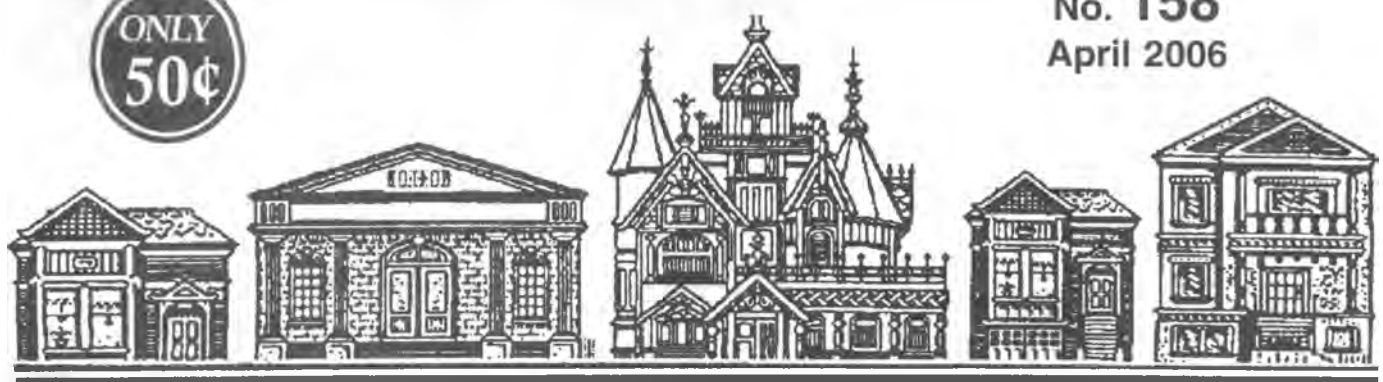


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No. 158  
April 2006



# Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY

## Boot's Lounge



For over thirty years it was one of the most popular restaurants in Huntsville. People got engaged there, then took their children and grandchildren back to visit.

All good things come to an end, and in 1992 the restaurant closed. That night as Boots and his wife got in the car to drive home the radio was playing, *"Thanks For The Memories."*

It was the perfect ending for a Huntsville landmark.

Also in this issue: **The Buried Gold of Hog Hollow**

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# Old Timer's Sale



# Boots Lounge

Alvie "Boots" Ellett was born in the small rural community of Owens Crossroads in 1934. It was a time when America was recovering from the worst depression in history, but for the residents of the small town it was as if time had stood. Men still walked behind a mule trying to scratch a living out of a sun-scorched cotton field while praying for rain. Families went to church every time the doors were opened and men gathered at the general store to swap yarns and pocket knives.

"My father and grandfather ran a small general store," recalled Boots. "They sold everything from horse shoes to medicine. People didn't have much cash money back then so they would buy on credit until the cotton came in. Unfortunately, if the crop failed my grandfather didn't get paid and even if the crop was good, people would sometimes move away or there would be sickness in the family and all the money would go to paying doctor bills."

Boots remembers his grandfather as a kind man. "He was one of the founders of the Owens Crossroads Church of Christ. Many times people who owed large amounts of money at the store, and had no way of paying, would come in and he would let them have more supplies on credit. He just couldn't bring himself to put more hardship on people who were already down and out."

"My grandfather gave me my nickname," said Boots. "One year when I was a small child they gave me a pair of Roy Rogers cowboy boots. I wore them everywhere I went. I think I probably even wore them to bed. It got to every time my grandfather saw me coming he would say, 'Here comes Boots.' Somehow the name just stuck."

With the store slowly losing money, Boots was expected to help out any way he could.

"I was in the tenth grade when my father announced that I was going to grow a cotton crop. He had the field plowed and the rest was up to me. It was only about five or six acres but after a few hours chopping cotton it seemed more like five hundred acres. The longest thing in the world is a cotton row when the temperature is about a hundred humid degrees.



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716 East Clinton Ave.  
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(256) 534-0502

E-Mail - oldhuntsville@knology.net  
Internet Home Page  
www.oldhuntsville.com

Advertising - 534-0502

Sales & Mrktg. - Cathey Carney

Gen. Manager - Ron Eyestone

Copy Boy - Tom Carney

Features - Stefanie Troup

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"I wasn't any better than anyone else but after a few summers chopping and picking cotton, I knew I had to find something else to do. I just couldn't see myself making a career out of pulling a cotton sack."

At that time there was an intense rivalry among the high schools in trying to win football and basketball championships. Recruiting players from other schools was common. Boots had been playing basketball for Owens Crossroads and was already known for his aggressive style on the court when he came to the attention of Coach Hughes of Huntsville High School.

"I was in the 10th grade," remembered Boots, "when Coach Hughes and Deputy Sheriff Carrol pulled up in front of the house one afternoon in a big green car. The coach didn't waste many words; he started off by saying he wanted me to play ball for Huntsville High. I lived in the county but they assured me there would be no problem with me changing schools.

"I was thrilled! Huntsville High had the best basketball teams in the county and I was honored to be asked to be a part of it. When I told the Coach I would love to play basketball for him, he gave me a funny look.

"Oh no, son," he said, "you're not going to play basketball. You're going to play football!"

"I've never played football," I

protested. "I don't even know how to play!"

"Oh, don't worry," said the coach. "We just want you for your size. We need some big players!"

"Coach Hughes was a good man," said Boots. "He would push us until we were about to drop, and then he would push us more. Playing ball under him was some of the best years of my life."

Despite the fact that Boots didn't know how to play football, Huntsville High went on to win the county championship. He also garnered the attention of the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa who offered him a scholarship.

"No one in my family had ever gone to college before. A fifth or sixth grade education and knowing how to read and write was about all most people knew. Whatever happened, I knew it had be better than picking cotton and running a general store."

"I was lucky in that I already knew some of the players. There was Buster Hill, who became a good friend of mine and Bobby Luna who was one of the biggest football stars of that time. And of course there was Ty Samples. He was everyone's friend and people everywhere knew him."

Boots quickly made a name

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"Because of your experienced staff

Betty's life was saved."



Steadman, Dr. Gilbert and Karen

for himself on the football field and gained national recognition. In 1955 he signed a contract with the Philadelphia Eagles football team. Unfortunately, at the same time he received another contract in the mail. This one was from Uncle Sam and was called a draft notice. Needless to say, the Eagles contract was canceled.

"I am kind of embarrassed," laughs Boots, "when people talk about their time in the Army. I went to Fort Jackson for basic and when they found out I had played football for Alabama, they gave me a different kind of uniform - I spent the rest of my military career playing Army football!"

"When I got out of the Army I signed a contract with the VC Lions, a pro team in Vancouver, Canada. They gave me \$5,000 plus a \$1,000 signing bonus. The first thing I did was buy myself a car and two sport coats. I was really big time!"

"The VC Lions were about the worst team in the division and they didn't improve much after I signed on. That was the longest season of my life. The food was strange, everyone talked with an accent and to be honest about it - I was homesick. I really missed Huntsville."

"I knew that coming back to Huntsville spelled the end of my football career but I didn't care. I was just happy to be back home among my friends."

"Like lots of other folks at that

time, I went to work at Thiokol, but after a while I started thinking about opening my own business. I first thought about a clothing store but that required more money than I had (or could borrow.) My next choice was a restaurant with a bar. I had spent a lot of time in both and I was just naive enough to think that cooking a cheeseburger or opening a beer would be easy!

"I rented a building on Governors Drive and started remodeling it. I was so broke that I had to do most of the work myself. Mr Halsey, of Halsey Grocery Company, was kind enough to sell me supplies on credit and a lot of other people agreed to hold my checks. Even with all my friends helping, I was almost out of business before I ever opened!

"The first day I opened the place it was packed with my friends. The day was a scorcher and everyone wanted a cold beer. Finally the beer truck showed up but the driver refused to unload the hot beer until he was paid.

"Cash on delivery." he said.

"I didn't have enough money in the cash register to buy two beers, much less a truckload. Fortunately, some of my friends saw the situation I was in and took up a collection at the bar to pay the driver. They must have thought the whole thing was funny because there were even complete strangers who chipped in!"

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"There weren't many good restaurants in town back then," said Ron Eyestone, "but Boot's Lounge was great. I remember there were pictures of football players on the walls and a huge cheeseburger and fries cost about 75 cents. The best item on his menu, however, was his steak. He never would tell us where he got them but they were some of the best steaks I ever tasted! People used to come from all over the county just to get one of his steaks."

"I remember those steaks well," laughs Boots. "When I first opened I was so broke I couldn't stock much food so every time someone ordered a steak I would run across the street to Piggly Wiggly and buy one. For a while I was one of their biggest customers - a dollar or two at a time!"

Boot's Lounge soon developed a regular following but the business refused to grow. Huntsville's businesses were moving along the newly opened Parkway and traffic along Governors Drive was decreasing. Many of Boot's regular customers now found it easier to stop at a restaurant near where they

shopped.

"I was sitting in the restaurant worrying about paying the bills," said Boots, "when Tom Taylor came in. We got to talking about traffic and business when he told me he had a place on the Parkway for sale. I asked how much and when he told me \$80,000 I almost choked on my beer. I knew it was a good deal but it was also \$80,000 more than what I had."

"That weekend I was talking with my father and I happened to mention Tom Taylor's offer. Dad asked me what I was going to do."

"I'm not going to do anything. Buying that place would break me."

"Son," my father said, "What are you worrying about? You're already broke."

"My father helped me borrow the money," Boots recalled, "but I was so scared that I insisted on financing the loan for twenty years so in case something happened I would still be able to afford the payments."

Boot's new location on the Parkway, the old Holiday House Restaurant, was already a



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"That room had a special kind of glass about two inches thick," Boots said, "to keep the noise out. I figured it had to be worth a lot and I needed the money. I spent about two weeks taking it out piece by piece, being careful not to scratch or break it. Finally, I got finished, had the glass stacked up in neat stacks and called K&M Glass to see what they would pay for it."

"Nothing," they said, "but if you want to pay us we'll haul it off."

Boots finally got the restaurant opened and it became an immediate success. With no Piggly Wiggly across the street, he started having Omaha steaks shipped in and began serving items that were considered exotic for Huntsville at the time, such as lobster and shrimp.

A real estate broker still tells the story about when he was trying to put together a land deal. The owner of the land was an elderly man who wore overalls all the time and rarely came to town. The broker, hoping to impress the old farmer, carried him to Boots and ordered him a lobster. When the waitress brought it out the old farmer set there for a

long time staring at it with an incredulous look on his face. Finally he turned to the broker and said, "That's just about the biggest crawdad I've ever seen!"

In 1964 Boots met Joyce Willis, who would become his wife, business partner, and construction helper.

Joyce still laughs when she remembers the early years of their marriage. "We didn't have much money so we tried to do everything ourselves. One time Boots and I were up on the roof trying to patch a leak. I was trying to hold on, keep my dress from blowing in the wind and trying to hand Boots a hammer at the same time. At about the same time a man in a Volkswagon pulled up. When he saw me on the roof he started laughing like it was

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2. *Eden of the South: A Chronology of Huntsville, Al. - 1805-2005* by Raneé 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

10. *Old Huntsville Photo Albums on CD Rom. Vols. I, II & III.* Hundreds of B&W Photos of Old Huntsville/area. \$15.95 each

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the funniest thing he had ever seen. I was so embarrassed but I hate to admit that I felt better a few seconds later when I heard a big crash. He had run into another car while laughing and looking over his shoulder at me."

"Often it seemed like as soon as one thing was fixed something else would go wrong. One time, after working late the night before, we got a phone call from a friend telling us that we had water damage at the restaurant. When I asked how bad it was he paused for a long time before answering, 'Well, I'm in a boat at your front door.' Pinhook Creek had overflowed its banks and flooded many of the businesses along the Parkway.

As the restaurant continued to grow in popularity it began to attract a lot of avid sports fans. It was one of the first places in town to have TVs and every time a football game was on the place would be packed. Apparently some of the customers did more than simply watch.

"One day two men walked in," Boots said, "and identified themselves as FBI. They said they had information that my

phone was being used to place bets in Las Vegas. We got it straightened out but after that I was careful about who I let use my phone."

As the years began to pass many people developed special memories for Boot's Restaurant & Lounge. People got engaged while sitting in the booths, celebrated their anniversaries there and later brought in their children. Customers became close friends and the restaurant became a part of their lives.

Joe Reid remembers going there every week with his wife & friends. "We were having dinner and drinks with another couple one night when someone started talking about going to Hawaii. I wasn't really listening so I just mumbled something like "That would be nice." Apparently my wife misunderstood me because

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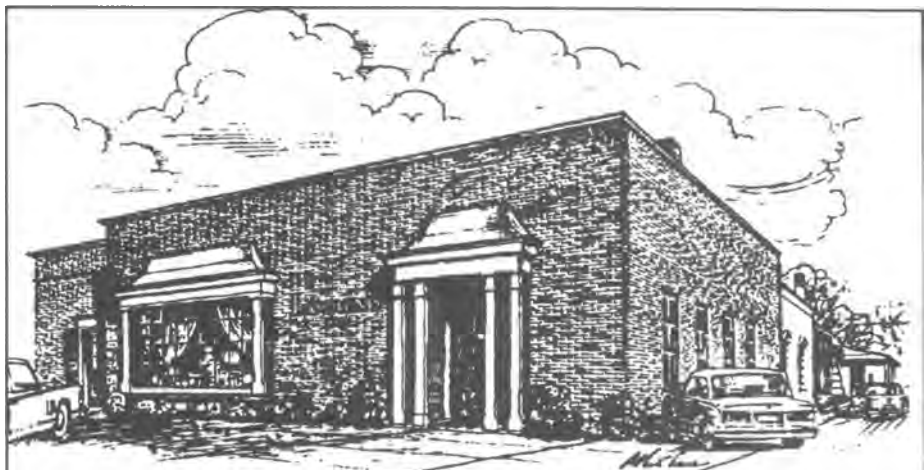
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the next day she bought the tickets for all of us, kids & all. That was the most expensive steak dinner I ever had at Boots."

Will Halsey, of Halsey Grocery, remembers, "Lots of friends would meet up at Boots - I met there with Dr. John Evans, Pete Lanier, John Lary, John Scott, Joe Fleming and others. Then on weekends we'd get sitters for the kids and take the wives out - it was a great time. And the best food in town."

"We did a lot of proms and private parties," said Boots. "The Madison County Medical Association met upstairs in the banquet room for years and lots of businesses had their Christmas parties with us. Jerry Damsen always rented the place on our off day for his company Christmas party as well as Bill Propst. One of our favorites was Leroy Cunningham's annual Christmas party. Most of the people there were good friends of ours and everyone always had a great time. Leroy always hired a band and when the party re-

ally got going he would do his famous rendition of *Elvira*."

"Sometimes I don't know what we would have done without our friends," said Joyce. "Boots was out of town one time and he called one night to see how everything was going. It was one of those days when everything had gone wrong."

"I've got a restaurant full of customers," Joyce told him, "and I'm out of lobster and shrimp and there's no money in the cash register to make change." I don't think I even mentioned the toilet that kept stopping up.

"Boots finally calmed me down and told me to call Gary Clemons, at the Twickenham Sta-



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tion, and Jess Sanford at Gibsons Bar B Q. I made the calls and in a few minutes Gary was unloading boxes of lobster and shrimp at the restaurant's back door. At about the same time Jess showed up with a bag of money for the cash register."

"We had a great time and made some of the best friends in the world," remembered Boots, "but it was wearing us down. We had to be there every morning at about nine to get ready to open up and sometimes we didn't get done before three or four in the morning. All we did was work and get ready to go back to work. We had gotten to the point in our lives where we just wanted to slow down.

"One day, in 1992, we were both dead tired and had set down to take a break when I turned to Joyce and asked what she thought about us doing something else. She was so tired she didn't even reply. She just reached over and squeezed my hand."

That same day Boots and his wife hung a small cardboard sign on the front door announcing the restaurant would close the following day. The next day Boots Lounge was packed with old friends and customers sharing memories and telling tales. Couples stopped by one last time to show their children where they had gotten engaged. Others asked for a menu as a special souvenir.

When the last customer left late that night Boots locked the door for the final time. As they got in the car to drive home the radio was playing, "Thanks For The Memories."

Somehow, that was an appropriate ending for a Huntsville landmark.

## Help Wanted

from 1862 newspaper

Maj. G. W. Jones, C.S.A. Quartermaster in Whiting's Division of the Army of Virginia, has been sent here by the War Department to procure clothing for the Confederate Army. He has secured 110,000 yards of woolen goods, and wishes to have 4,000 suits of clothing made as rapidly as possible. The Government will pay good prices for good work. This will be a fine opportunity for females in want of work.

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# Diary of a Yankee Soldier

**April 4, 1862** As we approach the Alabama line we find fewer but handsomer houses, larger plantations, and negroes more numerous.

**April 9** Moved at six o'clock this morning. Roads sloppy and in many places overflowed. Marched sixteen miles.

**April 15** Resumed march at six this morning. Passed the plantation of Leonidas Polk Walker. He is said to be the wealthiest man in North Alabama. His domain extends for fifteen miles along the road. Reached Huntsville at 5 in the afternoon.

**April 20** At Decatur. The town is as ugly as Huntsville is handsome. There is a cane brake near

the camp, and every soldier in the regiment has provided himself with a fishing rod.

**April 24** Our forces are on the alert. Before leaving this place the rebels built a cotton fort, using in its construction probably five hundred bales of cotton. Today we filled the bridge over the Tennessee with combustible material, in case we find it necessary to retire to the north side.

**April 27** The Tenth and Third crossed to the north side of the river and Colonel Burke of the Tenth applied the torch to the bridge. In a few minutes the fire extended along its whole length, and as we marched away, the flames were hissing among its timbers, and the smoke hung like a cloud above it.

**April 28** Ordered to move to Stevenson.

**May 2** Took the cars for

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Huntsville. At Paint Rock the cars were fired upon, and six or eight men wounded. I had the train stopped and taking a file of soldiers, returned to the village. The telegraph line had been cut and the wire was lying in the streets.

Calling the citizens together, I said to them that this bushwhacking must cease. Hereafter every time the telegraph wire was cut we would burn a house; every time a train was fired upon we would hang a man; and we would continue to do this until every house was burned and every man hung between Decatur and Bridgeport.

I then set fire to the town, took three citizens with me, returned to the train and proceeded to Huntsville.

**May 10** Have been appointed President of a Board of Administration for the post of Huntsville. After an ineffectual effort to get the members together, I concluded to spend a day out of

camp, so I strolled over to the hotel, took a bath, ate dinner, smoked, read, and slept until supper time.

**May 16** Appointed Provost Marshal of the city. Have been busy hearing all sorts of complaints, signing passes, sending guards to this and that place in the city.

**May 23** The women are outspoken in their hostility. A flag of truce came in last night from Chattanooga, and the bearers were overwhelmed by favors and visits from the ladies.

**July 3** It is exceedingly dull; we are resting as quietly and leisurely as we would at home. There are no drills. Tomorrow is the Fourth.

**July 4** Thirty four guns were fired at noon.

**July 7** Am detailed to serve on court martial. The first case to be tried is that of Colonel J.B. Turchin.

**July 14** Turchin's brigade has stolen a hundred thousand dollars worth of watches, plates, and jewelry in Northern Alabama.

**August 3** The gentlemen of the South have a great fondness for jewelry, canes, cigars, and dogs. White men rarely work here. Judging from the number of stores and present stocks, Huntsville, in better times, does a heavier retail jewelry business than Cleveland or Columbus. Dia-

monds, rings, gold watches, chains and bracelets are to be found in every family. The negroes buy large amounts of cheap jewelry, and the trade in this branch is enormous. One may walk a whole day in a Northern city without seeing a ruffled shirt. Here they are very common.

**August 7** General McCook was murdered near Winchester yesterday by a small band of guerillas. When the Dutchmen of his old regiment learned of the unfortunate occurrence, they became



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Seen on hospital chart

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uncontrollable, and destroyed the buildings and property on five plantations near the scene of the murder.

**August 8** The night is exceedingly beautiful: our camp lies at the foot of a long range of mountains called the Monte Sano.

**August 25** Ordered to move.

## An Embarrassing Suicide

*from 1912 newspaper*

Harold Gentry, 32, yesterday phoned his mother to inform her that he had taken poison and would not be long of this world.

A short while later he again phoned to say he was growing weaker.

Mrs. Gentry, apparently hard of hearing, understood her son to say that he was going to Illinois where he was going to meet a man by the name of Mr. Beaker. Mrs. Gentry congratulated her son, wishing him good luck on his upcoming trip.

Fortunately the incident had a happy though embarrassing ending when Gentry discovered he had taken a large dose of laxative, rather than poison.

Gentry will apparently not call his mother again in an emergency.

## Real Estate from 1910

- \$4,400 will buy a well-improved farm just 7 miles from Huntsville. This farm is 150 acres, 100 in cultivation, 50 acres in woods and pastures. A good number of springs and a good well is on the land.

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# A Faithless Spouse

*from 1890 Newspaper*

George Mitchell came into the office of the Times yesterday and reported the disappearance of his wife, who was before he married her, Nancy Whitlock.

Mitchell and his wife were living happily and Mitchell's half brother, George Edmonds, boarded at his house.

Last Thursday a week ago Mitchell returned from work late in the evening and found his house closed, and upon inquiry found that his five months old child had been taken to a neighbor's house with the request to take care of the child for an hour, when the mother would come for it.

Mitchell waited for his wife's return, but she never came back,

and upon investigation it was found that Mitchell's half brother had eloped for parts unknown with Mrs. Mitchell.

Mitchell took his babe in his arms and walked through country roads to his friends in the neighborhood, three miles from town where he left it, swearing that he would search the earth over until he found the base wretch who has brought this sorrow to his home, and that if the law set his brother free after he had found him and turned him over to its custody, he would shoot him down in the courtroom then and there.

Mitchell left in the rain, trying to find a trace of his faithless spouse.

**"Bigamy is having one wife too many. Monogamy is the same."**

*Oscar Wilde*

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# Local News from 1907

- Hubert Long, a young man from this county, was arrested in the Whitesburg precinct yesterday and brought here to jail on a warrant charging bastardy. A warrant for the young man's arrest was sworn out in Justice Grimmitt's court by the parents of Miss Francis Upton who is thirteen years of age. She claims that Long won her favors by promising marriage, but Long is not of legal age and his parents have refused to give their consent for him to marry her.

- Sheriff Mitchell reports the seizure of an illegal still that was operating in the back room of a retail store on Washington Street. Perhaps this explains why so many of the young blades around town have been sporting new neck ties recently.

- I propose to open a private school for boys at my residence

on East Holmes Street on Tuesday, the first day of October, 1907. I will teach whatever is necessary for entrance into the Sophomore class. My fee is \$5 per month paid in advance. Chas. O. Shepherd.

- Sheriff William Mitchell is in correspondence with various parties for the purpose of buying a pair of pet deer for the county court yard. They will make the yard look more attractive. The unsightly pathways will soon be obliterated as the sheriff has placed a number of signs

up bordering the pavement forbidding anyone from walking on the grass. Whomever violates this rule in the future will be arrested and fined.

- Wanted - a responsible man to sell our new line of windmills. Liberal commission for the right man.

**Do you realize that in about 40 years, we'll have thousands of old ladies running around with tattoos?**

**Jim Hereford, Athens**

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*Redstone Village*

# Heard On The Street

by *Cathey Carney*



The first caller with a correct guess for the Photo of the Month in March was **Erk Payne**, a long-time Huntsvillian. The young soldier in the photo was retired **Judge Thomas Younger**. Congratulations Erk - who grew up with Judge Younger in Lincoln Village and remembers him well!

Speaking of judges, it was great to talk with **Danny Banks** recently while he was shopping at Lewter's Hardware. That man gets better looking every day!

**Carolyn Tidmore**, of Sanders Cleaners, is sure proud of her beautiful grandchildren. **Alysa** is 6, **Kyle** is 5, and **Olivia** is 2. She says they are so much fun to be around!

We were sorry to learn of the death of **Ruth Bell Mitchell**. We send our deepest sympathy to her husband **Glenn** and their family.

Another friend who is ailing is **Fred Webster**, who's 63 years old. His Mom **Helen**, 86, is still able to drive to be with him. They have many friends and family who love Fred and are all pulling for him.

**Jeremy Woods**, only 21, is now serving in Iraq for his second tour. We send our love to him and are so proud of all of

our soldiers. His Mom, **Donna Smith** of New Market, can't wait til he is home again.

We met the sweetest couple recently. **Ralph & Betty Harvey** stopped by to see us, they told us they've lived here for 30 years and don't want to be anywhere else!

A special Happy April Birthday to our dear friend **Cheryl Tribble**, of Woodstock, GA.

We recently saw our good friends **Terry and Kim Davis** at Bonefish Grill. Terry is running for Superintendent of Education for Madison County. He's a good man and we know he will do a great job!

**Bob and Carolyn Nathan** stopped by for a visit recently - they are the most interesting people and we love catching up with them.

You can't find a nicer person than **Jennifer Dugan**, who works at Colonial Bank. She always has the most beautiful smile on her face, and just makes you feel good you came in that day!

**Helen Riser** is sure proud of her family - children **George Riser, Jr.**, **Diana Riser**, and **Leisa Teed**; as well as grandkids **Brian Teed**, 16 & **Alan Teed**, 14. Dad is **Jim Teed**, of SAIC.

**Dave Smith**, fiance of **Sherri Williams** of Pleasures, had a 38th birthday bash recently, hosted by Sherri. Happy Birthday, Dave!

It was good to spend some time with **Myrtle Butler** and **Violett Layne** recently. Even though Myrtle is the Mom, these ladies look like sisters!

**Charles Cantrell** sure misses Huntsville. He left here in the late 70's and lives in Greenville, TX. He says he's never forgotten Huntsville and her people.

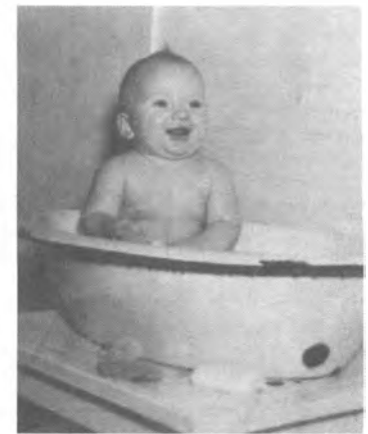
Has anyone else noticed how much **Wes Savage**, of Moss Valley Railroad, looks like **Taylor Hicks** - the American Idol finalist? He could be his twin!

**Sherry Lewis** is sure proud of her exotic animals she cares for at "Old MacDonald's Petting Zoo" between Huntsville and Scottsboro. Kids love petting all

## 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: You can always see this little boy's name on a sign in Old Town or Twickenham.



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the animals and grandparents are getting into it too!

**Florence Tier** had a good birthday celebration at Redstone Village recently - she is a real sweetheart!

**Steve Stokes** of Southern Home and Hearth has so many interesting stories about Huntsville and it's history - he could write a book! **Carol Christopher**, who also works with Steve, has won awards for her delicious recipes and will be featured soon in our recipe section!

**Hank Miller's** wife **Judy** had a really bad fall recently and is recuperating with the help of her sweet husband, who's President of the Golden K Kiwanis. We're thinking about you, Judy!

We were saddened to hear of the death of **Mary Ann Hall**, wife of **Albert Hall** and mom to **Lynda Hall**, our Tax Collector. Mary Ann worked as a Registered nurse at Huntsville Hospital for 30 years. We know she has many friends and family who will miss her, and we send our condolences to them.

**Ann Price** continues to improve a bit and loves visitors. We love you Ann and know you enjoy seeing your sweet niece **Gale Nichols**.

**Johnny Johnston** spoke before a packed house recently at Carlton Cove and two people he really enjoyed meeting were **John and Doris Martin**, residents there.

It was good to see **Curtis Parcus** - he is staying busy non-stop these days, with the upcoming opening of his new restaurant on Pratt Avenue - Dallas Mill Deli.

**Sam Dodsworth**, owner of Coppertop Bar & Grille on Oakwood, had a March birthday and we send best wishes to her.

Also recently we caught up with **Frankie Glassco**, co-publisher of the Valley Planet. She is one hard-working lady and we are proud of the job they are doing!

We saw that handsome **Emmett Boylan** and he told us he's moving - into Redstone Village independent living!

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



## New Arrivals!

LAUNDRY by Shelli Segal		BCBGMAXAZRIA	
Huntsville Hospital	Whitesburg Drive	Blevins Jewelers	Bulldog Antiques
Governors Drive	Duffy's Deli	★	Bob Wallace Ave.
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# Low-Sugar Recipes

## Pear Salad with Blue Cheese Dressing

1 head Romaine lettuce, washed & torn into bite-sized pieces

1 pear, thinly sliced  
2 T. walnuts

### Blue Cheese dressing:

1/4 c. light mayonnaise  
1/4 c. 1% milk  
1/4 c. crumbled blue cheese  
1 t. lemon juice  
1 t. balsamic vinegar

In a small bowl, combine all ingredients for the dressing. Stir well and add pepper to taste.

In a salad bowl, toss Romaine lettuce with the dressing. Arrange the pear slices over the salad, sprinkle with walnuts and a bit more blue cheese.

Serve immediately.

## Tapioca Pudding

3 c. skim milk  
1/4 c. quick-cooking tapioca  
1/2 t. salt  
1/4 c. egg substitute  
1 egg white, beaten  
1 t. vanilla extract  
2 1/2 t. Splenda sugar substitute

Whisk together the milk, tapioca, salt, egg substitute and beaten egg white in top of a double boiler. Heat the water in the lower part to boiling. Cover the top part and cook for five minutes while stirring. Remove from heat, add vanilla extract and Splenda. This pudding will thicken as it cools.

## Veal Piccata Milanese

4 veal cutlets  
3 T. stone ground flour  
2 T. olive oil

1/3 c. dry white wine  
2 T. butter  
2 T. lemon juice  
1/4 c. chopped fresh parsley  
With a mallet, flatten veal to 1/8" thickness. Combine flour, salt and pepper and dredge veal in this mixture. Heat the oil and cook the veal for one minute on each side.

Remove veal from skillet and keep warm. Add wine to the skillet and deglaze the pan (cook while scraping veal bits that stuck to the pan.) Add butter & lemon juice. When butter is melted, pour sauce over the cutlets and sprinkle with chopped parsley.

## Macaroni & Cheese

2 c. macaroni, cooked  
1/4 c. fat-free cheese cracker crumbs  
Nonstick cooking spray  
Paprika

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**White cheese sauce:**

- 1 1/2 c. fat-free milk
- 1 1/2 T. plain flour
- 1 1/2 T. low-fat margarine
- 3/4 c. grated low-fat American cheese

Preheat oven to 375 degrees and spray your baking pan with cooking spray. To make the cheese sauce combine milk, flour, margarine and American cheese. Alternate layers of macaroni and cheese sauce in dish, cover with cheese cracker crumbs. Sprinkle with pepper and paprika for taste. Bake til the mixture bubbles and the crumbs turn brown.

**Baked Salmon**

- 4 salmon steaks
- 1/2 t. dried parsley flakes
- Vegetable cooking spray
- 1/2 t. ea. salt and pepper
- 2 T. lemon juice
- 1/2 t. dried dillweed
- 1/4 t. garlic powder

Rinse steaks well in cold water, pat dry. Place them in a shallow pan coated with cooking spray, brush with lemon juice.

Sprinkle evenly with dillweed, parsley, spices and garlic. Bake at 350 degrees for 25-35 minutes and fish flakes easily with a fork.

**Spicy Fries**

- 4 medium yellow potatoes
- Cooking spray
- 1/2 t. salt-free seasoning
- 4 t. canola oil
- 1/4 t. ground red pepper

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Slice potatoes lengthwise into 1/8" slices. Rinse in cold water. Combine with oil in a large bowl and toss to coat. On a baking pan coated with cooking oil arrange potatoes in a single layer, bake uncovered for 15 minutes and golden brown. Sprinkle with salt-free seasonings & pepper.

**Sweet Cherry Dessert**

- 10" baked pie shell
- 1 lb. bag frozen, unsweetened sweet cherries, thawed
- 1 env. unflavored gelatin
- 1/4 c. cold water
- 2 c. prepared nondairy whipped topping
- 1/4 c. unsweetened, shredded coconut
- 1/2 c. chopped pecans

Drain cherries, reserving liquid. Soften gelatin in the cold water. Add water to the reserved cherry liquid to make 1 cup, pour into a saucepan. Add softened

gelatin and stir to dissolve. Bring to a boil, remove from heat and cool to a thick syrup. Beat til fluffy. Fold whipped topping into cherry gelatin, then cherries, coconut and pecans. Transfer to baked pie shell. Chill for several hours.



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# Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Recently you asked if anyone could give you the name of the drug store located a few doors from the Harrison Bros. store in the early 1900's.

In case you don't have the answer yet, it was known as "Ben Lee Young's Drug Store", located on the corner of the street a few doors from Harrison Brothers. I recall my mother mentioning Mr. Young often, I was about 2 or so at the time. My mother would take me to that drug store for an ice cream cone when I was a little girl. My father & his brother operated a clothing & shoe store next to Harrison Brothers. It was known as Fuller's store, the building was later known as T. T. Terry's store, where the sign "Great is the Power of Cash" could be seen over the store.

Sara Fuller Williams,  
Ocean Springs, MS

Dear Editor,

This is to thank Ken Owens

for his excellent article on the Keller Motors. It is of special interest to me as I worked there. I was secretary to Billy Don Mitchell (brother of Hubert) who was in charge of the dealership applications.

It was a wonderful place to work and a shame it fell apart with Mr. Keller's death. When Billy Don and Toy married we gave him a shower. I still have that picture made that day.

I worked in that same building again later on. I worked for GE (I was first person to get a pass in to work) and then for RSA where I retired. I am 87 years old and think I had a colorful career and worked in Georgia before coming back here. I was born in Choctaw County.

Thanks again for the article - it brought back good memories!  
Elizabeth H. Jackson,  
Huntsville

Dear Editor

I grew up in Huntsville but left in 1954. Recently a friend gave me a copy of your magazine and I was amazed to see so many names I remembered. One of the people mentioned was George Foster, my great uncle. We had no idea whatever happened to him. Thanks for the memories.

Fran Hopewell  
Atlanta, Ga.

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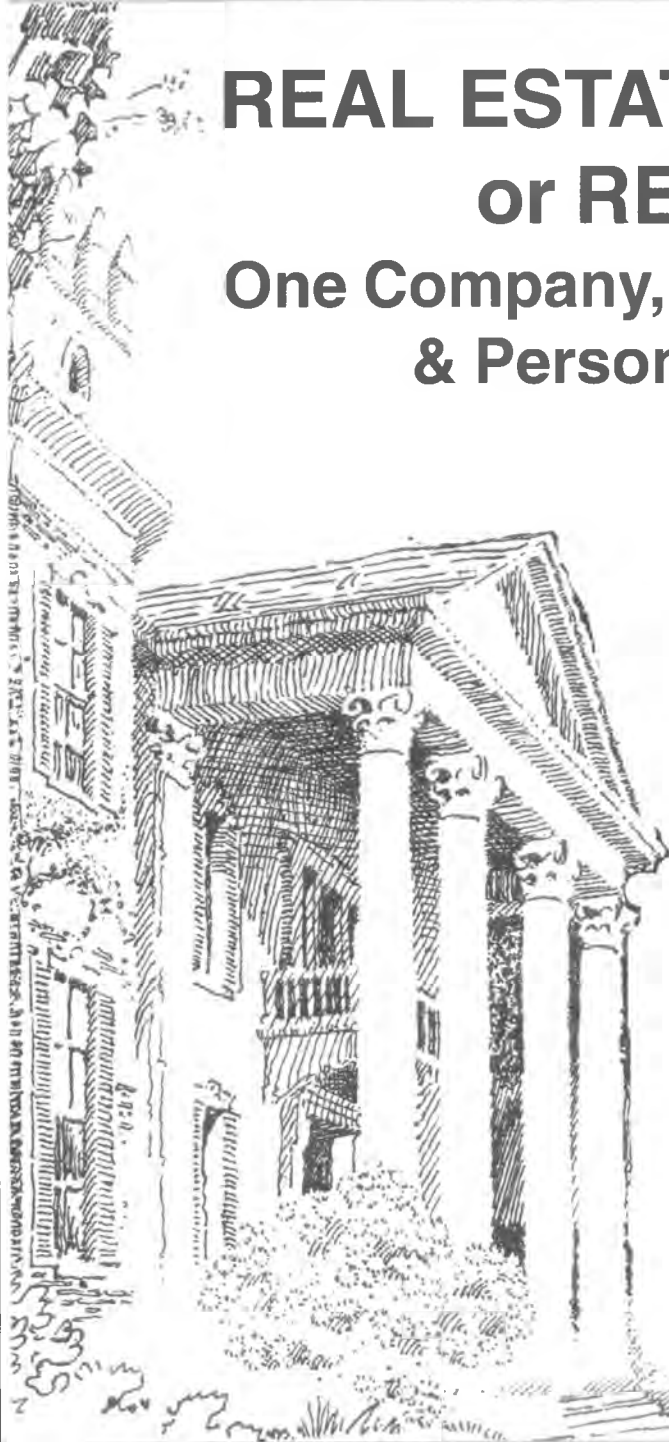
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# The Spragins Place

by Austin Miller

In 1905, when Teddy Roosevelt was president, my grandparents started their married life on a farm they called the Spragins' Place. Sharecroppers named the farm they rented after the landowner. The owner of the land was Mr. R.E. Spragins, thus the name, the Spragins' Place.

The farm was located in a narrow valley between the mountains called Fagan Hollow. It is now Fagan Springs subdivision. Their first home burned when Uncle Robert was about six months old. A 1910 article in the Huntsville Mercury told about the fire and referred to the location as, "on the little mountain east of town." Subsequently, Daddy, Uncle Gib, Uncle Louis and Uncle Paul were born in the replacement house after the fire. In the 1950's, I remember visiting the old home place with my Grandmother and Aunt Lucy and seeing the old house still standing in good repair. The farm was developed into a subdivision in the early sixties and is now a

well-established Huntsville neighborhood. Mountain View Baptist Church located at the end of McClung Avenue now sits on the spot of the old Miller home place.

Fagan Creek runs out of the mountains through the hollow. When the Millers lived there, it was open fields. My grandfather

farmed the land and raised cotton and corn along the creek; hay in the higher elevations and tended a sizeable herd of Black Angus cattle. The farm had two large barns for storing corn and hay, stalls for the mules and horses as well as space to park farm equipment. One of the barns

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was close to the house and the other was some distance away.

Mr. Spragins was president of the First National Bank in Huntsville. His bank was the white building with big columns above the Big Spring at the southwest corner of the square. It now houses a Regions Bank and is one of the oldest, if not the oldest, building still standing in Huntsville.

Mr. Spragins lived among Huntsville's wealthiest people on Echols Hill. Uncle Gib remembers, as a child, going to the Spragins house (the house is still a residence), with my grandmother to work in the garden. Evidently, he made quite an impression on a rich lady who lived nearby. The lady was childless and offered to buy Uncle Gib.

I asked Uncle Gib if he ever wondered what it would have been like to grow up in a family of wealth and privilege. He said there was no amount of wealth or privi-

lege that he would prefer over the family of his birth.

When the family lived there an eerie phenomenon was often seen from the house. When it came big rains, water converging from the slopes turned the creek into a raging torrent, making it impossible to cross until the water subsided.

On rainy nights, when the creek was up, a strange light that looked like someone walking side by side with two lanterns, would come through the hollow, cross the raging creek, move on through the hollow and disappear into the mountain.

Despite numerous attempts to investigate, the source of the light was

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The Crawford-Cain House was built circa 1870. The Crawfords then sold this home to Dr. Cain who had come to Mooresville from Mississippi. Dr. Cain's first office was over the tavern. Later he built an office next to his house that included an apothecary. This is reportedly the building that is now used as the guest house.

This 3 bedroom, 2 3/4 bath house and wonderful guest house contain 2741 sq. ft. and has been totally renovated. The property is offered at \$349,900. The property has been recently painted inside and out. The kitchen has just been redone.

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never determined and it still remains a family mystery.

Mr. Spragins was rich but he was an honest and honorable man. The family had to move because the work was more than my grandfather could do alone. There is no doubt that if he could have stayed, the family would have had a much better life in the following years.

After moving to Ryland the landlords were not as fair and honest as Mr. Spragins. Moving from a good house near Huntsville to a shack in Ryland must have been a very hard adjustment for my grandmother.

I feel a strong connection to this area. It was where my grandparents lived for fourteen years and where daddy and three of my uncles were born. It is where they lost a baby daughter/sister, and their house burned. The family contracted and survived the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic.

Also, it was an easy walking distance across the ridge to my McCay great-grandparents house.

The McCays lived at 1602 Toll Gate Road and the house is still there.

Occasionally, I take a drive by the church where the house stood and then down into the Fagan Springs subdivision. When I do this, my mind takes me back almost a hundred years to what it must have been like when my grandfather farmed the land. I can imagine daddy and my uncles as they played in the creek and ran through the open fields.

## Court News from 1893

- For Hog Stealing: In court yesterday M.D. Hammer was placed under a \$500 bond for grand larceny. He was accused of stealing a hog from a colored man, named Felix Hawkins. The evidence against him was found on the table along with fresh wheat biscuits. A warrant was issued binding him over to await trial.

- The oft-continued case against Wm. A. Fuller, charged with bigamy, was ended yesterday by the discharge of the pris-

oner. When Fuller was brought into court for trial the prosecuting witnesses failed to appear and could not be found, there was nothing left for the court to do but discharge the prisoner.

The second Mrs. Fuller had been in the court room before the case was called, but could not be found when she was wanted.

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*Sir Walter Scott*

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1216 Meridian St. - Call 536-3117 for general information and to reserve your tickets.

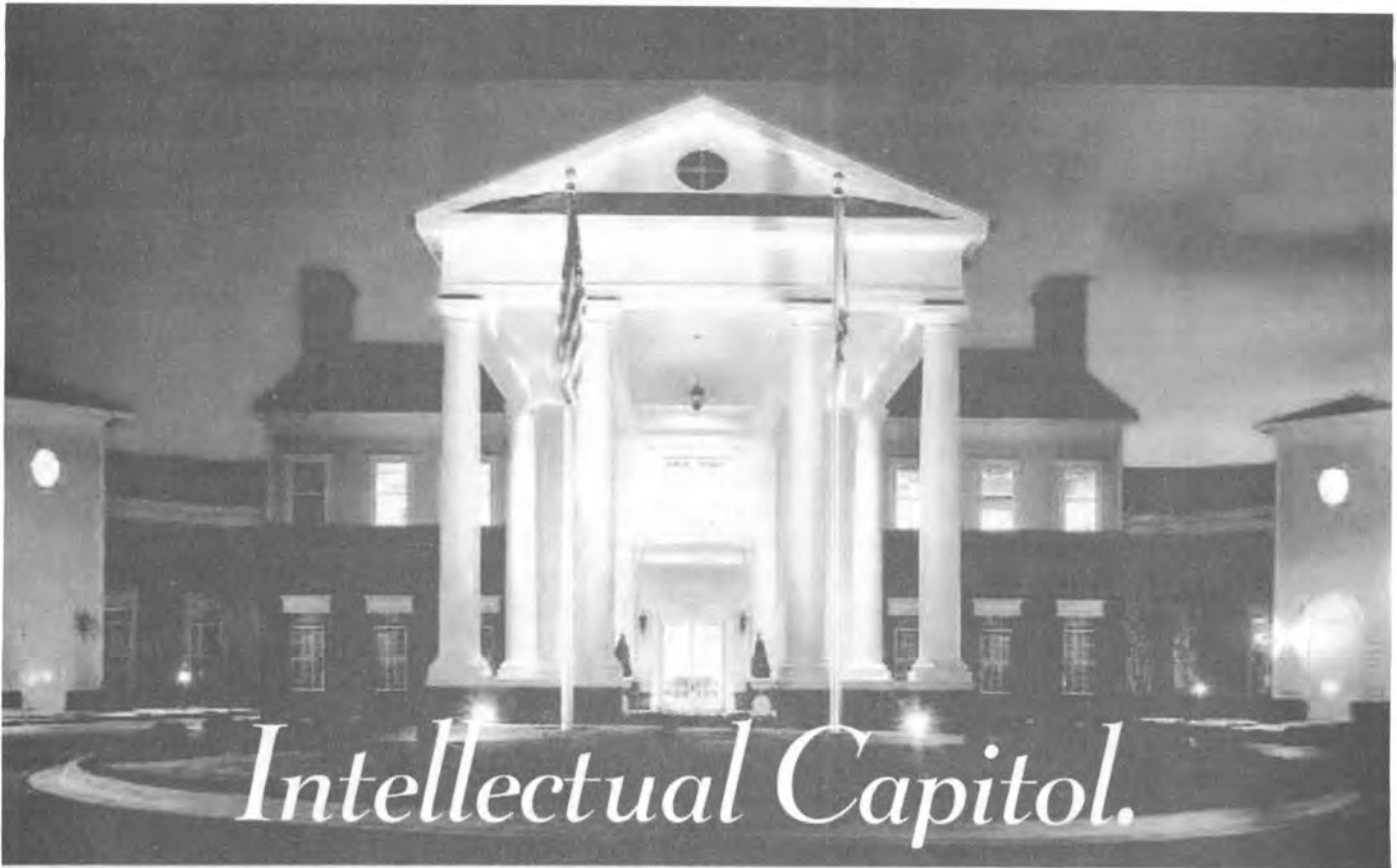
Tickets available at Shavers Book Store & Lincoln Center Antiques  
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# Without Friends in Madison County

*The following is an actual copy of a pension application filed by a disgruntled former Union soldier.*

The United States of America, Northern District of Alabama, Madison County, Huntsville

On this 17th day of March, 1891, personally comes before me, a Notary Public for said county, Howard English, who, having been duly sworn, says he is an applicant for relief under the June 27 Act, Disability Pensions Claim No. 876791, late of the United States Infantry.

Applicant says that he is no

longer able to provide for himself through meaningful work due to an injury received on July 21, 1879 and pleads that he be awarded the pension due him for his service in the United States Infantry.

Applicant says that his injury occurred in defense of the reputation and honor of the memories of his fallen comrades.

Applicant says that on 21 of July, 1879 he was at the rail depot in Huntsville, Ala., where he was accosted by a group of unrepentant secessionists. After Claimant had listened to numerous vile and slanderous utterings about the Union, and the citizens of the Union, he felt it his duty to defend the flag under which he had served.

During the altercation he was seized and physically thrown from the rail platform where upon he received numerous broken bones and cuts.

Applicant says that he is without friends in Madison County willing to assume the care for him and he is ill afforded the expense of travel to

Indiana from which he comes.

Signed, John Roberts

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# Rockets and Whiskey

by Col. Don Steenburn

Early in the Cold War, Huntsville's Redstone Arsenal was already deeply involved in providing Army missile support for our country's defense.

However, not everything associated with this everyday effort could be classified as grim preparation for a possible war.

Many of us may remember the German V-2 rocket that came to Huntsville with Wernher von Braun, that once stood on a concrete pad in front of a building on the arsenal and has long since been removed.

Some may recall that there was a tongue-in-cheek attempt to "fire" this missile!

On 4 June 1954, at the completion of the thirty-six week course, a graduation exercise was held on the lawn in front of the early Ordnance Guided Missile School headquarters. At the very end of the address by Colonel Snooks, the School Commandant, a dozen smoke-whiz bombs were detonated in the base of the rocket.

Emerging from the cloud of dirty white smoke and his shock, the School Commandant canceled all student departure plans and held the entire class over another day. That V-2 never left the ground - the culprits dis-

appeared!

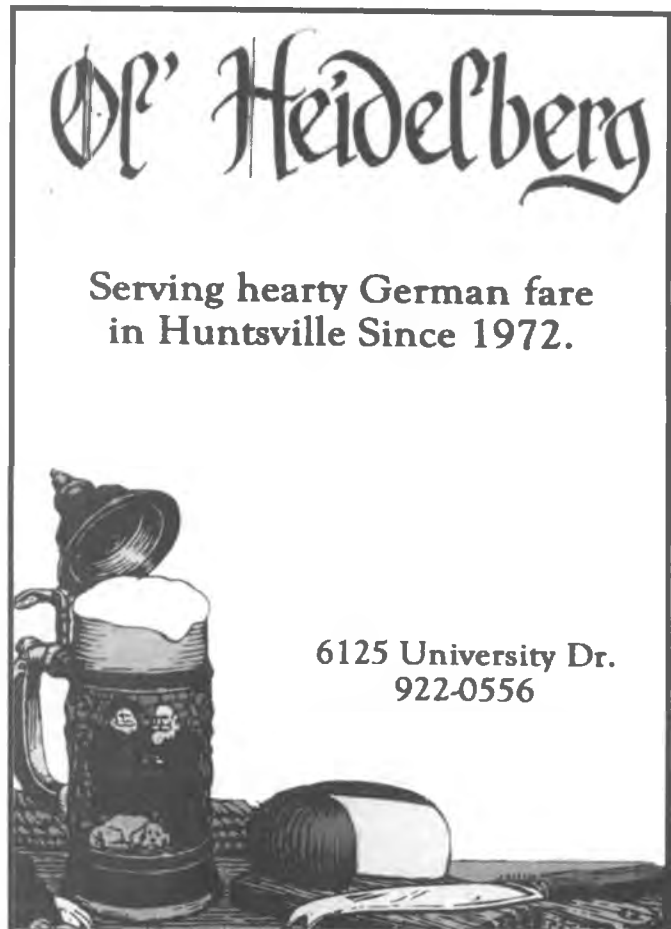
Missiles and whiskey were never designed to mix, but mix they did - in this true tale that began early in WWII.

In an attempt to pay off part of its initial war debt, England gathered up, over the strenuous objections of the local inhabitants, every drop of Scotch whiskey, over and above their skimpy wartime ration. 50,000 cases were loaded in the cargo hold of an ill-fated ship on its way to New York.

Leaving its last port of call north west of Scotland, in a dense fog, the ship struck some sunken rocks and began to take on water. As the ship was being deserted by the crew and slowly sinking, out of the fog came a flotilla of local residents who proceeded to relieve the sinking ship of its cargo. Case after case was lifted from the hold and transferred to the little boats and spirited to shore. The ship finally sank. The authorities

were enraged at the actions of the local islanders and actually sent a battalion of troops to recover the loot.

Fifteen years later, General Shinkle, the commander here at Redstone Arsenal, sent a team of men headed by a young captain to the British firing range in the Outer Hebrides, northwest of Scotland, to assist the British Army in solving a problem with their American-manufactured CORPORAL missile system. Little did he know at the time that he would be involved in the sequel to



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the whiskey story, just described.

After exhaustive checks and tests, missile UK32 was erected on the launcher ready to fly. The launch of a large missile is nothing short of spectacular. The roar of its engine is deafening and earth shattering: the awesome plume of fire and smoke is always a little frightful, and the total experience is one that is never forgotten as it is difficult to imagine that it is man-made. After an uneventful countdown the gleaming white missile lifted slowly and majestically from the earth. Then it happened - the engine shut down and instead of rising-heavenward, it dribbled out about a half mile into the bay and disappeared with little more than a spectacular splash.

The evaluation team realized that this was exactly why they were there and this missile had to be recovered. Royal Navy divers, attached to the station,

went down and told of the missile laying on the bottom of the bay and nearby the hull of an old ship.

The ship was the very same whiskey-laden ship that sunk fifteen years earlier with its liquid cargo.

The enthusiastic crew made trip after trip and retrieved a total of eighteen cases of the precious, well aged, pride of the Scots.

Four hundred and thirty two bottles were transferred to an empty Quonset hut and laid out on the floor.

It seemed that every person authorized to be on the missile firing range that were there for what was about to happen.

To the Sergeant Major, a big man, the epitome of what a real British Sergeant Major should look like, went the honor of uncorking the first bottle.

This was accomplished with much pomp, ceremony and flourish, and at full attention, he



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raised the bottle to his lips and took a hearty draught. A look of utter disbelief came over his face as he spit the mouthful out onto the floor.

In a frenzy all the bottles were opened and not one, not a single drop in all the four hundred and thirty-two bottles was fit to drink.

Salt water had worked its way through the corks during the years on the bottom of the sea and ruined every single bottle!

Have you ever seen forty four grown men cry?

## Visiting Ladies Prove Deadly for Yankee Soldiers

*from 1864 newspaper*

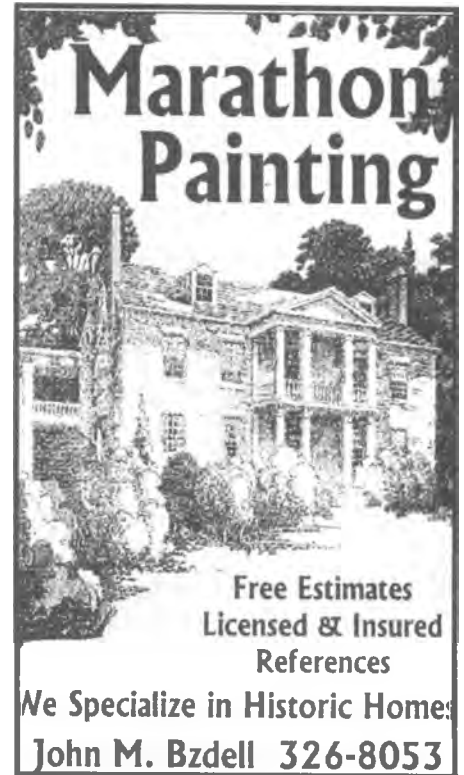
On March 2, three young men named Benj. Arthur, Leonidas Bouris, and John K. Morris, of Company A, 5th Ohio cavalry, went outside of the Federal pickets near Huntsville, Alabama, to visit several lady acquaintances.

After two days absence, a force went out in search of them, and found a well partially filled with dirt.

After digging down, they found the bodies of the three young men, and from a neighbor they learned the men had been pounced on by the enemy and deposited in the well.

One hundred and thirty-five

dollars was taken from one of the young men. All three men were residents of Clermont County, Ohio.



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# Almost Famous

It was an old dilapidated nightclub on Holmes Avenue in the 1940s. The air was thick with cigarette smoke and fumes of stale beer. There were only a few people sitting around the tables, bored to death, while on the small stage was an old gray-haired man, trying to coax one more song out of his memory, as his knurled fingers gently stroked the strings of a guitar.

The old man had been almost famous at one time. Years earlier he had been known as "Crying John," a name he had acquired because of his soulful renditions of the Blues. But with the new popularity of the radio, time had passed him by.

Now he was just another broken down old man, playing in clubs for whatever tips people might decide to give him.

No one really noticed the stranger when he slipped in the door and pulled up a chair at a

table in the back shadows of the room. He sat there for almost an hour, listening to the old man and drinking, never saying a word.

Finally, when the old man was done playing, the stranger invited him to sit at his table and have a drink. They talked in voices so low that no one else in the room could hear them. Not that anyone cared, of course. The old man had long ago become the butt of all the jokes told in the bar.

When it was time for the old man to begin playing again, the stranger joined him on stage. With the old man taking the lead, the stranger hesitantly began to follow.

Slowly and awkwardly at first, they began singing the songs of the cotton fields and of the poor people. Their songs told of empty whisky bottles, and heartbreak, and lost loves.

Two men; one, an old bro-

ken down shell of his former being, and the other, a tall, young gangly lad, together on the

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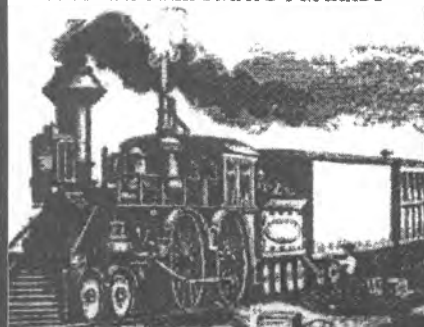


**If you really want to get better  
at golf, go back and take it up  
at a much earlier age.**

*Glenn Brooks, golfer*

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makeshift stage, staring into one another's eyes as they blended their voices in while singing the songs that most people had forgotten.

When they finished the last song the stranger told the old man it was time for him to leave. They stood there silently for a moment, and then the stranger reached out with his arms, and embraced the old man.

After watching him leave, the old man paused, wiping a tear from his eye, and then slowly picked up a handbill the stranger had given him. Carefully he smoothed the paper and with a piece of old scotch tape, taped it to the wall behind the stage.

Once more, he stood back and looked at the stranger's picture on the handbill and read the words, "Hank Williams - Appearing in Concert."

1204 Stevens Ave.

- The Reverend Otis King of Johnson City, Tenn. will preach at Lincoln Baptist Church Wednesday night. All are invited.

- Following the official announcement of V-J day, a short service will be held at the Church of Christ Scientist, Wells Avenue and White Street.

- For Farmers - scrap wood from Arsenal delivered anywhere in the county, \$20 per load. Call or write W. J. Hasting, 541 Bonita Cir.

- Lost on Jefferson St. - gray suitcase containing woman's clothing. Reward - notify Lester Tidwell at Halsey Grocery Co.

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## Classifieds From 1945

- Lost - one No. 4 food ration book in name of Jesse B. Lynch. Return to 806 Pratt Ave.

- Turtle races will be held Wednesday at the Locust Street playground, 7pm.

- For Sale - ice box equipped with coils, ready for motor. Bargain for cash - can be seen at

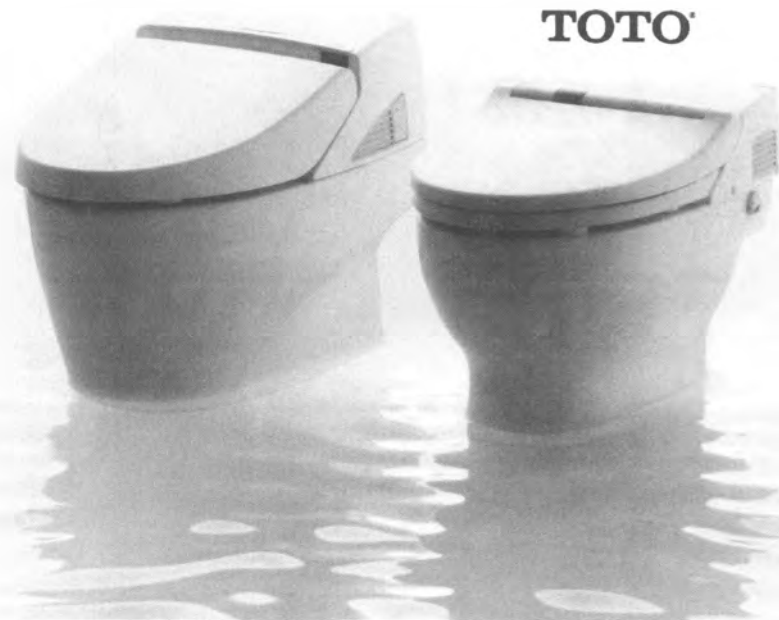
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When an animal dies that has been especially close to someone here on earth, that pet goes to Rainbow Bridge.

There are meadows and hills for all of our special friends so they can run and play together.

There is plenty of food, water and sunshine, and our friends are warm and comfortable.

All the animals who had been ill and old are restored to health and vigor; those who were hurt or maimed are made whole and strong again, just as we remember them in our dreams of days and times gone by.

The animals are happy and content, except for one small thing; they each miss someone very special to them, who had to be left behind.

They all run and play together, but the day comes when one suddenly stops and looks into the distance. His bright eyes are intent; His eager body-quivers. Suddenly he begins to run from the group, flying over the green grass, his legs carrying him faster and faster.

You have been spotted, and when you and your special friend finally meet, you cling together in joyous reunion, never to be parted again. The happy kisses rain upon your face; your hands again caress the beloved head, and you look once more into the trusting eyes of your pet, so long gone from your life but never absent from your heart

Then you cross Rainbow Bridge together....

*Author unknown*

## Need Someone to talk to your Club?



Long time Huntsville native and regular writer for *Old Huntsville*, Johnny Johnston will be glad to speak before your group about Huntsville, *the way it used to be*. There is no charge.

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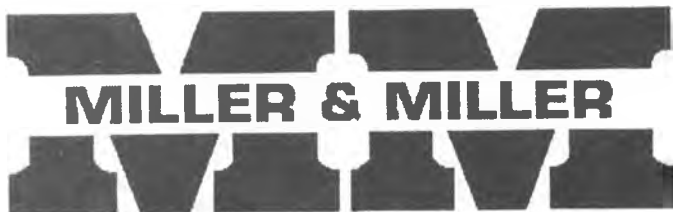
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# Times Have Changed



## The Flood of 1973

1 - Memorial Parkway    2 - Leeman Ferry    3 - toward Drake Ave.    4 - toward Bob Wallace



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# News From The Year 1950

## News From Huntsville and Around The World

### Truman Meets MacArthur

Two of America's strongest personalities, General Douglas MacArthur and President Harry Truman, met on Wake Island today to discuss the Korean War and the spread of communism in the East. The two men have butted heads before, most recently in August when the general made a statement about Formosa which the president felt differed from U.S. policy, but this time they seemed to agree.

Truman expressed confidence that "we can surmount" the dangers facing U.N. forces in Korea. He also praised

MacArthur and his men for their loyalty and bravery. The general said the Chinese would not enter the conflict. Truman also awarded MacArthur an Oak Leaf to add to his Distinguished Service Medal, and MacArthur returned the gesture by praising Truman in front of the press.

With characteristic flair and confidence, MacArthur told newsmen to "come on up to Pyongyang (the North Korean capital); it won't be long now," implying an expeditious U.N. victory.

### Scientists Use Atom to Make Electricity

Chicago scientists have discovered the first practical method for converting atomic energy into electricity without the use of boilers or dynamos, the Atomic Energy Commission disclosed today.

Details of the method have been kept secret for security reasons until now.

Patents for use of the technique have been granted to a company headed by John L. Kurantz, who worked with another physicist, Robert J. Moon, on the atomic bomb program.

Many scientists are already predicting that atoms will become part of our everyday life.

### Anti-Communist Bill Passed

Congress has voted to override President Truman's veto of an anti-Communist bill, thus making the Mundt Bill a law of the land.

Each chamber easily cleared the two-thirds majority required to prevail over the presidential veto.

President Truman rejected

the proposed statute because he feels certain aspects of it are unconstitutional and that it will actually advance communism in America, not hinder it.

The law is designed to root out Communists by requiring Communist organizations to identify their officers and to prove how they spend funds.



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## President Orders Military Build-up

The powerful American war machine started its engine this month as President Truman authorized a broad military buildup for the fighting in Korea and granted the military the power to wage war.

Today, the president ordered the mobilization of Marine Corps and National Guard troops, bringing into service 114,000 American men, with another 100,000 soon to swell the military ranks via the Selective Service System.

While increasing manpower, Truman also boosted funding to meet the challenges of Communist aggression, made more apparent by the Korean War.

The mobilization of money and men followed the U.N. Security Council vote on July 7, giving the United States full command of U.N. troops defending South Korea. The 7-0 vote-with Egypt, India and Yugoslavia abstaining and the Soviet Union continuing its boycott paved the way for the military to take actions against the North Korean aggressors.

## RCA Corp. Develops Color TV

The Radio Corporation of America successfully demonstrated an all-electronic color television tube today as its Chairman, David Sarnoff, proclaimed, "We are on the threshold of a new era in television - the era of color."

RCA actually demonstrated two color tubes today, one using a single electron gun, the other three guns to produce color images. Both picture tubes are the size of those in current black-and-white receivers. RCA is competing with a CBS system that uses a mechanical scanning disk to produce color images.

The advantage of the RCA tube is that it is compatible with existing black and white transmission equipment, so that viewers can continue to use their existing home sets. The CBS system is not compatible.

RCA will repeat its demonstration for industry representatives and federal officials who must decide between the two competing systems. Color television is still many years in the future and then it is expected to be to expensive for the average household.

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# Mama's Chickens

by Johnny Johnston

The Postman was about due and Mother was more excited than the rest of the family but we were all filled with anticipation. It was the early 1940's and anything new was exciting to me at my young age.

A few weeks before, Mom had saved the \$2.38 necessary for her purchase and sent it away to the dealer in a northern city. Everything now comes from China or a foreign country; back then most everything came from a northern city.

Mother was raised in Lacy's Spring, just across the Tennessee River. Her family was very hard working and headed by my Grandfather James Thomas Buck. He had a habit of spending Saturday's downtown Huntsville on the square and taking a baked sweet potato into the Big Spring Cafe where he ordered a glass of water for lunch. The Bucks made a living sharecropping land around the area as the children were growing up.

The work was absolutely required in order to survive the "Hoover Days" as the Bucks called it. Most of the nation called it the Depression. Mother married in 1925 to John F. Johnston. I was

the last child born in 1937. Mother's Father was a very good farmer and eventually was able to purchase 30 acres of farmland from his brother-in-law, Will Oakes. His farming was a little more rewarding after getting his own farm in 1924. He was able to raise plenty of food and have some to sell for cash.

As a child my mother was the one who cared for and fed the chickens. They are the cuddliest, softest and most fun things to have when they are small. You can get attached to baby chickens but that soon disappears when they grow up.

The Postman arrived at 119

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Maple Street where we lived in Lincoln. My parents had been able to buy the house on Maple which was not as large as the one rented on Orchard St. but it did have its own yard - it was outside the city so Mom could have a semblance of farm life.

The Postman would bring her order of about 24 baby chickens which she would raise for their eggs and a meal or two later on. That's not all the reason she bought them - she loved to handle baby chickens.

You could pick them up, hold them, talk to them, and just plain make pets of them. By the time they arrived my Dad would have a pen for them made from chicken wire and placed on the back of the lot. The pen was as much for keeping varmints out as keeping the chickens in.

I was always amazed that chickens could come by mail. Anything you send now by mail is usually a little harder to damage and a little less fragile than live chickens. When chickens get a little older it is fun to feed them and watch the action as they wrestle over food, bugs and anything else they can find to eat. Roosters usually have their way and are first to go into the frying pan since one live Rooster goes a long way in reproducing the flock. Since it only takes one Rooster, and hens are good for eggs as well as the frying pan, you can imagine where most roosters wind up. As a young boy of 7 or 8 years of age, it was my job to catch the bird that was selected for the meal, then wring its neck. That was much more fun than my sibling's job of plucking the feathers and cleaning the bird. Mother always did the job of cutting up and frying the chicken.

One thing about buying chickens then was you could not or maybe cannot control the sex of the bird. Most of the ones Mother got in the mail were supposed to be

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hens; that did not always happen. If you had too many roosters you had more for lunch and fewer eggs for breakfast.

My family's favorite food was fried chicken and I suppose was also mine until later in life. As an employee of Eastern Airlines who flew a lot, I had my share of chicken for lunch or dinner. Captain Rickenbacker, who ran Eastern Airlines from 1935 until 1965, had a special taste for Chicken Casserole. That was a meal you could prepare and keep hot long enough to serve on a short trip. I remember the 5" dish which was a strange green and blue color.

I also remember a particular flight which flew from Rome, Georgia to Atlanta and served that meal. The poor Flight Attendant was expected to pass out the meals on a nice tray with that casserole on it and have a polite smile on her face. She also had to

prepare the correct accompanying drink on a 14 minute flight. When the airplane landed in Atlanta people would still have the tray in their lap and would set it all over the cabin in order to deplane. What a mess! No way could any Flight Attendant serve that meal and pick up the dishes on a 14 minute flight.

We had a little more time to cook and prepare meals at the airport in Huntsville during the old days. Darnell Brooks served the very best meals on the system from the Huntsville Airport starting in the early sixties and continuing for many years.

I still wonder at his ability to serve Lobster and trimmings on our non-stop Orlando, Chicago, New Orleans, and St. Louis flights. Darnell was the best we ever had preparing meals for Eastern Flights in the United

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States. My opinion!

Huntsville was blessed with a "chicken processing plant" for many years. It was owned and managed by my deceased friend and neighbor Harold Green. Some of my Butler High Classmates worked there at night and attended school in the daytime. The plant was located on Clinton Street at the time just where the Heart of Huntsville Shopping Center was built about 45 years ago. Harold and his employees used to brag that everything about the chicken was sold except the squawk.

I wonder now if Harold ever knew that chickens had fingers.

Mother kept chickens most of the time we lived in Lincoln, which was 1941 until 1949. We then moved to McDonald Hill in West Huntsville at which time she stopped the practice of keeping chickens.

There were some chickens running loose in the neighborhood however, which caused problems among the neighbors.

One neighbor who was sure of his facts came over one afternoon and asked my brother Lloyd and I when we were going to get the chickens out of his garden and keep them home. We both told him that we didn't have any chickens. We didn't know who owned them. Dad came home from working a couple of hours later and the neighbor came back. He

said to Dad "I asked your boys about those chickens that are running loose and they said you didn't have any chickens, well I figured they were lying and came to talk to you". You never, ever told my father that his kids were lying.

The neighbor chose to retreat in a hurry when Dad threatened him with certain violence for calling his boys liars.

I proved that day what I had been saying all my life. "Chickens are good for nothing but to cause trouble".

No! We don't keep chickens where we live now however, once many years ago Dad and Mother lived just a block from Huntsville Hospital when Mother did buy two chickens.

One of them happened to be a rooster which demonstrated his vocal strength at daylight each morning. Mother just couldn't believe that her neighbors could not appreciate how wonderful it was to have chickens.

I don't know to this day if she sold the chickens or had them for lunch.





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# The Day They Roasted Van Buren

George Steele had become wealthy as a contractor, architect and builder. After working on different building projects in Huntsville for years he finally built his own home. It was a fine mansion of three stories, set among a grove of towering oak trees that afforded an expansive view of the mountain.

It was here, at Oak Place, that one of the most memorable parties in Huntsville was held.

It came about as a result of a United States presidential election. During the 1840 race, Steele picked out a splendid ox to roast in honor of his favorite to win, Martin Van Buren. Steele even named the ox after Van Buren and invited many friends to join in the celebration. Unfortunately, Van Buren was defeated.

Not to be daunted, Steele kept the ox on a fattening diet. Four years later, in 1845, James Polk, another favorite of

Steele's, was elected President. Plans were made to slaughter the ox in celebration of the new president.

Four thousand citizens from Madison and adjoining counties and states accepted with pleasure the generous and courteous invitations to feast on the ox named Van Buren.

All kinds of vehicles, from the lowly ox cart to the elegant carriages drawn by dashing teams, were brought into requisition to bring the poor, the rich, the high and the low, all welcomed alike.

Long tables were arranged under the majestic oaks. On the center table was a magnificent cake pyramid, four feet high, surmounted by a figure of President-elect Polk. Steele had ordered it from Nashville, sending his own team to ensure its safe delivery.

The barbecuing was the work of Mr. Smoot, an artist in that line, and Van Buren was stuffed with

turkeys and roasted for twenty-four hours. There were also pigs and lambs barbecued, hams boiled and their accompaniments in jellies, sauces and bread without stint; ice cream and cake, and immense cutgrass bowls of syllabub.

Every man present received a hickory cane cut from Monte Sano, and the most prominent citizens were presented with canes highly polished by the well known slave, Charles Peck,

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Matthew Weaver Steele, the young son of the host, gave the address of welcome and Clement Claiborne Clay, the young lawyer and future statesman, was the orator of the day.

After the speech-making, feasting and handshaking, a string band of the best picked banjoists, guitarists and fiddlers from the plantation slaves, in happiest mood, played the Reels, Jigs and other dances; and in the grand old rooms, aristocrats and Democrats cut the pigeon wing, sang Auld Lang Syne and danced the Old Virginia Reel in gayest mood.

Now, many years late, with the memory of that fabulous festival growing dim, Huntsville has still to see another gathering as lavish as the one that George Steele put on at his splendid home, Oak Place.

## Learning To Drive

The cargo on the train that slowly pulled to a stop at the railroad depot that spring morning of 1904 contained a revolutionary invention that would forever change the way Huntsville lived.

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George Cooper purchased the car while on a trip to Cincinnati, Ohio. The company had offered to send an instructor with the car to teach its owner how to drive it, (for only \$45 extra) but Mr. Cooper had declined.

Sadly to say, if Cooper had taken them up on their offer, the first automobile ride in Huntsville history would have been longer than 15 feet and would not have ended by crashing into the side of the depot.

Luckily no serious damage was sustained and Cooper eventually learned how to drive it before selling it two years later to a Mr. Liles of Gurley.

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# Miss Louise

Her name was Louise Shenefield but for thousands of people she was known simply as Miss Louise, a hardworking lady who had a smile for everyone and who cooked the best dip dogs in the world.

Miss Louise was raised in the cotton fields of Macon, Georgia before moving to Huntsville in 1962. After working in the cafeteria at Huntsville High for several years she went to work at Zesto's on the corner of Russell & Pratt Avenue.

Zesto's was one of those small neighborhood restaurants that specialized in hot dogs & fries before the advent of fast food chain restaurants put most of them out of business. It was a place where politicians, construction workers and small kids lined up for hot dogs or milk shakes.

Miss Louise had always loved cooking and meeting people and the combination soon made her a popular fixture at the small hot dog restaurant.

"Miss Louise was never just an employee," remembered a friend, "she just took over. What ever she decided was what you did!"

Marie Thigpen, owner of Po-Boy Factory, remembers when

she started working at Zesto's as a young girl. "Miss Louise had a great sense of humor. When a new employee was hired she would tell them to go down the street to Star Market and bring her back a "bag stretcher". Of course, there was no such thing as a bag stretcher, but the people at Star Market always got a big laugh out of it."

Although she loved a good joke, she would not tolerate insults to others. Many in the downtown area remember the "Flashlight Man," who used to stand at

the 5 Points Intersection and wave a flashlight at all the people driving by. People laughed about him but Miss Louise found out by talking with him that he was a decorated veteran in World War II. She always went out of her way to be kind to him.

Even though she was just an employee, Miss Louise insisted everyone had to look professional. She sewed all the uniforms that were worn by employees at Zesto's - red with white stripes and a bandana for their

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hair - and wearing hair nets before other restaurants had even thought of it.

It was during this time that Louise came up with the famous Dip Dog recipe that became famous throughout the entire city. There were ingredients in the recipe that she never told anyone about, but that were rumored to contain marmalade. Whatever it was, the corn dogs were a huge hit with the restaurant patrons.

As the years passed, Miss Louise became a very popular fixture for the patrons. Many people whose diets would not allow Dip Dogs still went in just to talk to her. Grady Reeves, Joe Davis, Bulldog Daniels, and Chick Russell were just a few of her good friends.

When Zesto's closed she went to work for Marie Thigpen at Po-Boy Factory until her death in January 2006. Other co-workers had to tell her to take breaks and she was always the last person to leave, even though she walked two miles a day back and forth to work.

Louise's son Frederick, who now works at Po-boy Factory, said that she was a great mom. "She was the one who disciplined us kids, but she showed us so much love. When people came to our home to ask for help, she'd do anything she could to help them." His sisters Barbara Daniels and Patty Suttles agree. She took care of everyone. Louise knew the names of every bird she fed in the back yard, and loved all animals.

Louise Shenefield was one of those rare individuals who really enjoyed working. She rose each morning at 4, worked 12-14 hours every day, and loved every minute of it.

She will be missed by everyone who knew her.

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# The Buried Gold of Hog Hollow

by Charles Rice

A fortune in antique gold coins lies awaiting a lucky finder about thirty miles west of Huntsville. At least, there is if you can believe an old local legend. The fascinating tale of lost treasure does have some verifiable facts to it. The story dates back to the War Between the States, a time of tragedy and turmoil in the Tennessee Valley, as indeed across the entire Southland. Just how much truth there is in the tale, we leave it up to you to decide. The story takes place in Hog Hollow, a small valley not many miles below the town of Riverton, known in those days as Chickasaw. In October 1984, Mr. Cecil Hayes, who had grown up hearing the tale, recalled it for the Cherokee News of Cherokee, Alabama.

"This is all part of an old legend dating back to the Civil War," wrote Hayes, "and is kept alive in this region by an occasional repetition." The story tells of a keg of U.S. gold coins - \$5.00 half-eagles, \$10.00 eagles, and \$20 double eagles. Just one of the coins would be worth at least hundreds, if not thousands, to collectors today."

Local tradition tells that the Rosses settled

there in the in the early 1840s. "They bought vast tracts of timberland in a beautiful pastoral valley," recalled Hayes, "surrounded by wooded hills and divided by a winding mountain brook, later known as `Ross Branch'."

"They cleared the land, sold the valuable tim-

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ber and built a large two story house, barns, and other out-buildings," continued Mr. Hayes. "They planted their crops and orchards and vineyards. The Rosses were good farmers and hard-working people, and after a time their farm was one of the most productive in the county.

The Rosses became wealthy in a region where many other people had failed to make a living. Through careful and selective breeding, they produced the finest of livestock. Their sheep and cattle and horses were all thoroughbreds. And they raised such vast herds of hogs that their beautiful valley took on the rather odious name of Hog Hollow."

The Rosses were a quiet family, remembered Cecil Hayes, and kept pretty much to themselves. "When the family went to Riverton or Cherokee for supplies, they made their purchases in silence and silently departed." It was this

that probably caused people to speculate about the Ross family. In the absence of knowledge, people perhaps began to make up stories about their reclusive neighbors. Since the Rosses seemed to spend so little, some folks naturally must have imagined they had a lot put away somewhere.

"As the income of the Ross family increased (so the old story tells us), they began tossing money into a new nail keg kept in one corner of the large living room," wrote Hayes. "The money was all in gold, five, 10 and 20 dollar gold pieces."

This continued until one day it was discovered that the keg was nearly full. Then they took the golden treasure out and

hid it, presumably some where about the farm. And where they put it, there it remains to this day. Why didn't the Rosses retrieve the treasure?

The simple reason appears to be that the Civil War caught up with them in the form of the invading Union Army.

The Rosses seem to have sat out the War Between the States, determined to take no part in the fierce struggle between North



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and South.

However, the war eventually did come to the Muscle Shoals area, and no one was exempt from the death and destruction that came with it.

One bright spring day, Union foragers came into Hog Hollow seeking the Ross' fabled pigs and sheep. In rather un-Quakerlike fashion, the Ross men objected to this blatant thievery. A gunfight broke out, with the outnumbered civilians naturally getting the worse of it.

"Some say two Union soldiers were killed," wrote Hayes, "but the Ross family were all killed. Then the house and all the other buildings were set on fire. The girl, by some unexplained miracle, escaped both the barrage and fire. Days later she was found in the woods."

That the gunfight did happen seems evident. Certain it is that John Ross no longer appears in the U. S. Census of 1870. Furthermore, while the tombstones on five of the six graves in the Ross family cemetery are now broken and illegible, the sixth is still intact. It reads: "James J. Ross, Son of John & M. A. Ross, Oct. 11, 1840 - May 29, 1864."

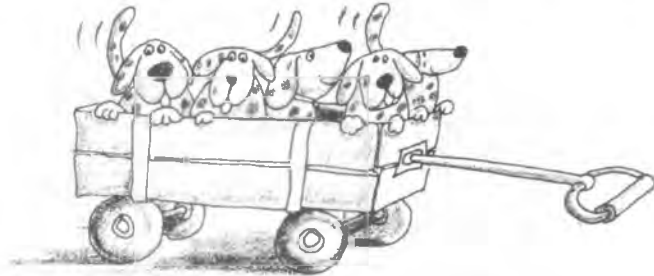
The latter date presumably records the day of the fatal encounter with the Yankee raiders. But what of the treasure? Was such a keg of gold possible?

Unfortunately, it seems highly unlikely that John Ross was ever

wealthy enough to have accumulated so large a fortune. His real estate -- 80 percent of it in untouched woodlands -- was valued at only \$200 in the 1850 Census. It had risen in value to \$1500 by 1860. Ross' personal estate in 1860 was listed at a modest \$500.

Ross was not a slave owner though he did raise enough cotton in 1860 to make seven 400-pound bales.

Then is the treasure tale only a harmless old legend? Well, maybe yes, and maybe no. Once the truth is sifted out, what re-



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mains is a half-forgotten story of an American tragedy.

Quite likely, they did hide away their money -- perhaps not in the gold coins of legend, but probably in the more common silver and copper.

"Some people today believe the old Ross story was just a kind of local fairy tale, a myth," recalled Cecil Hayes. "But my grandfather, John Carrithers, who was born in 1854, believed every word of it."

"He spent most of his life searching for the hidden treasure. With our modern equipment, he might have been more successful".

Like John Carrithers, we all have our dreams. So why not get out your metal detector and head for Hog Hollow. Just be sure to get the landowner's per-

mission first! (There are laws against trespassing.)

Who knows, you just might discover John Ross' legendary keg of gold. Most likely you won't. But then again ... you never know!

"I have the body of a God - Buddha."

Jeremy Tyler, Madison

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# Deacon Johnson

from 1893 newspaper

Deacon Johnson is a great temperance man, and sets a good example of total abstinence to all his church-going neighbors.

Not long ago he employed a carpenter to make some alterations in his parlor. In repairing the corner near the fireplace it was necessary to remove the wainscoting, when, lo! A discovery was made that astonished everyone. A brace of decanters, a tumbler and a pitcher were costly reposing there, as if they had stayed there from the beginning. The deacon was quickly summoned from prayer, and as he beheld the bottles, he exclaimed,

"Well, I declare! That is curious, sure enough. It must be the

same that old Bains left when he left this home for greener pastures, thirty years ago!"

"Perhaps he did," offered one of the carpenters, "but, Deacon, the ice in that pitcher must have been froze mighty hard to last all these years!"

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From 1893 newspaper

## For The Sick

A little girl and her mother were attending Mass in the city's largest and oldest Church.

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Mother says, "Hurry around to the little garden behind the church, Peggy."

When Peggy returned in just a few minutes, her mother asked, "Did you get there in time?"

Peggy: "I didn't have to go that far. There's a little box on a stand just inside the door that had a sign that says, 'For the sick'."

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Business Week, Aug. 2, 1968

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# Heard on the Street in 1907

- In the recorder's court this morning Stephen Peters, arrested for disorderly conduct for throwing rocks at Mayor Smith, was fined \$5 and costs.

- John Williams, an old man who was arrested a few days ago for drunkenness, was ordered released and directed to leave Huntsville at once. Williams is quite an old man, being 72 years of age, and Mayor Smith took pity on him.

- By reason of an open switch on the Southern railway freight train No. 306, it collided on the side track on Meridian Street late yesterday afternoon, wrecking and derailing two cars of the regular train. No one was hurt.

- W. T. Franks wants the public to know that he will be in town for seven days and will purchase all types of gold and silver items. Cash will be paid.

- Mrs. Thelma Wesley died of gunshot complications. A long time resident of Merrimack Village, she was accidentally shot by a neighbor three months ago and never recovered. She left three daughters.

- T.M. Craft was arrested yesterday for placing dynamite under his neighbor's home. The incident is but one more chapter of an ongoing feud that began nine years ago when Craft's hogs strayed into a neighbor's garden.

- J.M. Lowell is once again back in the lockup. Witnesses say that Lowell refused to pay for a hair cut and an altercation ensued, ending with Lowell attempting to shave the barber's head with a razor.

- Elbert Hood displayed a monstrous catfish at the city market yesterday. It is said to weigh 137 pounds and is supposed to be the largest fish ever caught locally. It was caught on a snag line above Ditto's Landing.

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# A President's Visit

by Jack Harwell

It is one of the ironies of history that the monuments we erect to our leaders come to have less meaning than the people they are meant to honor. McKinley Avenue, in northeast Huntsville, is named for the man who served as the nation's 25th President, but the significance of this honor is lost to many people today. For William McKinley was one of the few Presidents to visit our city.

McKinley is one of the streets that originally made up East Huntsville, a large subdivision that was laid out near the Dallas and Lincoln Mills in 1892. It was originally called Melette Avenue, after Arthur C. Melette, who was governor of South Dakota in the 1890s. South Dakota was the home state of Tray Pratt, one of the men responsible for bringing the mills to town and reviving the local economy a century ago. Pratt was also one of the individuals who laid out East Huntsville.

Huntsville was a busy place at the turn of the century. New textile mills were running in East and West Huntsville, and the city was marching into the 1900s with enormous self-confidence. It was a reflection of the national mood of the time, for the United States was becoming a world power.

Having been pre-occupied with foreign policy during his first term, McKinley wanted to turn his attention to the nation. In particular, he wanted to visit the great cities of the South, and reaffirm his message of national reconciliation. This was a favor-

**Money can't buy happiness, but somehow it's more comfortable to cry in a Lincoln than in a Yugo.**

*T. W. Hawk, Arab*

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# Old Huntsville

ite theme of his. Although the Civil War had been over for 36 years, reconstruction was stilled marred by regional differences.

McKinley missed few opportunities to remind audiences that America was the great united nation its founders had intended it to be. In 1899 he had tried this approach with a group of Confederate veterans in Atlanta. Though respectfully silent at first, the old Rebels applauded the President loudly when he said that "sectional lines no longer mar the map of the United States." A suggestion in the same address that the North should help maintain Confederate graves received a thundering ovation.

He was scheduled to reach Huntsville on April 30. The night before the President's arrival, volunteers began stringing 200 yards of bunting along the platform at the railroad depot on Church Street.

The Presidential train was scheduled to arrive at 9:10. By eight o'clock, crowds had begun to form at the depot. Newspapers reports stated that the crowd had grown to 10,000 by 9:00. (This, at a time when the city's population was 8,000.) A local band provided music to set the mood.

The tracks coming from Chattanooga, then as now, passed the sites of the Dallas and Lincoln Mills as they entered the city from the east. As the train approached the mills shortly after nine o'clock, the whistle at the Dallas mill began to blow. It was soon joined by every other factory whistle in town. No one in Huntsville had ever heard anything like it.

At the depot, the sound of the whistles had brought the expectant crowd to an almost unbearable state of excitement. The people surged forward,

straining to see up the tracks and catch a glimpse of the train as it came around the bend across Meridian Street.

Finally, someone shouted, "There it is!" The noise of the crowd almost drowned out the squealing of the brakes and the hiss of escaping steam as the train came slowly to a halt. Af-

ter a moment, the great man that everyone knew but never expected to actually see, appeared on the platform, and the cheering began afresh. Congressman William Richardson waited for the noise to die down, then introduced the President to the people.

The President spoke only briefly; he had only a short time

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to devote to this stop, and much of that would be taken up by formalities. Nonetheless, he was interrupted by applause over half a dozen times. He spoke of old foes and new friends, of America's love of peace, and the recent war "to relieve the oppressed people in Cuba." President McKinley then introduced Mrs. McKinley to the crowd's obvious delight.

There were a few remarks by local officials, and the President was presented with a walking cane made of Shittim wood from Monte Sano (where it still grows), and a glass decanter of Big Spring water, with which he was invited to drink to the prosperity of the nation.

Finally, the President waved farewell and disappeared into the "Olympia" The train pulled out of the Huntsville depot at 9:30. The whole affair had lasted only twenty minutes, but thousands of people would remember for years the day that President McKinley came to Huntsville.

Ironically, this trip, for which McKinley had such great hope, had to be curtailed due to a minor illness not long after the Huntsville visit.

On September 6, 1901, President McKinley was shot twice by an anarchist while visiting the Pan American Expositions in Buffalo. Though seriously wounded, the President rallied a week later and appeared on the road to recovery. On September 13, he took a turn for the worse, and died the next day.

William McKinley was greatly lamented by his countrymen, and the people of Huntsville were no exceptions. On September 17, the day of his funeral, memorial services were held in three Huntsville churches.

Later, Melette Avenue was re-named for the slain President It has been McKinley Avenue ever

since.

President McKinley's visit to Huntsville is nearly a century in the past. Passenger trains no longer stop in Huntsville, and the Dallas Mill that heralded the President's arrival with its whistle has vanished, the result of arson.

Only the street that bears his name recalls the memory of the President who came to Huntsville on the train.



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# Court News from 1908

- A negro by the name of Lemley appeared in the recorder's court and complained that young boys tied tin cans to his mule's tail and caused it to run away and upset his wagon.

- G. Kenney pleaded innocent to burglary charges of the home of Eliza Tompkins. Miss Tompkins said she went home and discovered Kenney in the process of removing her cook stove. Kenney said he was intoxicated and thought he was in his own home. The charge of burglary was dismissed and Kenney was sentenced to 30 days for public drunkenness.

- Two convicts walked off yesterday while working on the paving of California Street. They were last seen in the area of the Depot. A \$5 reward is offered.

- Mary Davidson was fined \$100 for running a disorderly house. She was given the option of working out the fine at the rate of .50 cents the day.

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

- Francis Star, leader of a

group of gypsies, was arrested for telling fortunes and given 24 hours to leave town. Her band is believed responsible for the rash of burglaries lately.

- Robert Sanders appeared in court for stealing chickens. This was the fifth time this year that Sanders has been arrested for the same offence. The judge suggest in the strongest terms that Sanders find a new employ-

ment, before fining him \$50.

- John Younger was arrested and fined \$25 for using profane language in describing a local minister. The minister's wife filed the complaint. Younger insisted to the arresting officer that he was merely telling the truth.

**"I met the Surgeon General. He offered me a cigarette!"**

*Rodney Dangerfield*



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# When Stars Fell on Huntsville

*The Huntsville Democrat  
November 14, 1833*

The inhabitants of our town were aroused at an early hour yesterday morning to witness one of the most extraordinary phenomena which perhaps have ever occurred in this country. It was the incessant falling of meteors, in such vast numbers as to illuminate the heavens.

For several hours thousands or even millions of these meteors appeared in every direction in constant motion - all taking the direction of the earth, but rather ranging from the East.

They presented exactly the appearance which is exhibited by the shooting of the meteors which we occasionally see almost every

night.

Our town was the scene of great commotion, particularly among the blacks, who were praying and shouting in every direction, thinking the Day of Judgement had come.

In one or two instances we noticed meteors of extraordinary size, which left for the space of five or ten minutes, serpentine-appearing objects of great length

and size. The early hour at which our paper issues (for the mails) prevents our being able to converse with those of our town who would be able to *properly account* for this strange phenomenon.

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

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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*  
*Mac Lewter*

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