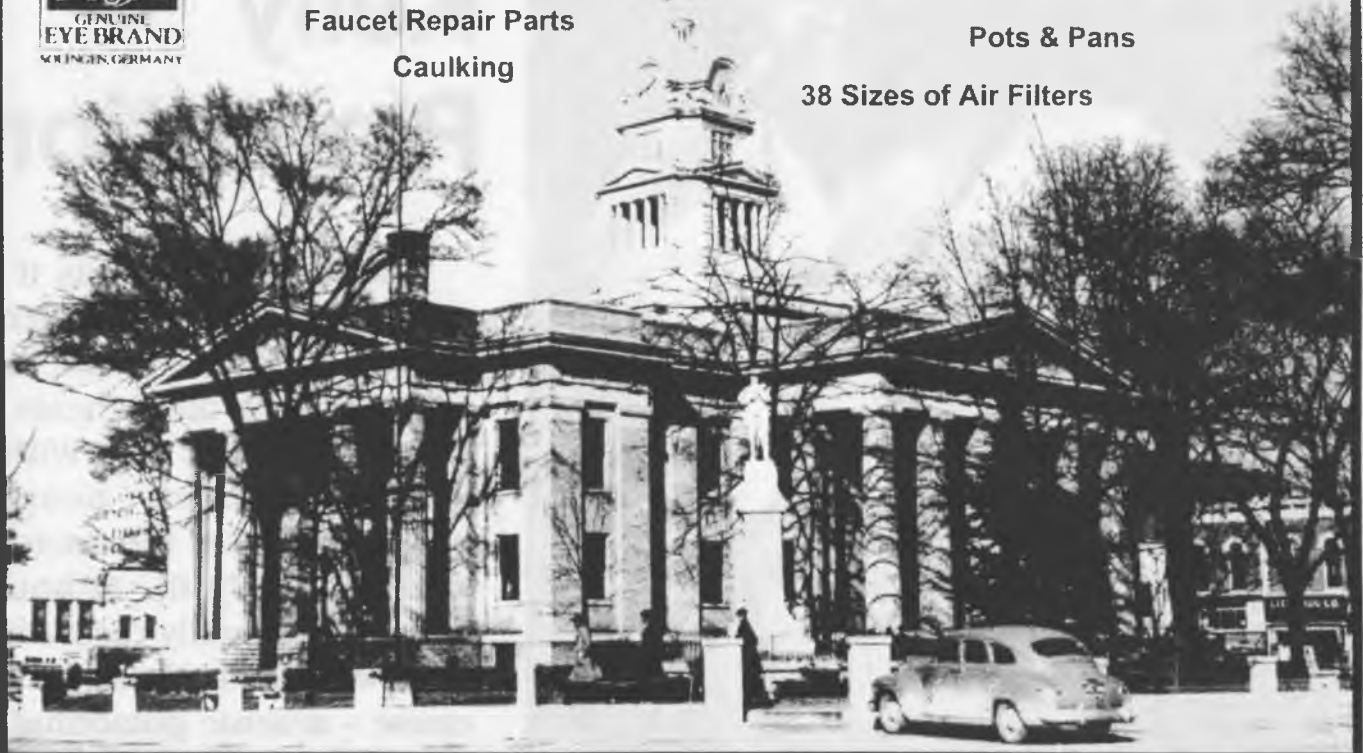
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# Murder on the Kelly Plantation

The spring of 1897 was a time of hope for the residents of the Tennessee Valley. The winter had been unusually harsh, with ice and snow covering the fields, confining people to their homes for days at a time and making travel difficult. Now, as warm weather began to slowly settle over the Valley with its gentle rain bringing life to the barren fields, people began to look forward to a prosperous new year.

For the family of Major J. O. Kelly, however, it was not a time of hope - it was a time of unmistakable horror.

The Kelly family was a well known and respected family in Madison County, having moved here from Brunswick County in Virginia around 1820. In 1853 J.O. Kelly purchased six hundred acres located about fourteen miles northwest of Huntsville. Within a short time the family had built a prosperous plantation, owning numerous slaves who worked in the vast cotton fields and the house. Later, as the family's wealth increased, they added to their holdings by opening a store, a cotton gin and a black-

smith shop.

The Civil War was traumatic for the family. J.O. Kelly enlisted in the Confederate Army where he was promoted to the rank of Major and saw action in many of the bloodiest campaigns of the war. His wife Sally struggled to manage the plantation against ever-increasing hardships. There was no market for the cotton and their home was occupied by Federal troops.

J.O. Kelly returned from the war to a devastated Southland. Much of Madison County laid in ruins and the cotton fields which had provided wealth were now barren with no one to work them.

As word of the Emancipation Proclamation spread throughout the South, the slaves had simply walked off of the plantations, not knowing where they were going, just hoping for a better life. In Huntsville alone tens of thousands of Federal rations were distributed to the newly-freed slaves to prevent starvation.

Slowly the ex-slaves began returning to the plantations. Free or slave, it didn't make any difference to someone who just wanted a place to live and something to eat.

Many historians have argued that, ironically, freeing the slaves actually proved a blessing in disguise for the people who depended on their labor. Whereas



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before the war, a cotton grower could expect to pay a thousand dollars for a good field hand - now that same hand could be hired for a few dollars a month. Also, the employer no longer had to provide clothing, doctors or the thousand other things an owner would worry about.

If the hand did not work out, he could be easily replaced from among the hundreds of ex-slaves thronging the roads in search of work. Needless to say, there was undoubtedly much hidden bitterness against the white plantation owners who were once again their masters.

The Kelly family, like most other white people in the Tennessee Valley, remained loyal to the ideas of the Old South. Whether free or hired, the black employees were still servants. An indication of the prevailing sentiment can be ascertained from the fact that J.O. Kelly wanted to name the community "Jefferson Davis" in honor of the Confederate president. According to legend, Federal officials resisted the idea, saying the name was too long. Perhaps as a compromise the community was instead

named "Jeff", the name it still goes by today.

It was against this back drop that the Kelly family sat down to dinner on March 6, 1897. From all accounts the dinner was a pleasant affair, with J.O. Kelly, his wife and an employee who worked at the store across the road, Oakly Woodard, lingering around the table afterwards to drink a cup of coffee. Suddenly as Kelly got up to leave the table he was seized by spasms of pain in his chest and stomach. His face began turning pasty white as he struggled to breath.

As Sally Kelly got up to help her husband, she too was seized by the same symptoms. Minutes later Oakly Woodard was also gasping for breath as he fought against horrible pains that seemed to be tearing at his stomach.

Other members of the family rushed to their aid but there was little they could do. A doctor was sent for but before he could arrive even more horrible events began to unfold. Seven Negro field hands were experiencing the same symptoms and were also seriously ill, fighting for their lives.

When Dr. William Pettus arrived, a quick examination of the patients was enough to make him realize he needed more help. Dr. Thomas Dryer, from Huntsville, and two doctors from Madison

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*Jim Stafford, Athens*

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Steadman, Dr. Gilbert and Karen

were sent for. Although there was little the doctors could do for the patients, they all recognized the symptoms.

**Arsenic poisoning!**

Arsenic, used as a pest control, was a common item in most of the homes of the rural south. It was also the most common kind of poisoning as small children and pets would often accidentally eat small amounts of the powder while thinking it was something else.

While the doctors labored over the patients, other members of the Kelly family questioned everyone on the farm trying to find the source of the arsenic. It was quickly determined that the only thing everyone had in common was the coffee. It had all been boiled in the same pot.

With nothing else to go on, the family reasoned it was an accident. Perhaps the cook had accidentally contaminated the coffee with the poison that had probably been sprinkled on the counters for mice. As a precaution the family had servants scrub the kitchen and destroy any pots, pans or eating utensils that might have come in contact with the poison.

Despite the best efforts of the doctors J.O. Kelly died a few days later. A large group of people, including the doctors who were still caring for Mrs. Kelly and the poisoned servants, gathered at the home to comfort the family. Probably, as people stood around

talking and eating, the main topic of the conversation was the unfortunate accident the family had suffered.

Suddenly, almost as if in a rerun from some horror movie, people began retching and clutching their chests as they gasped for air. Within minutes fifteen people, including two of the doctors, were seriously ill. Although they all eventually recovered, there was no doubt about the cause - arsenic poisoning.

At first, attention centered on Julia, the Negro cook, but she was cleared when it was discovered that she too was violently ill as a result of poisoning.

The kitchen was again scrubbed and everyone was questioned, but there were no answers. Members of the Kelly family, while at first calling it an accident, came to the conclusion that it was something much more sinister - someone was trying to murder them.

With the aid of neighbors, the Kellys began to investigate everyone that had anything to do with the farm. The Kelly servants were called in one at a time and interrogated while neighbors and friends quizzed their own servants. Casual visitors to the home were questioned along with any-

**A good time to keep your mouth shut is when you're in deep water.**

*Johnny Richards*

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one who had sold supplies to the family.

Despite the intensive investigation, no clues were found as to whom, or what, had caused the poisonings. As a temporary precaution the Kellys placed their food supplies in a locked cupboard and gave orders that a member of the family had to be present in the kitchen any time food was being prepared.

Months passed and the excitement began to fade as the small community went on with everyday life. Whenever the poisonings were mentioned they were dismissed as unfortunate accidents. No one could really believe that someone in their midst had tried to murder so many people.

As the sun began its slow rise over the horizon on the morning of May 7, 1897 there was no indication that the day would be any different than thousands of others. Field hands gathered in the yard behind the kitchen for break-

fast before beginning another long hot day in the fields. In the dining room the Kelly family, along with three guests, sat down to a large breakfast washed down by pots of coffee. The house servants were eating at a table in the kitchen.

Suddenly there were shouts from behind the house. One of the field hands had been seized by terrible convulsions and was lying on the ground gasping for breath. Minutes later other hands began retching as horrible pains tore at their stomachs. The terror quickly spread to the kitchen as house servants began screaming in agony. In the dining room the same horrible scene was repeated as the Kellys and their guests began experiencing the same symptoms.

Within a few minutes time fourteen people - seven whites and seven servants - had become violently ill. There was no doubt as to the cause. By then everyone in the household was familiar with the symptoms of arsenic poisoning.

Within a short while the doctor arrived and confirmed that the family had indeed been poisoned, most likely from some-

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thing they had for breakfast. At first attention centered on the coffee but this proved to be a false lead when they realized that David Kelly had not had any to drink, but was still as sick as the others. The cook was again immediately suspected, but she too was seriously ill.

As the doctor began examining the patients his attention was drawn to two servants, Mandy Franks and Molly Smith. They both claimed to have the same symptoms as the others but it was obvious to the doctor that, for some unknown reason, they were faking. A few questions quickly established the fact that they both helped in the kitchen.

When the doctor relayed his suspicions to the family, they decided to keep the information to themselves for a while, but to watch every move the two servants made. However slim the lead was, it was all the family had to go on.

Meanwhile, Eva Kelly gathered samples of everything that had been served for breakfast and sent them to town to be examined.

Other members of the family began a systematic search of the kitchen. Every crack and crevice was carefully examined for clues. Finally a break came when

an empty box of rat poison (arsenic) was discovered under the kitchen floor. Almost unbelievably, the box was stamped with the Kelly store logo. It had been purchased at the family's own store, directly across the street from their home.

A quick examination of the store's account books showed only two boxes of that particular brand rat poison had been sold during the past year. One of them had been sold to Molly Smith, the same servant whom the doctor had said was faking her illness.

Although it was suspicious, it was not enough evidence to accuse someone of attempted murder. The Kelly family decided to wait and see if more evidence could be found.

The following day the family

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2. *Eden of the South: A Chronology of Huntsville, Al. - 1805-2005* by Ranee Pruitt \$29.95
3. *Dr. Space: The Life of Wernher von Braun* by Bob Ward \$29.95
4. *Through the Garden Gate: The Gardens of Historic Huntsville* by Donna Castellano \$30.00
5. *Alabama's Canyons: The Bankhead National Forest* by Charles Seifried & Jim Felder \$29.95
6. *Life in the Skillet; Memories of Lick Skillet, Ala.* by Pastor Harold Fanning \$13.99
7. *Tales of Huntsville Caves* by Huntsville Grotto, National Speleological Society \$12.95
8. *Why is it Named That? 250 Place Names in Huntsville/Madison County* (new edition with a few corrections) by Dex Nilsson \$13.95
9. *Scenic North Alabama - A travel guide to Canyons, Caverns, Bridges (natural & covered) and Waterfalls*, by Robert Schuffert \$27.95
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received the test results from the food samples that had been sent to town to be examined. According to the doctor, the flour used to cook the biscuits with had been laced with arsenic. In fact, there was so much arsenic that the flour had turned brown. If the same amount had been placed in the coffee the whole family would probably have been killed. What probably saved their lives was the fact that there was so much arsenic in the biscuits that it made the people vomit the poison out of their systems before more harm could be done.

That same day Molly Smith disappeared. Apparently she had become aware that she was under suspicion and decided to flee before it was too late.

An armed group of men set out in pursuit and late that night she was captured near the Tennessee line. In spite of the men's threats, Molly Smith refused to

confess and kept insisting that she knew nothing about the arsenic. Finally, despairing of getting any answers, the men decided to take her back to the Kelly plantation and confront Mandy Franks, the other house servant who was suspected of faking an illness.

Mandy Franks quickly confessed after seeing that Molly Smith had been captured. According to her story, Molly had poisoned the coffee the first time. The second time she had poisoned the sausage that had been served at the wake of Mr. Kelly. The last time, when people were poisoned while eating breakfast, Mandy said that she had mixed the poison with the flour while it was being carried from the locked cupboard to the kitchen.

That was enough evidence

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for the unruly mob. The two women were taken to the Kelly store where they were locked in the basement to await their fate. There they remained for the rest of the night and most of the next day.

News of the two women's capture quickly spread throughout the county. Small groups of men gathered on street corners whispering about lynchings. Other people, more vocal, talked about the waste of money and time by holding a trial. Apparently, someone "forgot" to tell the sheriff the news, or possibly he "forgot" to investigate. Whatever the reason, the sheriff remained strangely absent during the time the women were locked in the store's basement.

Sometime around midnight the following night, a mob of men entered the store and re-

moved the women from the basement. They were carried a short distance away to a clump of woods near the intersection of Monrovia and Jeff roads where a tree was selected and two ropes thrown across a limb. The two women were given a chance to make a final statement.

Mandy Franks again con-

fessed to the crime and begged for mercy. Molly Smith refused to say anything. A cold rain was falling and the mob was in no mood for further questioning. Nooses were placed around the women's necks and seconds later they were hanging lifeless in the cold dark night.


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passing mailman discovered the bodies.

It was widely believed that the women had not acted alone. Another servant, Jennie Burwell, later confessed that she had known of the plot but did not want to tell on anyone. She was given three days to leave the county. A field hand named Jim Nance also fell under suspicion. Apparently he became so scared that he left his plow in the field and fled. With at least three, and possibly four, people knowing of the plot it is reasonable to believe that others knew of it also.

Strangely, one of the most fascinating aspects of the case was the lack of motive. No one ever offered a reason except that Molly had contempt for the family.

Regardless of the reason, you can be sure that, after the lynchings, residents of Madison County kept a careful eye on their cooks.

## Remnants of War

### New Hope Native Burns Logs and Blows up Neighborhood

*From 1891 newspaper*

A Mercury reporter was informed that on last Saturday at a point in the vicinity of New Hope an explosion occurred that has recalled the war and nearly scared the life out of an honest old man.

It seems that John Roberts was burning logs for the purpose of clearing up, and he had set fire to a heap which ignited a large dead tree. Suddenly a most terrific explosion occurred, one that was heard for miles.

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

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



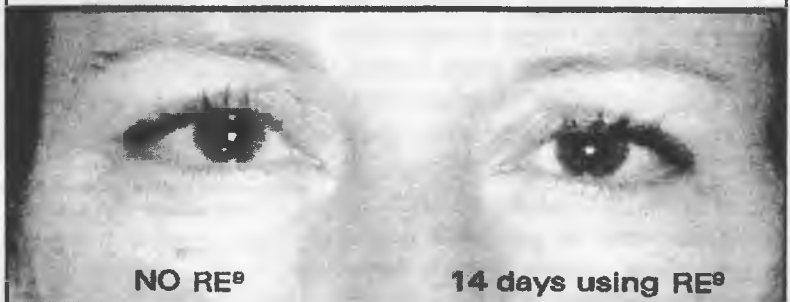
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# Huntsville Heroes in Gray

He was a Confederate hero. Born in Huntsville, Alabama, Henry Bolden served in many theaters of the war and saw action in the battle of Nashville. When the Union troops began to overrun his position in bloody hand-to-hand fighting, Bolden, who did not have a gun, picked up a stick and began swinging it furiously. When the battle was over, five dead Yankee soldiers lay sprawled about his feet. Later when asked how he did it, his only reply was, "I knocked them in the head."

Henry Bolden was a black man.

Although few people realize it, there were a number of black Confederate veterans in Madison County. These men, all of whom were valued and respected citizens, earned a unique place in Huntsville history.

Essex Lewis, one of the best known and highly respected of these veterans, went to war with his master, Colonel Nick Lewis, and saw action in Virginia, Tennessee, Alabama and Georgia.

After the war he returned to Huntsville, where he worked as a farmer and as a janitor at the post office. Lewis was a loyal member of the Egbert Jones Camp of Confederate veterans here in Huntsville. In 1910 he was chosen to represent the Huntsville camp at a Confederate reunion in Richmond, Virginia. When Lewis died at the

age of 106, his funeral was attended by an honor guard consisting of ex-Confederate soldiers.

Another Huntsville black who saw service in the Civil War was Matt Gray. "Uncle Matt," as he was known, always wore an old gray uniform with the bronze "medal of the Confederacy" pinned to his lapel. He also was a member of the Confederate veterans organization here in Huntsville and had the distinction of a "special" chair being reserved for him at the monthly meetings. According to newspaper accounts of the day, the only meetings he ever missed were when he was sick. At his death, the Huntsville newspaper ended his obituary with, "Now Uncle Matt has gone himself to aid with the Rebel yell."




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# Local News from 1911

- William Moore is being held here on charges of forgery and bigamy. He tried to commit suicide in his cell by eating the heads of a large number of matches. Women companions had gone to his mother to get help. The jailor discovered his plight and administered medicine. Before eating the matches he wrote a letter to his mother, companions and chief detectives.

- A local woman asserted that for months she had been abused and threatened by her husband. Mrs. Ethel Olsen, formerly of England, and later of Huntsville, sent a pistol bullet at her husband in a crowded street near the courthouse here late Sunday, missed him and powder-burned a passerby. She declares she fired to protect her face from a dash of muriatic acid which she charges her husband was preparing to cast at her. She was arrested and charged with assault with intent of murder. She tells a story of her husband's alleged cruel treatment of her and their children.

- Mayor R. Earle Smith stated today that no whiskey shall be sold in Huntsville while he is mayor. He stated that a few bottles may occasionally change hands but that there will be no general or even restricted sale, and that the law shall be enforced as it appears on the statute books.

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**Sometimes Nothing Else Will Do!**

# Memories of Lincoln Village

by Tony Thompson

In 1930, life in the Village was a lot different than today. Life was a lot simpler, but cash money was often short. Many families raised chickens in their backyard for food, eggs, and as a cash crop. My dad, Erskine Thompson, was about 13 years old at the time. He was working on enlarging the chicken coop when he ran out of fence staples. My grandmother instructed Dad to take one of the hens downtown to the Tennessee Hide and Poultry Company and sell it, and then go next door to Lewter's Hardware Store and purchase the fence staples he needed to complete the job. Dad caught one of their chickens, tied its legs together, and with two of his friends, Roy and J.T. Duncan, began walking toward downtown Huntsville.

Unknown to the boys, there had been a chicken thief at work the night before in the Village. Someone had stolen a "Rhode Island Red" hen. This was exactly what the boys had with them.

About halfway to town, near the railroad tracks known as "Miller's Crossing," Dad and his friends stopped to watch a marble

game being played.

The local mailman, aware of the previous night's crime, spotted the rag-tag boys with the chicken and called the police. As they were watching the marble game, a touring car with curtains pulled up beside them. Two police officers jumped out and said, "We want you boys." Dad explained that they were not playing marbles but were on their way to town to sell the chicken. The officers said they were not interested in the marble players - they wanted the boys with the chicken.

All three boys were taken to the City Hall on Madison Street. There they were searched and taken to a cell.

As they were being escorted to their cell, they passed a desk with a pistol on it. Roy told the officer, "If you think we stole the chicken, just take us out and shoot us." The officer told them that they would not be shot, but they would go to reform school if found guilty.

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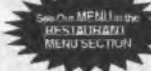
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An officer was sent to Lincoln Village to fetch my grandmother. She went to the City Hall and cleared the whole matter. The officer then took the chicken next door to the City Cafe and sold it for \$1.25. Dad took the money and went to Lewter's and bought the fence staples to complete his job.

In the end, all came out well except Dad's rear end. He was punished for not going directly downtown and completing his chore. All three boys were kidded a lot at school for being chicken thieves.

This was the only time my dad was ever arrested, and he became the infamous "Chicken Thief of Lincoln Village."

**"Reason for leaving last job - Pushed aside so the Vice President's girlfriend could steal my job."**

*Seen on local resume*

# Happy Birthday!

**Feb. 02**

- 1954 Christie Brinkley
- 1947 Farrah Fawcett

**Feb. 04**

- Oscar De La Hoya
- 1948 Alice Cooper
- 1947 Dan Quayle

**Feb. 07**

- 1885 Sinclair Lewis
- 1812 Charles Dickens

**Feb. 10**

- 1940 Roberta Flack
- 1930 Robert Wagner

**Feb. 13**

- 1934 George Segal
- 1930 Dotty McGuire
- 1919 Tennessee Ernie Ford
- 1885 Bess Truman
- 1873 L.L. Bean

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# A Shrewd Lady

*from 1887 newspaper*

Last week a widow lady, residing near Hazel Green, put her house up at a raffle and very soon disposed of the tickets - all feeling disposed to assist her.

The evening arrived, and the house was won by a gentleman who thought himself most fortunate in obtaining a home-stead so cheaply.

The next day he asked for a title to the property. What was his surprise when he was coolly informed that it was unnecessary to give any written title to the house - that there it was, and to take it; and the sooner the better, as she was anxious to

build another on the spot where it stood. The winner discovered that he had drawn a house, but no lot.

Upon applying to the authorities for relief, he was turned away with the understanding the raffle was legal and he had no recourse.

The gentleman, deciding to make the best of a bad situation, moved into the house with it still standing on the lady's piece of land.

The lady then applied to the authorities for relief but was told

that she too had no recourse; she had not specified the house had to be moved.

There has not been a final outcome to the baffling dilemma yet.

We predict the only winners in this strange case will be the attorneys.

**"Love is the most important thing in the world, but baseball is pretty good too."**

**Chaz Smith, age 7**

**"I think there is a world market for maybe five computers."**

**Thomas Watson, IBM Chairman, in a 1943 prediction**

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# Heard On The Street

by *Cathey Carney*



Congratulations to **Betty Browner**, who called with the first correct guess for the Photo of Month last month. It was none other than that pretty **Betty Jo Cunningham**, of Cunningham Furniture & Wicker, and wife of **Leroy Cunningham**.

**Betty Browner** sure works hard as a Safety Patrol lady at **Stone Middle School**, on Governors Drive.

**Hannah Troup**, 5, and her Kindergarten friends at Weatherly Heights Elementary School, want to wish their sweet teacher **Mrs. Skipworth** a Very Happy Birthday! She's the best!

**Tricia and Steve Connelly** in Old Town are thrilled with the arrival in January of their new son, **John**. The baby boy joins his big sister, **Virginia** and she loves him already! Proud Huntsville Grandparents are **Mr. & Mrs. Hall Bryant**. Congratulations!

Many of us watched the Rose Bowl parade in Pasadena, Ca. and were so proud to see the first band marching - our own **Alabama A&M Marching Band**. They did an outstanding job even though in bad weather, and sounded great.

We heard from our favorite

bartender recently. **LeeAnn Lancaster** is now working at Philby's Pourhouse, located behind the Jazz Factory and owned by **Kim & Tim Mardis**. She says to tell her friends to come see her!

**Rusty Dinwiddie**, of Park Supply, is the most interesting guy to talk with. His sweet Mom, **Anne Dinwiddie**, lives here and at 86 is going strong! Rusty's stepdad is **Dyke McCulloch** and loves Huntsville's rich history. Dyke's wife **Beverly** takes good care of him. Rusty and his wife, **Anna**, are busy with their two kids **Forrest**, 16 and **Meagan**, who's 18. Anna works as office manager for Young Life and keeps them organized!

While in Philby's Pourhouse recently we met **Steve Osterrieder**, the very talented executive Chef at the Heritage Club. He sure knows his trivia and is one good chef!

We were so sorry to hear that **Dolly Davis** of Huntsville died during January. She was the

mother of former astronaut **Dr. Jan Davis**, also of Huntsville. We send our deepest sympathy to her husband, **Bryce**, and their son **Rev. Ronald Davis**, as well as Jan. Dolly and Bryce used to go to **Eunice's Country Kitchen** on a regular basis, and have many friends here.

**Barbara Saunders** is having a birthday in late February. We just know that her sweet husband **Chuck Saunders** is going to do something really special for her - and she deserves it!

A friend of ours is trying to find out the name of the **drug store that was located on South Side Square** here in early 1900, several doors to the right of Harrison Brothers. He would love to have any information, pictures, etc. - please call **Robert** at 536-3690.

**Joe Robinson** was Huntsville's famous Shoe Shiner for many years - he worked at the Central Bank building downtown and more recently had a couple of chairs at the Amsouth Building. We were really sorry to hear

## Photo of The Month

The first person to correctly identify the youngster below wins a full one-year subscription to "Old Huntsville" magazine.

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Hint: This little boy is everyone's friend, a successful businessman and lives just a few feet from where he grew up.



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that he had died, leaving many friends and associates in Huntsville. Our deepest sympathy to his family.

We were very proud to hear that **Rick Jobe**, of Grateful Life Community church, has been authorized to be ordained as a minister! Congratulations Rick!

**John Bzdell** hosted a surprise birthday party for his Dad, **Stephen S. Bzdell** - who turned 88 in January! Congratulations Stephen!

The sweetest couple in Huntsville have to be **Ward** and **Betty Gateley**, who own Cruise Vacation, Inc. They love Huntsville and especially Big Spring Park, and have lots of memories of this area since they moved here in 1955.

It's good to know there are romantic doctors nowadays! **Dr. Ralph Dejarnatte, Jr.** of Huntsville, recently took his pretty wife **Lisa** to Nashville for her birthday. Happy Birthday, Lisa!

A really special hello to **Jean** and **Ron McIntosh**, of Huntsville. We're thinking about you both!

**Darryl Goldman** and his lovely wife **Linda** were both looking good recently at a dinner at Bonefish. Darryl is a retired Army Chaplain and also works for Keller-Williams Realty. Linda is a Budget Analyst for the Army. They are a sure delightful couple to spend time with.

Welcome to Huntsville to **Carole** and **Walt Donaldson**. Carole's sister **Cordy Fortson** and brother-in-law **Mark Fortson** are so happy to finally have them here, from the big state of Texas!

It was great to catch up with **Michael Johannes**, that handsome charmer of Northrop Grumman. He was dining at 801 Franklin and having a good time with friends.

Also at 801 we talked with **Bob Harrison**, Madison County Commissioner. It was good to catch up with all the political news in

town.

**Colleen Kay**, of 801 Franklin, makes beautiful quilts that are artwork - for the walls rather than the bed. Very unique!

We saw that gorgeous **Wanda Harvill** a week ago. She is a Realtor with GMAC Real Estate and is really fun to talk with!

Happy Birthday to **Tom Gurley** who turns 50 in March. His wife **Donna** will probably plan something special for him!

Happy Valentine's Day to all of you.

See you next month!



## Ladies First Boutique

# New Arrivals!

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by Shelli Segal

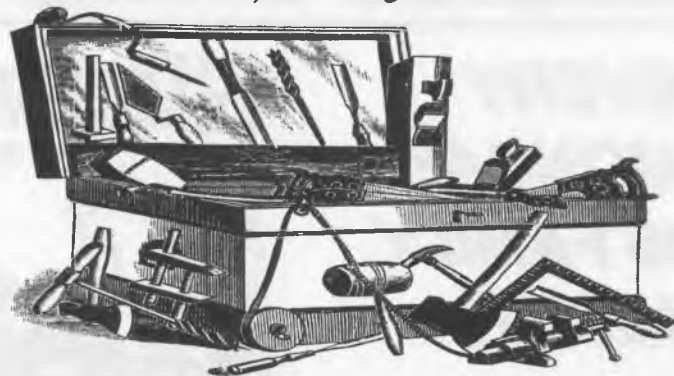
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## Sweet Confections

### Cherry Fudge

- 2 c. sugar
- 1 c. milk
- 1 T. butter
- 1/4 lb. chopped cherries

Butter an 8-inch square pan. Combine sugar, milk and butter in a saucepan; boil for 8 minutes. Beat til creamy. Add chopped cherries. Pour into the pan. Cool and cut into squares.

### Walnut Penuche

- 2 c. light brown sugar, firmly packed
  - 1/3 c. cream
  - 1/3 c. strong coffee
  - 2 T. butter
  - 1/2 t. salt
  - 1 c. chopped walnuts
- Butter an 8-inch square pan. Combine brown sugar, cream and

coffee; bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Cook without stirring to 238 degrees (soft ball stage). Remove from heat; cool to 110 degrees or outside of pan is cool. Add butter and salt. Beat til thick and creamy. Add walnuts, turn into the pan. Mark top into squares and cool.

### Taffy

- 1 c. light corn syrup
  - 1/2 c. sugar
  - 1 T. vinegar
  - 1 t. butter
- flavoring

Lightly butter a platter. Combine first 4 ingredients in saucepan and boil til firm, 252 degrees on a candy thermometer. Pour onto the platter. When cool enough to handle, add several drops of flavoring you choose. Pull with thumbs and forefingers til taffy is

light. Pull off pieces and wrap in small squares of wadded paper.

### Butterscotch Lollipops

- 1/2 c. dark corn syrup
- 1/4 c. butter
- 3/4 c. sugar

Place 18 lollipop sticks 4 inches apart on greased baking sheet. Combine corn syrup, butter and sugar in a heavy 1-quart saucepan.

Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, til sugar is dissolved and mixture comes to a boil.

Continue cooking, stirring occasionally, til temperature reaches 270 degrees (softcrack stage). Remove from heat.

Drop candy mixture from a tablespoon over pointed end of each stick, forming a 2-inch disk. Cool.

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## English Toffee

- 2 c. sugar
- 1 1/2 c. butter
- 2 T. water
- 2 c. blanched almonds

Butter a jelly roll pan. Combine sugar, butter and water in a medium saucepan; cook over low heat, stirring constantly, til candy thermometer reaches 235 degrees (soft ball stage).

Stir in almonds and continue cooking without stirring til thermometer reaches 280 degrees (soft crack stage). Pour into the jelly roll pan. Cool & break into pieces.

## Vinegar Candy

- 3 c. sugar
- 1/2 c. water
- 2/3 c. vinegar

Butter a marble slab or cookie sheet. Combine sugar, water and vinegar in saucepan. Bring to boil, stirring constantly.

Then boil without stirring til mixture reaches 290 degrees on a candy thermometer (hard crack stage).

Pour at once onto prepared surface and cool. Break into pieces.

## Chocolate Fruit Drops

- 1-6oz. pkg. semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 1 c. chopped pitted dates
- 1 c. miniature marshmallows

Grease a cookie sheet. Melt chocolate chips in microwave or top of a double boiler.

Remove from heat and stir in dates and marshmallows. Drop by teaspoonfuls on cookie sheet. Cool at room temperature til firm.

## Nutty Mocha Balls

- 6 sq. semi-sweet chocolate, 1-ounce size
- 1/4 c. light corn syrup
- 2 c. confectioners sugar
- 2 T. instant coffee powder
- 1/2 c. hot milk
- 1 t. vanilla
- 1 2/3 c. graham cracker crumbs

1 c. chopped walnuts  
1/2 c. finely chopped walnuts  
Melt chocolate in the top of a double boiler over hot water. Add corn syrup and sugar, mixing well.

Stir coffee powder into milk and stir into the chocolate mixture.

Add vanilla, graham cracker

crumbs, and chopped walnuts, mixing well. Chill about an hour, or until firm enough to handle. Roll into 1-inch balls. Roll balls in finely chopped walnuts. Cover and store in your refrigerator. This will make about 40 balls.




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# My Mother's Life

*A little over a year after my 85 year old mother's death, her house finally sold. As I looked through her file cabinet to find the manuals to the household appliances, I had no idea that I would find a family treasure. Inside, I noticed a white legal pad in my mother's handwriting. I had grown up hearing stories of the depression era days and how hard life was for everyone. What follows are some of the contents of the ten handwritten pages I found. It is truly a glimpse into an era and a way of life that few people could grasp.*

*Don Broome, Huntsville*

by **Florence Margaret Holliday Broome**

I was born April 16, 1917 at 4:00 PM; a Monday. My birth certificate states "delivered by father".

My father was a shell digger and fisherman and we lived on a small cabin boat which was

probably tied up away from everyone. I was the second of 3 girls. The first born was an 8th month baby and wasn't expected to live so wasn't tended to until it was too late. She had choked to death on the mucus that ran from her lungs. There was an old wives story that 8th month babies never lived. I came here screaming because Mother said my Dad spanked me before I was a week old. Maybe that is when I learned to be a timid person which has followed me all my life. I want to say right now that though we got spanked we weren't beaten.

I was named after two King sisters who lived near my Aunt and grandmother. They had received a letter from them mentioning something about them. Neither of my parents had much education and every name Mother suggested Dady didn't know how to spell it. Finally, she said Florence Margaret - you can get the spelling from the letter. My teacher taught me it was Florence instead of Flornce and I couldn't spell Margaret until I was lots older.

By the time Sis was born we had the boat beached and only floated during high water time. They kept telling me if I wasn't careful I would fall in but I swore with positive assurance that I would go to the bottom

and walk out and nothing convinced me until came the day I did. The cabin boat had a front and back porch and a walkway down each side but no railing. We were afloat and I needed to go to the bathroom. Mother said

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to use the chamber pot. Well I took it onto the walkway and wasn't satisfied just to sit on it, I had to stick my legs out and of course the pottie tipped me into the water. When my father lifted me out from waist deep water to him and on to my mother aboard, she asked "My, why didn't you walk out" my reply was "I couldn't find no bottom."

That was my second trip overboard. The first time mother had the wash tub set up washing. When I tried to walk by her I fell into the river. It was high water and the river was swift. Fortunately, the (battaew???) was tied to the down current end of the house and mother dashed through the house, jumped into the boat and grabbed me as I passed. People across the river working at the sawmill said later they expected to see us both drowned so were relieved when she jumped into the boat, instead of into the swift water, to get me - she couldn't swim. I wasn't over 3 or so at the time.

It soon became evident that the house boat was too small for a family of four so dady started building larger quarters. During high water, he floated logs and made a platform or raft base onto which to build. It seemed a long time before we moved in but finally we did. We heated it with a tin stove that was flat on top with a small opening in the front for venting. The wood was put in the top. I remember it getting red hot

if too much wood was put in. It had a pipe that went straight out the roof above. This pipe had to be taken down and taken out side and the soot removed. There would be two inches of soot all the way around with a small space in the middle so the fire wasn't vented well and wouldn't burn well. Even the cook

stove had to be cleaned. Quite a messy job. The soot would roll around in balls in the wind. Some always fell out in the house.

There were woods everywhere. There was a farm house up the hill, but we never visited. I expect they thought we were "River Rats."

Dady had a two wheeled cart

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he hauled fish in. The wheels were wagon wheels and a prop in back kept it level. Was pushed like a wheel barrow. He caught mostly Buffalo, Drum, and Catfish. There was a 6 foot by 18 inches round vat he heated with wood under the bottom. Tar was put in the vat and a block and tackle operated over a tree limb to raise and lower new knit nets into the hot tar to coat the webbing so it wouldn't rot. Handling them was a messy job. Tar always was soft enough to get on anything the nets touched. Lard or grease of any kind was used to soften it so it could be washed off. If it was left on one's skin it blistered. There were also large squares of knit webbing with a net hold in the middle. This combination was stretched across the river with the opening upstream. The fish swam against it until they landed into the net which had baffles in it to keep fish from swimming back out.

I remember one day dady and mother had me in the boat and

dady was raising the net. There were big crawfish clinging with big pinchers to the nets. They were red and I thought they were the prettiest things I had ever seen and begged for one. Mom and Dad both said no they would bite me. I pitched a fit so with an oath dady threw one at my feet. I grabbed it and it grabbed me. Needless to say I had quite a lot of respect for any size after that. Cray or as we called them crawfish were plentiful, but we never ate them. I expect we missed quite a delicacy, now they are quite the rage. Daddy also set traps so in winter we ate raccoon "Preferred" or possum. Occasionally he shot a squirrel. I don't think he was a good shot. We had rabbit if one got

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in a trap. We also grew a garden and had a few chickens. We didn't have milk except canned; no place to keep a cow.

Came the Winter and Spring of flood time (1927). Loggers had been cutting huge logs up river and floating them past us to saw mills. A lot were lost and Dad got them together and made a deal with a saw mill. In exchange, he got the deed for a 40 acre piney hill plot and enough lumber to build a small four room house.

He must have had a good fishing year because he hired black boys to come and help build the house. Then we had 2 homes. Three miles apart. One mile steep road and two by rail.

We kids and Mother moved to that house and Dad came some. We started to school. I was 4 years old when I was enrolled so the community could keep it's school. For two years, I went to school but stayed in primer or first grade. Only one teacher and if I went to ask a word I was sent back to my seat without being told the word, but that I was interrupting her

class.

I can see that having 6 grades she must have been frustrated but I had no other course of learning and a timid child I never asked again and also froze in my own class. Was a wasted two years.

We moved back to the river the next term and I started learning. I loved that teacher. I made 2 grades that year and did 3rd grade then we moved back to the house and the old school. That year they had enough pupils for 2 teachers. My teacher was appalled to realize that her 4th graders didn't know the 3rd grade. Every question she asked, I was the only one who could answer so we repeated the 3rd grade for half the year. We attended there with good teachers until midterm of my 6th and sis's 3rd grades.

We were in hog heaven there. We had 30 acres fenced on one side of the road and the other 10 on the other side. We got a cow and 2 horses and a wagon. Put out an orchard and grew a garden. Dady fished. Mother took produce and fruit and eggs to town and peddled them on the streets. We kids went wild in the woods. Roaming around, piling up pine straw and sliding down hill on it. Playing tag. We also helped with the gardening. We also carried wood from where Mother cut it for the

house. We had a cistern and caught water from the roof of the house. It was carried to the cistern by an underground clay pipe. Mother always let it rain and wash the roof before diverting it through a mesh to the cistern. The cistern was there because once there had been another house there.

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*Seen in church bulletin*

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The one church only had services of the 4th Sunday. It was Baptist. Dady finally got a car and we attended church in town for a while. Then I guess fishing must have gotten bad or something. Dad got more and more belligerent and came less and less often. Could have been he saw Mother getting more and more able to take care of us than he was.

He wanted us to move back down to the river and Mother insisted it was no place to rear two girls. She had seen old men marry 12 and 13 year olds and was worried. I was getting to be 11 so nearing that age.

That last summer, we went to town which was an all day trip and it was hot. Sis was fretful and went to sleep in the wagon bed on the way home. It was only when we got home and she carried Sis into the house that she realized she had a fever. I don't remember how long, if it was that night or the night she was crying out and Mother found her having a convulsion. Dady was there anyway.

I ran to the nearest neighbor in the middle of the night and

she came to help. Later she had another convulsion and I ran back and got the man of the house and he rode to the neighbor on the other side to bring his car and take her to town. I stayed with the neighbor. It was 10 days before they brought her home. She was skin and bones and still unconscious. I guess they still didn't know how she would be.

We were on the porch when she came out of the house and wondered what she had done wrong when everyone was alarmed she would fall.. What a happy time, she was at least alive. She had terrific headaches for several months and got them often after that and couldn't stand the sun. The doctor didn't know if she had polio or meningitis. There were two other cases in the area. One Doctor later decided it was most likely polio. The prolonged headaches I guess could follow either disease as severely ill as she was she could have been brain damaged, but thank God she wasn't.

***Florence Broome died in January of 2003. She was a remarkable woman.***

### Girls of Merrimack

*from 1925 newspaper*

The girls of Merrimack are planning a week of recreation and pleasure during their camp at Lawler's Bluff.

There are to be many very pleasant things happening that week such as hikes, swims and of course a wonderful watermelon feast.

## First Baptist Church

### Sunday

9:00 Bible Study

10:30 Worship (Broadcast live on WHNT Channel 19)

5:00 Discipleship Training

6:30 Worship

### Wednesday

5:00 Fellowship Supper

5:45 Prayer Meeting

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# The Monkey

Jake was a long time employee of Ashburn & Gray Construction Company. Although he was known to "tip the bottle" on a regular basis, he was still a valued employee who showed up for work on time every day.

Once during the 1960s he was sent to a construction site on the Arsenal. That morning Cecil Ashburn, one of the owners of the company, was driving around checking on the progress of various jobs and decided to stop by and see how Jake was doing.

Ashburn parked his truck, got out and looked around but there was no Jake. Ashburn was getting worried - it was not like Jake to simply disappear. Finally, after searching for a few minutes he found Jake hiding behind some bushes, trembling with fear.

"Captain," Jake said, "There's a monkey over there staring at me!"

Ashburn looked around, but needless to say there was no monkey. This was a real dilemma. Jake was a valued employee but if he was hallucinating - seeing monkeys - it might be dangerous to leave him on the job alone.

"You been drinking?" Ashburn asked.

"No sir, Captain. I had a few

last night but I was fine until a few minutes ago!"

Not knowing what else to do, Ashburn told Jake to go back to the shop and work there for a few days until he got over it.

Jake didn't mention the monkey again but the more he thought about it the more worried he became. Finally, one day at quitting time, he announced to Ashburn that he had quit drinking. "Captain," he said, "I done learned my lesson!"

Ashburn congratulated Jake on his wise decision and went on home.

That evening he was reading the newspaper when he saw an article about Miss Baker, the first monkey in space.

Miss Baker had escaped her cage and had been gone for several days before being captured in the woods near where Jake was working.

Ashburn clipped the story out and first thing the following morning showed it to Jake.

"Jake," he said, "It looks

like you really did see that monkey."

Jake stood there, not saying anything, but with a look on his face like he was about to cry.

"What's the matter, Jake?"

Jake continued to stand there with a sad look on his face, struggling for the right words. Finally he looked at Ashburn and said, "Captain, I recond I done quit drinking for nothing!"



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# A Lover's Fight

*from 1893 newspaper*

Mary Herben and Mable Brown, daughters of prominent residents of Pleasantville, fought a prizefight in a 16 foot ring pitched in an old barn on the outskirts of that town at three o'clock Sunday morning.

The cause of the fight was rivalry for the attentions of a young man named George Woodward. Thirty-eight rounds were fought, in which both girls were severely punished, but neither had the advantage, and the contest was declared a draw.

The combatants were stripped to the waist, and every part of their bodies exposed to view bore the traces of punishment. The referee, seconds and

spectators were all females, friends of the principals.

Woodward has since declared that he will have nothing to do with either of the girls.

## Old Huntsville Trivia

**1829** - New City Hall is occupied. On January 2, the Mayor has been authorized to secure one stove, a dozen chairs, and one desk to furnish the new building. Total cost of furnishings - \$67.85.

**1832** - Francis Scott Key, the author of the National Anthem, visits Huntsville. He had been sent as a representative by President Andrew Jackson to investigate the Indian troubles.

**1834** - First stage line is established between Huntsville and Decatur.



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# City Council News from 1906

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

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

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

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

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

- The Hospital Association

stated that an annex is being erected to the city hospital and permission was asked for the right to remove this new structure when the lease of the association runs out. This was granted.

- By a vote of the council, water meters will be placed on the pipe furnishing water to the livery stables.

- The street committee, to which was referred the matter of extending Green and widening Cruse Alley, was reported favorable on both propositions. The recommendation of the engineer was that the new streets be made 46 feet wide but the committee reported in favor of 60 foot streets.

## Banned In Huntsville

In 1921 Huntsville's city fathers banned movies featuring Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle from being shown in local theaters. This came about as a result of the publicity Arbuckle had received at his trial for the rape and murder of Virginia Rappe.

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# Heard on the Street in 1925

- For sale - Cheap. Hogs and pigs. If you want pigs or hogs come to see me. D. B. Jett, Brownsboro, Route 1

- Wanted: good cook. Phone 629 or see Mrs. June Martin, Lowe Avenue

- For Sale - one flat top mahogany finished desk. Call and see. 427 White Street.

- One hundred and nineteen arrests were made by the Huntsville police department during this month. Arrests for violating the Sanitary laws, 21, lead the list. Stock at large coming next with 16 and drunks, 14, coming in third on the list. There were 12 arrests for traffic law violations and eleven for affrays, the balance were scattered among a large number of other causes. The total fines assessed amounted to \$1,398.25, collec-

tions being \$1,053.25. Fines worked out totaled \$300.

- Mrs. W. I. Thompson has been appointed truant officer of Huntsville. Her duties will be to see that no child of educatable age is kept out of school for other than valid reasons.

- During the heavy electrical storm of Wednesday night a barn belonging to James Bryce, New Hope, was struck by lightning and destroyed together with its contents of foodstuffs and farm machinery. The damage will reach approximately \$2500.

- Daniel Jasper, of this county, recently coughed up a bullet that had been lodged in his lungs for almost thirty years. The bullet was a souvenir of his time in the Arizona Territory. The doctors had been fearful of operating but now they won't have to.

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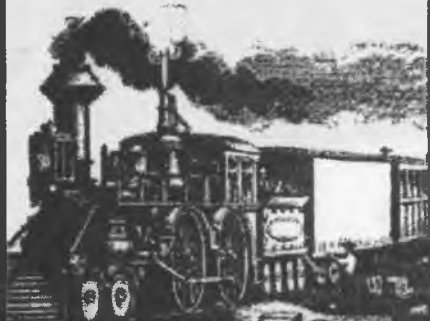
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# Wife Killer Caught By Posse

from 1924 newspaper

Bud Brooks, the Negro farm hand living in the Pond Beat neighborhood who killed his wife, Annie Lou Brooks about daylight Wednesday morning, was captured yesterday by Deputies H. C. Blackmore and S. E. Collins, under the direction of Sheriff Lane.

Brooks had committed the crime before a posse could be formed to prevent it, and made his escape towards the Tennessee River.

Reaching the scene, the three officers found the woman dead from the effects of 3 or 4 pistol bullets, not six as had been previously stated. After examining the premises the officers found

the tracks of Brooks, which led from the back of the house toward the river. From this fact the deputies approximated his course and went ahead in a car, cutting the wife-slayer off just below Triana.

Brooks was then located in a field and surrounded, later being taken into custody at the point of guns in the hands of the officers. He was brought to Huntsville and placed in jail Wednesday about noon.

One of the deputies told a reporter for the News that Brooks did not know they were after him until they rushed upon him from cover. He was surprised and did not have time to offer resistance in the face of the guns leveled directly at him.

The trial is expected to be short.

**You know you're getting older when you keep more food than beer in the fridge.**  
*Jacob Smithey*

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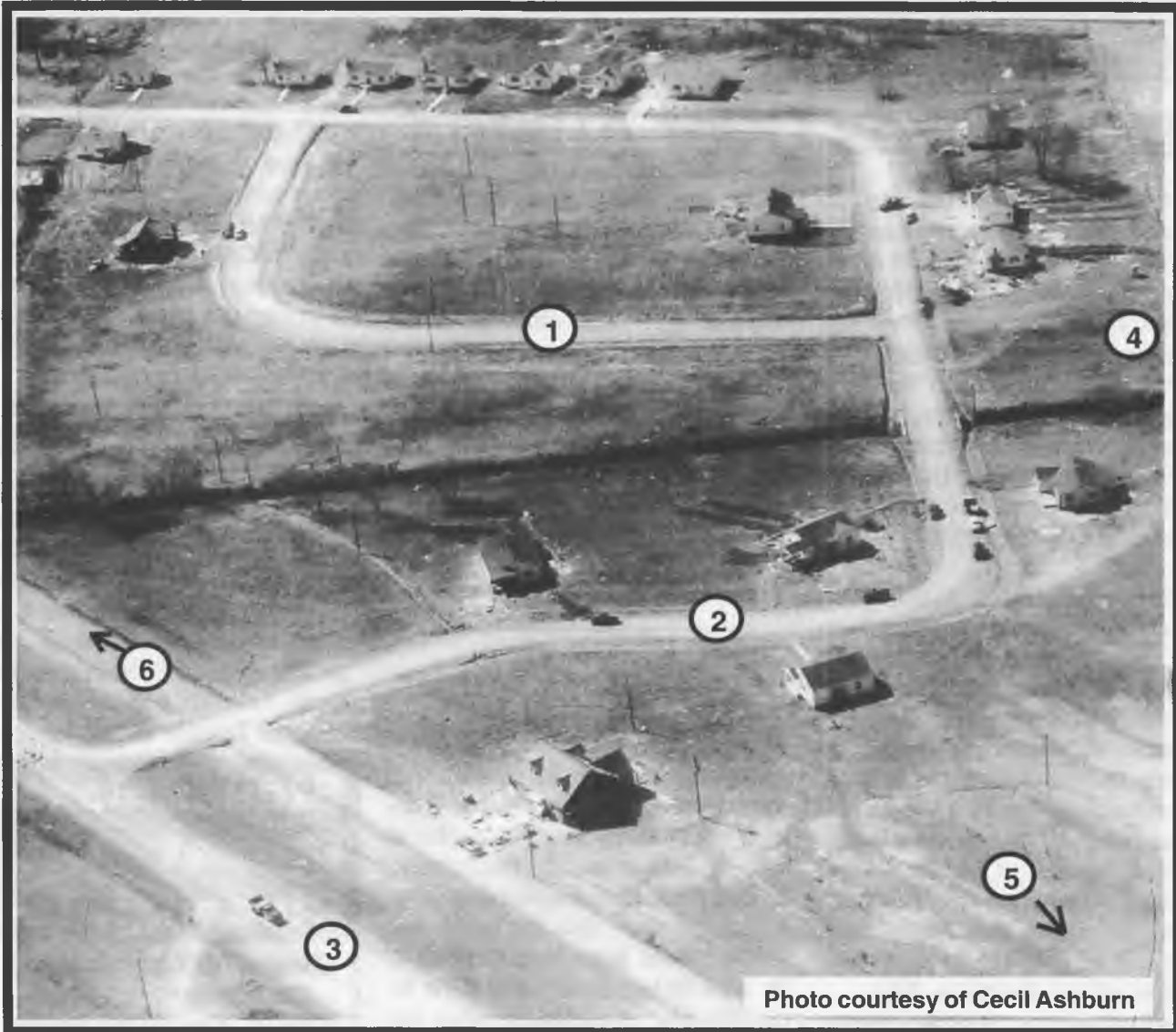


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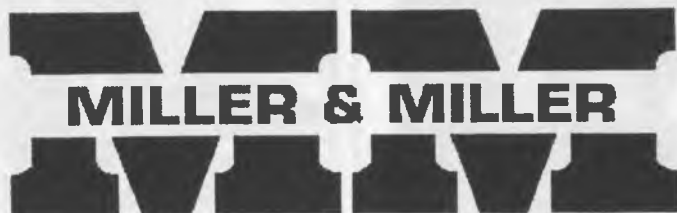


## Lee High Subdivision in 1948

1 - Forrest Circle  
2 - Lee High Drive

3 - Highway 72  
4 - Lee High (today)

5 - Toward Chapman Mountain  
6 - Toward Oakwood



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# News From The Year 1938

## News From Huntsville and Around The World

### Hitler Takes Over Austria

Adolf Hitler, who left Austria in his youth as a penniless artist, was cheered by thousands as he returned to Vienna today to pronounce the "Anschluss," or union, of the country with Germany.

Hitler was driven to the Austrian capital from Linz, where he had set up his temporary headquarters. Forty tanks led the way, and police cars filled with officers brought up the rear.

Along the route, Nazis from all over Austria cheered the man who once pledged that Austria's borders were inviolatable.

Hitler stood in the open car for most of the drive wearing his brown storm trooper uniform and returning the nearly hysterical salutes of his ardent supporters. Many of them waved banners emblazoned with swastikas. Some of the Nazis had stitched the symbol into the middle of the Austrian flag.

"What we are experiencing at this moment," Hitler proclaimed in Vienna, "is being experienced

also by all other German people. Whatever happens, the German Reich as it stands today shall never be broken by anyone again and shall never be torn apart."

Hitler has already signed a decree making himself the Commander-in Chief of the armed forces of Germany and Austria. All soldiers in Austria must swear allegiance to the Nazi leader, who is now the Fuhrer of more than 70 million people.

### Wrong-Way Corrigan Lands In Dublin

Douglas G. Corrigan, the daredevil American aviator who had been forbidden to make a solo transatlantic flight, landed in Dublin today, explaining with a straight face that his compass misled him into believing that he was flying from New York to California. Corrigan says he flew in clouds when he took off from Roosevelt Field, Long Is-

land, and his compass said he was heading west. He adds that he realized his mistake only when he sighted land at the end of the 28-hour flight. U.S. and Irish officials say he will get little or no punishment although he broke the rules of both countries, earning the nickname of "Wrong-Way Corrigan"

### Dizzy Dean Traded

The baseball world was stunned when the Cardinals traded Dizzy Dean to the Chicago Cubs for three players and cash. It seemed clear that the Cards were trying to unload their "problem child." Dean was voted most valuable player in the National League in 1934.

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## Minimum Wage Set At 40 Cents An Hour

President Roosevelt has signed the Fair Labor Standards Act, which establishes a minimum wage of 40 cents an hour and a maximum work week of 44 hours. The new regulations will apply only to those American businesses engaged in interstate commerce.

Five days ago, the president signed the Recovery-Spending Act, allocating over \$3.7 billion for the employable jobless.

Roosevelt punctuated that signing ceremony at his Hyde Park, New York, home with a prediction: The national income will increase to \$60 billion, up from previous estimates of \$50 billion. The President also emphasized that for every man or woman employed in a public works project, about two and a half other workers are employed in the private sector.

**"Money will buy a fine dog, but only kindness will make him wag his tail."**

**Jenny Adams, Athens**

## NBC Thrills Millions In First Nation-Wide Radio Hook Up


Will Rogers and stars across the nation enthralled an audience of millions tonight.

National Broadcasting Company hooked up all 48 states to a giant "studio" where entertainers hundreds of miles apart sang, laughed and bantered. Cowboy humorist Rogers broadcast from his home in Beverly Hills. He delivered a pithy monologue, part of it in Spanish for Mexican listeners. He then introduced Al Jolson in New Orleans, who sang "California, here I come" and other hits. Next, Paul Whiteman and his orchestra in New York performed Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue." Finally, the spotlight fell on Chicago, where Fred and Dorothy Stone sang duets.

The program's sponsor, Dodge Brothers, took the opportunity to introduce its Victory Six. The company president described the automobile in a brief broadcast from Detroit. Dodge Brothers should thank Mother Nature for delivering clear skies and crisp transmissions nationwide. It is doubtful if this experiment will be tried again.

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# The Legend of "Devil" Monroe Evans

The people of the Tennessee Valley had good reason to fear the man known as the "Devil of the Mountains."

William Monroe Evans, during a span of almost thirty years, terrorized the Tennessee Valley by killing, hanging and burning anyone or anything that dared to stand in his path. Not even the Yankees, under General Mitchell's command, would be guilty of such savagery and cruelty.

Evans was born on the Madison-Marshall county line around 1842 to a family that history has forgotten. From the few accounts available it seems as if his family eked out a living on a few acres of land where they worked halfheartedly at growing a garden and raising a few pigs. The farm, if it could be called that, was located in the mountains now overlooking Lake Guntersville.

Evans learned at an early age that the mountains, almost completely inaccessible and hidden from prying eyes, was a perfect place to hide any livestock that happened to become separated from their rightful owners.

Finding the life of a brigand

more to his liking than working on a hard scrabble farm, he quickly embraced his newly chosen career. Gathering about him a few other miscreants and establishing a base camp in the hills, he soon established himself as the leader.

The years preceding the Civil War were good ones for the band of budding desperados. Money had no real meaning to them as there were few places to spend it in the hills. They were content to rustle an occasional steer, and driving it back into the



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mountains, slaughter it when they were hungry. The remainder of their time was spent lolling about the crude shacks and lean-tos they called home and drinking the cheap homemade whiskey they concocted.

If ever the need for hard money arose, all they had to do was to sneak into the outlying areas of Huntsville, New Hope or Guntersville and burglarize someone's home.

At first, the citizens were content to post guards, but try as they might, they could never catch the outlaws in the act.

Evans seemed to find this highly amusing. Repeatedly, after confiscating some beef from its hapless owner, he would appear in town the next day as if daring someone to speak out against him.

Showing up in New Hope one day, after a particularly successful foray the night before, Evans began to taunt a farmer whose cattle he had stolen. The farmer was afraid of Evans, and as the outlaw realized this, the more brazen his abuse became. Finally the farmer, unable to take anymore, mounted his horse and left town.

The whole incident might have ended there if Evans had left town too, but instead he chose to stay, along with his comrades, and spend the day drinking.

Late that afternoon with the sun was still shining brightly, the brigands wobbled out of the saloon and staggered to where their horses were waiting, when all of a sudden their drunken revelry was interrupted by a loud shout.

"Evans, I want my cattle back!"

It was the farmer and in his hands, pointed straight at Evans, was a shotgun.

Evans made a sudden move, and when he did the farmer blasted away. Although the shot missed Evans, it tore a gaping hole in the shoulder of one of his men.

As Evans stood there unharmed, a cruel and vicious sneer spread across his face when he realized the farmer's gun was now empty. Slowly raising his pistol toward the defenseless farmer, Evans was heard to mutter, "self defense," as he cold-bloodily killed his first man.

Whereas before, Evans had been a troublesome thief, now he was a killer. Many people later said that with his first taste of blood he had become the devil incarnate. And with his hideouts in the surrounding mountains it was not long before he became known as the "Devil of the Mountains."

At first Evans seemed to relish his new-found notoriety. The people in the surrounding communities, never



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overly fond of him, now shunned him completely. Men that at least had tolerated him before, now hung their heads and made excuses to leave whenever he entered a building.

This only served to enrage Evans and drive him to further extremes.

With no friends except his motley gang of brigands, Evans became embittered, some people claimed, at the whole human race. A person could look at Evans in a quizzical manner and find his barn burned the same night, a bartender who refused to serve him might end up with a load of buckshot in his back.

The law was helpless. With no witnesses or evidence there was little the sheriff could do. Anyone who spoke up against Evans was destined to feel his vengeance.

When the Civil War broke out

there lived in the northern part of Marshall County a man by the name of John Dickey; a man who was known for his hatred towards his neighbors. After federal troops took control of the area north of the Tennessee River, Dickey offered his services to the union commander. Dickey's hatred for his own people was wrongly interpreted as patriotism to the Union, and so the yankees commissioned him a captain of scouts with the power to organize a company to operate in North Alabama.

This new company was composed mostly of men who had deserted the Confederate army or had been dodging conscription. Many of these men were also wanted by the law.

Lured by the opportunity to pillage and plunder at will, Evans joined the company and found to his pleasant surprise that he was

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in his element. John Dickey and "Devil" Monroe Evans cut a swath of vengeance across the valley that would terrify even their own band.

Men were dragged from their homes and murdered, some of them in the presence of their families. Volney Elliot was shot in the back, Alfred Clark was hung near New Hope, Davis Russell was shot and his body cruelly mutilated. Fletcher Lewis was found hung a few miles outside of Huntsville.

For most of them, their only crime was in crossing paths with "Devil" Monroe and John Dickey.

The Confederate army was powerless to stop these atrocities and the Federal government refused to help. Evans, Dickey and men like them, the federals reasoned, were helping the northern cause by keeping the rebel sympathizers in check.

By war's end, Evans and Dickey were the most hated men in the Tennessee Valley. Although legally operating under the auspices of the federal army, they had committed no crimes. The ex-confederate soldiers returning home saw things differently.

John Dickey, deciding discretion was the better part of valor, pulled up stakes and moved to Texas. Evans, with his small band of cut-throats, retreated into the hills above New Hope in anticipation of impending retribution.

An uneasy truce seemed to prevail for a while. The people


in the valley stayed out of the mountains and Evans rarely if ever went to town. When he did, he was always carrying his shotgun.

Again, the whole affair might have ended there if Evans had not become smitten by a comely young lass on the outskirts of town. Soon he became a regular visitor to the young lady's farm in an attempt to woo her hand. The girl's father had no use for Evans. He repeatedly told his daughter that he would never stand for Evans marrying her as long as there was any life in his body.

To Evans, that was talk he could understand.

Riding up to the girl's home late one afternoon, he killed the father and carried the girl off into the mountains.


The good folks of New Hope were outraged. A mob began to gather and there was talk of bringing Evans to justice. The sheriff brought them back to their senses. "No one witnessed the shooting except for the daughter," he said,



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"and if Evans is married to her now that means she can't testify."

In public, the men agreed with the sheriff but in private they had other ideas....

It wasn't long before Evans and his wicked ways came to the attention of the local, night-shirted gentry known as the Ku Klux Klan.

According to popular legend, the Klan placed a two hundred dollar bounty on Evans' head and within days, he was playing dodge the bullet whenever he wandered down from the hills.

This was more than Evans' pride could bear. Calling his men together he laid plans to dynamite the Masonic Hall and the Methodist church, both strongholds of his enemies. Fortunately for the townspeople of New Hope, word of the scheme leaked out and before Evans could act, warrants were obtained for his arrest.

After several long and hard days in the saddle the posse cornered Evans and his men near the present-day city of Arab. The pack resisted arrest and in the ensuing gunfight several gang members were shot to death.

Evans escaped, though severely wounded. He hid in the mountains until his injuries had healed sufficiently enough to allow him to travel. Deciding

that both Madison and Marshall counties were dangerous to his health, he moved his wife and what was left of his gang to the mountains of Morgan County.

Cast out of the hills that he called home and with no friends, Evans began to look for other means of solace. It didn't take him long to find what he was looking for.

Cloaked in the veil of religion and casting himself as a modern-day Gabriel out to rid the world of wickedness, Evans proclaimed himself a converted man ... a prophet of God.

Of course, cattle and hogs kept disappearing and he still carried the same shotgun wherever he ventured.

Traditional religion must have weighed too heavily upon his shoulders. Instead of spending his time in church spitting hell, fire and brimstone, he began to have visions.

"God," he said, "has told me to punish the non-

believers."

This punishment usually took the form of larceny, to the delight of his slovenly gang.

Next he had visions of many wives.

"God," he said, "has instructed me to take more wives so that our truth might be spread."

"Devil" Evans believed in practicing his newly discovered religion and it wasn't long before there were seven wives living in his shanty, with a multitude of min-

  
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ature devils playing in the yard.

It would be satisfying if we could, at this point, record that "Devil" Evans became a changed man, but alas, if anything, he became even more cruel. Despite his many wives (or maybe because of them) he began spending more time with his gang of brigands.

And now, with a bible in one hand and a shotgun in the other, he considered any livestock that wandered his way "donations for the Lord's work."

Evans would call on some hapless farmer, and with his shotgun lying across the saddle in front of him, inform the man that he would surely die and go to hell unless he saw it in his heart to make a sizable contribution.

Every grand jury that was impaneled between 1875 and 1891 tried to indict Evans for his many crimes, but through perjured testimony and intimidation of crucial witnesses he managed to overcome their every effort.

Many people began to think that the "Devil" was truly invincible. In the summer of 1891, Evans and his son, John, were once again out collecting "contributions". Unfortunately Pierce Mooney arrived in time to catch the duo burglarizing his home.

Mooney pulled a gun and began firing as father and son headed for the hills. The following morning Mooney was ambushed as he was feeding his livestock. Although in critical condition he was able to crawl back to the house where his wife sent for the doctor.

Evans knew Mooney was in critical condition so he waited in hiding for the doctor on the way to the patient's house.

The physician, after being warned not to attend the wounded man, made as if he was going back to town. Instead, he cut through the woods and returned to the house by another route.

Next Evans and his son tried to run Mooney's wife off. Hiding in the woods they fired their weapons at the house and in a loud voice warned her that if she did not leave, she too would be shot.

Meanwhile word had reached town of the dastardly attack and the "Devil's" attempt to silence the witness. That same afternoon Evans' son rode


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into town to pick up some supplies and was promptly arrested and carried to Baileyton for trial.

When Evans received word of his son's arrest he mounted his horse and carrying his shotgun, rode into town. For once his shotgun was of no help. He was seized by an angry mob and placed in an empty store building under guard until the authorities could decide what to do with them.

Late that night, August 15th, 1891 a mob of almost two hundred people approached the store and demanded custody of Monroe Evans and his son.

The guards offered no resistance

The condemned men were tied up and marched outside to the nearest tree limb.

Devil Evans departed this world with a curse on his lips and the gleam of a fanatic in his eyes. His son, John, began crying and begging for mercy as the noose was placed around his neck.

According to one account, seconds after the hanging took place a violent thunderstorm swept over the valley, with hor-

rendous claps of thunder and solid sheets of rain pulverizing everything in its path.

"The Devil," they said, "is taking his due."

The next week the following item appeared in the "Alabama Tribune" newspaper:

"Rube Burrow was shot down by Carter and his name was lauded to the skies as a hero. Ford, in a most cowardly manner, shot and killed Jesse James but the state of Missouri paid him large sums of money. Both of these men had some redeeming qualities. They were true to their families and true to their friends. But this man had none."

He was not true to his country or his family. But the men who relieved North Alabama of the presence of this man are called by some misinformed persons, brutes and murderers.

Evans' poor wife is in a better condition. The man who wrecked her life and educated her son for the gallows is gone. She will no longer be insulted by the presence of her husband's harem.

His gang is scattered to the four winds and peace and order have taken their place. The last stronghold of the devil in the Tennessee Valley has been destroyed and the people say 'Amen!'"

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*John F. Kerry*

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# Court News From 1885

- Esquire Figg was a busy man yesterday. The Tim Wilson mule-stealing case has been well worked up by Deputy Sheriff Fulghram. Two Negroes named Thomas Wilson and Ed Morris have been implicated. At a preliminary examination his Honor bound both prisoners over and their address for the present is cell No. 12, new jail, Huntsville, Alabama.

- Alfred Pope complained of one William Hunter, whom he wanted placed under bond to keep the peace. Alfred, it seems, is a little nervous and Mr. Hunter threatened him just to see him shake. Hunter however avers that he only makes threats when he gets drunk and claims that it doesn't happen that often.

His Honor concluded that William would keep from getting drunk if he was placed under a peace bond, and it was accordingly filed.

- Jerome Mitchel was charged five dollars and warned to stay off the streets and to not carry a gun when drunk. He did both last week and was soundly thrashed before being arrested.

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Private Robert James, son of the notorious outlaw Frank James, was stationed here in 1898 as a bodyguard for General Copping.

He had been in Huntsville once before when his father stood trial for a payroll robbery.

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"If the operator is slow to answer, don't get mad and say hard things to her; this only complicates matters.

"One minute is long enough to talk; over three minutes will be charged extra. We will, however, use some judgement in enforcing this rule. The purpose is to cut out useless gab and childish talk.

"Report all phone and line troubles to the manager. If the line is broken and you can make a temporary connection with a piece of wire, we will appreciate it.

"Operators do not have time to carry on conversations--please do not expect it of them.

"Always hang up your receiver earpiece down when through talking; otherwise, your batteries will be exhausted and your bells cut out. Ring off by giving the crank one turn.

"In dry weather it sometimes happens that

the earth around the ground rods gets very dry. By digging a small hole around them, and pouring on two buckets of water twice a week, you will greatly improve the service of your telephone.


"Anyone caught using insulators on poles for target practice will have their phone disconnected."

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A S S I S T E D L I V I N G

# A Letter

**Submitted by Terry Vickers and Ginny Campbell**

*The following letter was written by Hugh Martin Childress of Brownsboro, Alabama. At the beginning of the Civil War he, along with his twin brother George Childress, enlisted in the Confederate Army.*

Mississippi, Vicksburg - July the 20th, 1862

Dear Miss,

It is with gratitude to you that this morning I take my seat to write you an answer to your kind letter. It was Saturday and darkness had fell upon the earth and I had said a short prayer and raised a song of praise to God. I had thrown myself upon my blankets in my tent for another nights repose. It was near nine, yes I reckon ten when I was suddenly aroused by a foot-step and then a voice calling me said here's a letter for you. You can't imagine how I felt knowing it was from you as I had just received a letter from home.

I arose, gathered the letter, lighted a candle and read it and you can't imagine how happy I was to hear from you and hear that you was well but I was very sorry to hear of the family. I hope that they all be well long before this reaches you if not well before now.

I reckon you want to know what sort of a place I live in. We are encamped five or six miles from Vicksburg in a flat low hollow of a place with high round green hills all round. We have to walk out to town every two or three days to guard the place to keep the yanks from landing their forces here.

We go to the river and stay all night and then fall back three or four hundred yards among the hills. We can see the yankee gun boats from town. They bombard us every day. One shell killed one lieutenant in the company next to me last Monday night and knocked several other men down. I hope we will leave this place before long. I don't like this place.

Uncle Samuel L. Moon is well and S.W. is here sound and looks better than I ever saw him. Jackson Moon went to the hospital from Tupelo. He looked like a skel-

eton and fear he will never get well if he is not dead before now. I have not heard from him in nearly a month. Brother George left us at the same place. He had a very hard spell of the fever but I heard that he was getting well again. He is at Columbus, Mississippi.

I hope you will excuse bad writing and spelling for I am in a hurry this morning. I have to go to take some letters to cousin Bob Peevy. I suppose he is going to start today.

Hettie, you must write to me as often as you can get the chance to send a letter for I love to hear from you and my country.

Don't think that I



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am so bad dissatisfied about the conscript act for I am getting willing to do anything that I can for my country although I would be glad to see you and be at home with. Still I am willing to do my part of anything to obtain peace again.

You must write to me as soon as you get this. Send your letter by Robert W. Peevy when he comes back. Give my love to you all, receive a portion for yourself.

Excuse my scolding in the other letter for I wanted to hear from you so bad. So nothing more only I remain your ever faithful friend till death.

H.M. Childress to Hester Ann Chandler (your lover).

*Less than two weeks after writing this letter H.M. Childress was killed at Baton Rouge, La. Two months later his twin brother was killed at Corinth, Miss.*

## How To Blow Up A Tornado

*from 1885 newspaper*

Mr. John F. Schultz of Decatur has thought of a way to fight tornadoes, which he described in a letter to the newspaper. His plan is to blow them up with gunpowder.

A keg of powder would be kept near the house or village to be protected. When the funnel cloud appears, a cool-headed man would wheel the powder into line with the approaching storm, retire about 100 yards to the northwest, then wait until the air monster is just over the keg, then fire the powder by electricity.

Mr. Schultz's idea is that a charge of gunpowder would properly give a tornado a lift that would save a whole village.



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# The Night Bette Davis Played Huntsville

by Dex Nilsson

You didn't know that the famous actress, Bette Davis, once played Huntsville?

Maybe it's because there were 12 inches of snow that night, the roads were shut down, and the place where she performed was supposed to be closed. Here's the story:

The 1959-1960 season was the 10th for the Huntsville Little Theatre, and it was thought that there should be something special with which to celebrate it. In the mail came an announcement that movie great Bette Davis was going on tour in a show about poet Carl Sandburg. The group decided that sponsoring a performance of it here in Huntsville would be a highlight of the season, and it was able to book the show, called "The World of Carl Sandburg," for February 1960.

Stars had been coming to Huntsville in plays for several

years, sponsored by the Business & Professional Women, a forerunner of what is today known as the Broadway Theater League. Indeed, in December 1959, TV host Hal March appeared in "Two for the Seesaw," and also in March, Joan Blondell would star in "Dark at the Top of the Stairs." All such shows, along with those of the Little Theatre, were put on in the Huntsville High School Auditorium. Because of a scheduling conflict, though, the Bette Davis play was booked into the new Lee Junior High School Auditorium.

"The World of Carl Sandburg" starred Davis, Barry Sullivan, and guitarist-singer Clark Allen. It was more than a poetry reading, as Davis and Sullivan acted out the poetry, assuming dozens of characters and costumes. The idea for the show came from Norman Corwin, who adapted and directed it. He put the show together in the fall of 1959 in Maine, where

Bette and her husband Gary Merrill were living. It was relatively simple to produce, and it was decided to tour the country with it before trying Broadway. It originally starred the couple, but Bette and Gary bickered constantly, and Gary was reportedly drinking heavily - their marriage was nearing an end. On tour, Gary was replaced by "quick-study" Sullivan.

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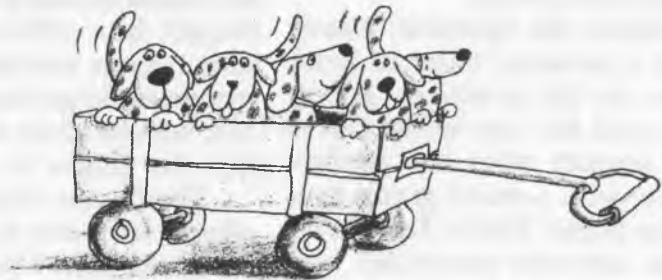
At this time, Bette Davis had made 68 Hollywood movies. She would go on to make 19 more, plus 14 for television. Her best known may be "Of Human Bondage," "Jezebel," and "All About Eve." The start of her horror movies like "What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?" was three years away. Barry Sullivan likewise had nearly 50 movies to his credit; he would go on to be in 104, plus another 100 TV shows. He had most recently been directing episodes of the popular TV series, "Highway Patrol."

The tour happened in a caravan of cars and a series of one-nighters. Bette liked it. In November she commented that producer Armand Deutsch "set up our production that we never have to worry about new lights and mikes in each town. Our own equipment travels right along with us." Back then, it was innovative. The show eventually reached Broadway in September 1960 with Bette starring with Leif Erickson. He was no replacement for Gary Merrill, or even Barry Sullivan, and the show got mixed reviews. Davis later said, "I wouldn't have missed that year for a million dollars. There's an excitement and challenge playing different places that you can't get in a single theatre."

Here, at the start of 1960, the Huntsville Little Theatre had great aspirations. HLT had formed an

"advisory committee" to see how it could get a theater of its own, instead of performing in the 1,000-seat high school auditorium - big, but with quite limited facilities and restraining rules. The committee consisted of Mrs. William Bradley Baker, Edwin Bartee,

Hugh Doak, Jr., Walter Eigenbrod, Emil Hellebrand, Mrs. Tom Jones, Jr., Dr. Alexandria Kates, Rev. Edsel Keith, Will Mickle, Harry Rhett, Jr., Mayor R.B. Searcy, Jimmy Taylor, and J.T. Uptain. With the committee's encouragement, in January



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1960, Nancy Nilsson, HLT's president, addressed the City Council, saying that HLT would try to raise the funds if the city would give it land on which to build a 400-seat theater. Not much came of this particular request, except that it was the start of lobbying for a facility that later resulted in the small theater that's in today's Von Braun Civic Center.

Always the optimist, Nancy wrote a personal letter to Bette Davis, via the producer, asking if she and the cast would like a light supper after the performance, with a small group in a private home. Walter Eigenbrod on the advisory committee had volunteered to play host at his home, which was at 312 Williams Avenue. To her surprise, Nancy received a handwritten note back from Bette saying that they would be delighted. She remarked that no one ever seemed to ask them, and it would be wonderful to go somewhere other than back to a hotel.

Ticket sales were sluggish. As the Tuesday, February 16, date neared, about half the tickets were sold - about 500 or so - leaving HLT hoping that a last minute box office surge would keep it from losing too much money. But then there was a problem:

The Huntsville Times headlines of Sunday, February 14, said it best: "Highways to Hunts-

ville Blocked. Vehicles Stalled. Paralyzed North Alabama Fights to Keep Head Above Heavy Snow." Snow depths ranged up to 12 inches. By Monday, it was worse. Temperature dropped to a low of 8 degrees. Roads were deemed unsafe for travel, so Superintendent Raymond Christian declared that schools would be closed Monday and Tuesday. Forget box office sales. HLT didn't know whether Davis and troupe could get here, and if they did, whether they could even get into the school to perform.

The troupe did arrive in the afternoon, checking into the Russel Erskine Hotel. Nancy got the school to open for the performance. The narrow streets to the school and the school park-

ing lot weren't cleared, and the auditorium wasn't too well heated - which is a nice way of saying it was cold. But 400 brave souls showed up, and "The World of Carl Sandburg" went on as scheduled.

Afterwards, the cast and their car were led to the Eigenbrod home. The party was given by the advisory committee, who, with officers of HLT, were the only ones present. Jay Fryman, Bill Schwarz, and I were the at-large members of the HLT board that year, and so we were at the party. Jay recalls that his car pulled up behind that of the cast, and he was the first to meet Bette as she got out of her car, helping her, as he put it, climb over a snow bank. He also

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clearly remembers her white ermine cape.

Refreshments were served buffet style from the dining room table which had a fine floral centerpiece.

A Times article the next day described Davis' dress: black taffeta with a fitted bodice and portrait neckline. She also wore long white gloves and that white ermine cape.

Jay also recalled Bill Schwarz's wife, Pat, asking Bette how much longer the tour would last - it had been 15 weeks so far. It was to end on Friday she found out. Pat remarked, "Well then you'll finally be glad to get home to Gary." Bette frowned and said, "My dear, you're too big a girl to think that." It would turn out that Bette would file for divorce from Gary in May.

I remember Bette sitting comfortably and relaxed in a corner chair, many of us seated on the floor at her feet. She was most gracious and talked for hours - in no hurry to fight the

snow or return to the hotel. Sullivan, on the other hand, paced back and forth. We were all surprised how tall he was, and he had looked good on stage - but we also all recall that up close his face was wrinkled and pockmarked. His biggest interest was getting on - he was to play Nashville and Chattanooga and then leave the tour for an appearance on TV's biggest dramatic show, "Playhouse 90."

We kept apologizing for having only 400 people in attendance, in an auditorium that could seat 1,000. Both Bette and Barry thought the audience was very responsive - one of the best to whom they had played. And it was then that Bette Davis taught me something I have always remembered and put to good use. She said, "You worry only about the people who come to see you. If you have one person in the audience, you give that person your best performance. Don't ever worry about the people who don't show up."

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# When Huntsville was Home to the Super Chief

by Ken Owens

It's difficult to imagine that, if history had taken a different course, automobile manufacturing could have meant more to Huntsville than the space industry.

But that's exactly what might have happened, if the Keller automobile achieved the success it could have.

The story began thousands of miles from Huntsville, in San Diego, California. As World War II was drawing to a close in 1945, many defense jobs were being phased out. John Lefield recognized that, and decided he'd better get involved in something else before he was out of a job.

Together with S. A. Williams, and Studebaker executive George Keller, he developed a fiberglass compact car called the "Bobbi" in California.

Although still in the prototype stages, the Bobbi seemed to fill a niche in the auto market for smaller cars. It weighed only 800 pounds, very light even by today's standards. After some refinements and development, they were ready to go to work on Phase Two: marketing the car.

The advertising and promotion were handled by S. A. Williams, with considerable success. The media was interested and published articles harking the car's virtues and advantages. Williams also bought advertising space in newspapers and magazines to

further push the wave of favorable response. Potential investors displayed interest and the press continued to be favorable.

Things were going just fine until California officials dug up some dirt on Williams' past that threatened the entire project. Apparently he'd been involved in some questionable business dealings before, including stock swindle and counterfeiting. Not exactly the kind of reputation needed to launch a business venture. The press turned the Guns of Navarone on Williams personally, speculating that this venture was probably a scam and referred to his prison record as proof. What the project needed was a significant geographical change. The operation was moved to Alabama

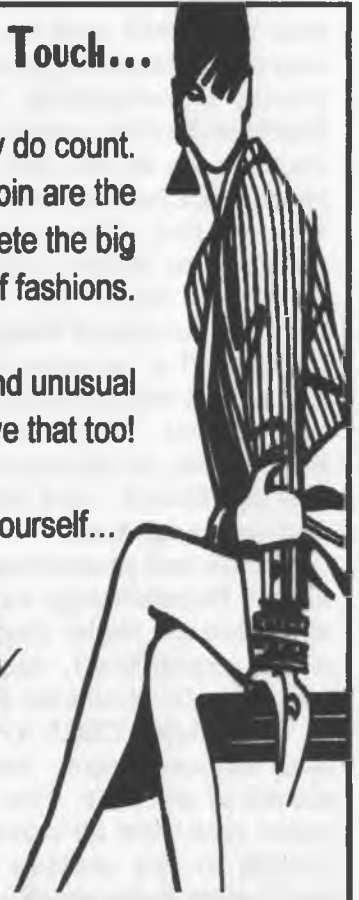
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**Kathleen Couch**  
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when the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce contracted Keller to find civilian use for an empty aircraft manufacturing facility there. Investor Hubert Mitchell of Hartselle was impressed with the idea of the Bobbi and its potential. He joined the firm and bankrolled most of the early operation.

It didn't remain long in Birmingham; Mitchell wanted it closer to home, and Redstone Arsenal was just the place. The year was 1947, and the Arsenal was also welcoming post war industry development. The old Betchler-McOne airplane plant was chosen as the site, and the Huntsville Chamber of Commerce was elated. The name was changed to Keller Automobile Company. About 130 workers were employed and things geared up toward a promising future. Keller had been a respected and successful executive with Studebaker, so the name change was significant - and helpful for market recognition.

Plans and production forged ahead. Painstakingly, early models called the Keller Super Chief were assembled, mostly by hand, at the Redstone Plant.

The Super Chief, a subcompact station wagon, was really ahead of its time. The cabs of these cars were all wood. In addition to the station wagon, plans were in the works for convertibles with options such as front or rear mounted engines. It seated 5 people and claimed 35 MPG with engines manufactured by Hercules (known mainly for tractor engines).

Keller Automobile Company even had an engineering office in Detroit for the purpose of obtaining parts for the car while it was being developed and prototyped. The Hercules engines were contracted from the Detroit office, as well as other miscellaneous parts (the Super

Chief used Buick hubcaps, for example).

The Super Chief was to have sold for about \$900. The production line on Redstone Arsenal was slated to produce 16,000 cars the first year, then 72,000 the year after that. George Keller used his contacts in the automotive business well to propel the project along. The car appeared in some significant auto shows in New York and Detroit, and was well received by the public.

Financial backing was positive, too: Keller successfully sold \$2.5 million of the company's \$5 million stock offerings, obtained dealer franchise commitments totaling \$450,000 from all around the country, and was one day

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when he died suddenly of a heart attack in October of 1949.

At that point, the wheels fell off, so to speak. Big backers choked, stalled and backed out, convinced that the company couldn't produce without Keller.

Mitchell couldn't find an individual to replace Keller in the 90 days granted in the stock option contract; the stock was removed from sale and the company had no choice but to dissolve operations and go out of business. Only 2,530 cars were actually produced on Redstone Arsenal during the firm's brief life span, and the dream of thousands of "Made in Huntsville" Kellers on America's roadways never materialized.

It's hard to imagine, but interesting to speculate - what if the Keller really succeeded and made it big? Would Huntsville be comparable to Detroit in auto manufacturing? And could a modern aerospace city peacefully co-exist with a successful automative one?



## Shaker Lemon Pie

- 2 lemons
- 2 c. granulated sugar
- 4 eggs, beaten
- Pastry Shell

Cut very thin slices of lemons with rinds. Place in bowl and add sugar. Let stand for 2 hours.

Add beaten eggs and stir well. Pour into pastry and bake for 15 minutes at 450 degrees.

Reduce heat to 350 degrees and continue baking for 30 minutes and knife inserted comes out clean.

(From "Cook with Nancy,

# Remembering

by Nolan Myrick

I spent most of my early life with my grandparents, Acklin and Annie White, who lived on the Old Rescue Road and their farm bordered on Kidd creek.

I don't know when electric power was available or when they got power but they didn't have it in the early fifties when I was there. We sat around and played rook by the light of the fireplace and kerosene lamps in the winter. In the summer we usually didn't stay up late at night because we had a lot of work to do and most of the time we went to sleep about dark. I

remember we had old army cots in the yard with metal springs and we slept in the yard under an old white oak tree where it was cool. I remember the darkness because no one else on the mountain had power either. Cars were scarce and no one hardly ever came down the road after dark. It seemed like the lightning bugs were twice as bright then. Sometimes on a clear night you could see the glow of the lights in Huntsville, but I believe being homesick for east Huntsville made me see the glow better.

When I wasn't at Morgan City

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I spent my time at 1312 Beirne Ave. That's where my parents lived and where I stayed when I had to go to school at East Clinton Elementary and grew up with some of the best people on earth. We also went to church at Fifth Street Baptist where Brother M.G. Wilson was the pastor. You could learn a lot in East Huntsville in the fifties.

Now back to Morgan City and my grandparents' farm. We had two mules, John and Blue were their names. We owned 30 acres and row cropped about 12 acres and the rest was woods and pasture. As best as I can remember we had about five acres of cotton and seven acres of corn. We also had about an acre in the vegetable garden.

We did everything by hand or mule labor. Today we could have advertised our operation as being total organic farming. We put the manure from the animals back on the land. Hoes were used for weed control and we picked the bugs off by hand. Most of the time in the summer we were up before daylight and milked the cow by lantern light and listened to the battery powered radio for the weather. Sometimes we got to listen to the Lone Ranger in the evening. Grandma listened to the soap opera nearly every day and she made me set on the couch so she could keep an eye on me while she listened.

When the produce got ready in the garden Poppa and me would pick a big load in the evening and load it in the 1953 Chevrolet pickup and cover it up with wet burlap sacks ( toe sacks) so it would stay fresh. About four the next morning we would be up

and headed down the mountain for Huntsville. In those days it was a two lane road and there was a sharp curve at the foot of the mountain. I always felt better when we got around the curve because Poppa wasn't the best driver in the world. I didn't enjoy the Whitesburg bridge either, but you had to cross it to get to Huntsville. We rode up and down the streets blowing the horn selling our produce. That's how we lived until the cotton came in.

My poppa White and grandma White were the best friends I had on earth. I learned how to work at Morgan City, Ala. What I know about farming came from those times and now I am grateful for the time my grandparents gave me. Now the old house is falling down and kudzu has eaten up the sheds an old barn. The old farm still lives in my memories, just like it was in the fifties.

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# Coming To Huntsville In 1955

by **Betty Gately**

At early dawn, August 1955, my husband Ward, myself, and our seven year old son drove into Huntsville. We had left our lifetime home, work, families and friends in Springfield, Missouri, to come to Huntsville, Alabama, to live and work for our faith. At the time we had no idea that decision would lead us to build a Church and a private Christian School that helped educate over 8,000 youth between 1958 and 1978.

I shall never forget that sunrise I saw as we crested the tall hill on Holmes Street. Below us, stretching over much of the valley, lay the small town of Huntsville, Alabama. As the colorful sunrise outlined the mountains beyond in the eastern sky, we saw the first evidence of welcome which spoke well of this town. It was a tall, massive, white Cross facing the town on the southern slopes of Monto Sano Mountain.

We saw in the valley before us scattered white framed houses with fields of cotton interspersed. There was no Parkway, only cotton fields surrounding the valley, for Cotton was still king. We noted the airport in the far southern distance.

Elderly men could be seen daily seated upon nice wooden benches on the Courthouse lawn whittling & visiting. A statue honoring the brave

youth who gave their lives in the Civil War stood next to the courthouse.

Streets and sidewalks surrounding the square were wide, cleaned nightly, and parking was free on both sides of the streets. All the streets leading from the square looked the same as the square. Crowds of Huntsvillians shopped daily in stores downtown. Today, there are fewer shoppers and not as many cars to be seen downtown, compared to those days.

We especially took note of a large sign above an old store located on the square. It read, "Great Is The Power of Cash," It is amusingly true then and today. Money and power can make good or bad changes.

A Southern custom we had to get used to was the practice of closing down all businesses

every Wednesday afternoon. This made possible for all families to go to the top of Monto Sano to enjoy the cool air and

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views. Family and friends brought picnics, ice cream churns, melons, and all kinds of play equipment for youth.

As Huntsville got ready to celebrate its 150th birthday in 1955 many of the men grew beards, or 'handle bar' mustaches, or both. I never saw long haired men, however, but some had long side burns. All were trying to emulate the early 1800 founders era.

The ladies and young girls were pictures of propriety, in gorgeous "Gone With the Wind" long dresses, with matching hats and gloves. My husband and son obtained appropriate attire from loaned top hats and ties and a sweet, kind 'southern' lady loaned a beautiful dress with matching hat for me to wear in that fall 1955 Anniversary Parade.

Our very small Church body entered a float designed by my husband, Rev. Dr. Ward Gateley. We built a simulation of a brush arbor church atop a flatbed pulled by a reliable tractor (a team of horses was risky in a parade). Mr. Willis Curtis, an elder in the Church, posed in a split-tailed coat as the parson. The Church was complete with pulpit and pews filled with the youth of our Church. A thatched roof covered the Church and a sign reading "1805 Brush Arbor" identified it.

We sang "This Old Time Religion," and "Just As I Am" as we rode in the parade. People along the streets joined in. It was a grand parade around the square and our float received lots of acclaim.

We had only been in Huntsville for a short while but we were already at home.

**"The streets are safe in Philadelphia - it's only the people who make them unsafe."**

**Frank Rizzo, Mayor**

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We are the fourth generation, proudly carrying on the same tradition.

While our prices have gone up slightly and we have a few more employees, 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.

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*Domie Lewter*  
*Mae Lewter*

# When life was simple...



Huntsville celebrated its 150th birthday in 1955. Most of the men grew beards but for the unlucky few who didn't there were kangaroo courts that would often sentence people to be placed in the stocks on the courthouse square for all to see.

That same year the Parkway opened, the Dwarf Restaurant began business and the Arsenal had 6,500 civilian employees.

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