

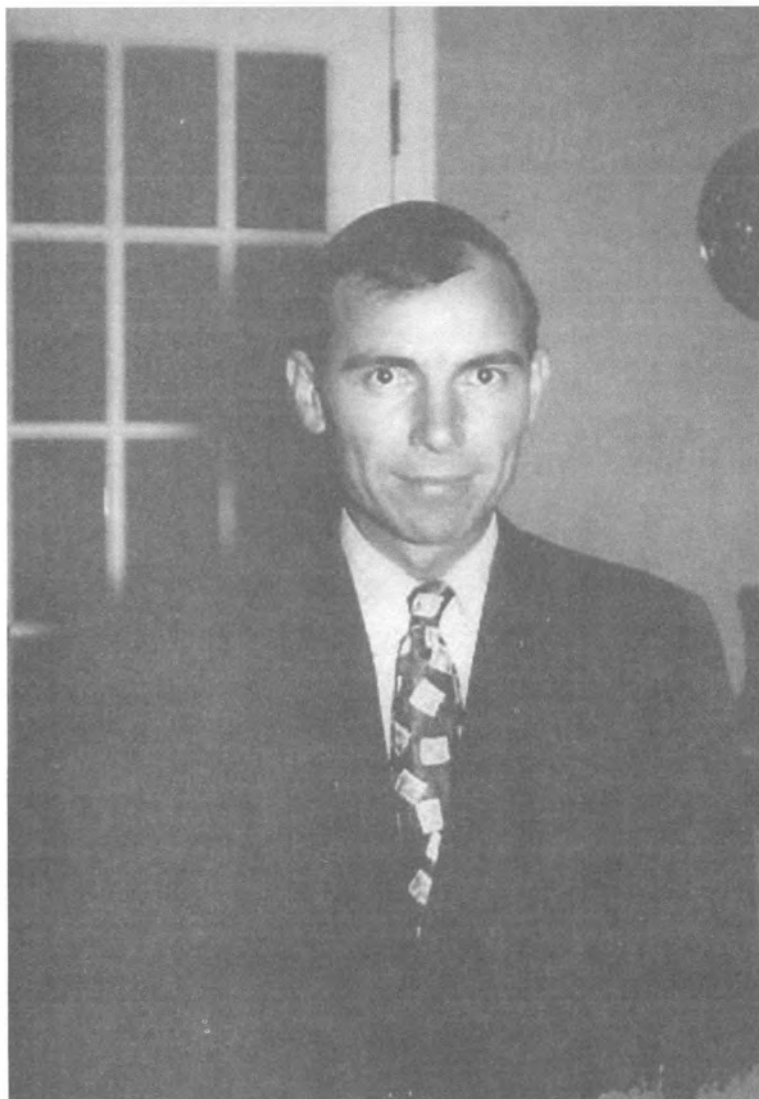
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No. 160  
June 2006



# Old Huntsville

HISTORY AND STORIES OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY



## The Road Builder

He started with a few pieces of equipment purchased at a government auction with \$1,600 he had saved while playing poker in the Army.

By the time Cecil Ashburn retired in 1991, he had built one of the largest road-building companies in America.

It has been estimated that his company employed over six thousand people and paved enough roads to stretch from New York to California and back. Today it is almost impossible to go anywhere in Huntsville or North Alabama without driving on a road built by Ashburn and Gray.

Also in this issue: **The Story of the Confederados**

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# Old Timer's Sale



# The Road Builder

By the time James Cecil Ashburn was born in 1920, his family had already been part of Madison County for well over a hundred years. Originally from North Carolina, the family had followed the emigrant trail to East Tennessee where they settled briefly before joining thousands of others who came to Madison County in search of cheap lands and adventure.

As they settled and began to clear the lands, their family history became a part of our history. A small log cabin was built in Ashburn Cove (now Big Cove) where they raised a family. Their children grew up, got married and had children. Some of them fought with Andrew Jackson during the war of 1812. Their grandchildren took up arms in defense of the South during the Civil War while their wives stayed at home, struggling to keep body, soul and family together.

Reconstruction found the family trying to rebuild from the ashes of a horrible war. With the country devastated and cotton prices at all time lows, it was almost impossible for small farmers to earn a living. By the early 1900's the Ashburns had moved to Killingsworth Cove where they opened up a small general store.

"The store was the center of the community," Cecil remembered. "Many people still traveled by horse and wagon and the roads were so bad that most people rarely came to Huntsville. We sold about everything you could imagine, from coal oil to patent medicines. If we didn't have it, we would order it."

The Ashburn family, like millions of others, found it harder and harder to make a living as the country slid into the Great Depression. "Back then," said Cecil, "most people didn't pay cash. They would buy on credit and pay when they sold their crops. When they went broke, we were right behind them."

The family moved across the mountain to a small house in Sharps Cove where they began farming. Tom Carney laughs as he remembers living in the same



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house years later. "Cecil might have lived there," he said, "but he sure didn't fix any cracks in the walls or ceilings. I remember one time it snowed and I woke up the next morning with snow on top of the bed."

Money was tight and Cecil, although a small boy, was expected to help in any way he could.

"Cecil was determined to make money," recalled J.B. Tucker, of Hurricane Creek. "One year he decided he was going to grow a bed of tobacco seedlings. That was just about the hardest thing anyone could grow around here because it took so much work, patience and luck. Everyone told him he couldn't do it but he just kept on anyway. Every morning and every afternoon, after school, he would be out there watering, pulling weeds and picking worms. After a while everyone in the neighborhood began stopping by to watch."

"Cecil probably grew the best bed of tobacco any one had ever seen around here and when they got big enough to transplant Mr. St. Clair bought them for \$500. It was the most money anyone had ever paid and people still talk about it today."

When asked what happened to the money, Cecil laughed, "I don't know, Mama got it!"

Cecil's first real experience

in road building came while living on Hurricane Creek.

"Back then," Cecil recalled, "You could pay your land taxes by working on the roads. We paid ours with a team of mules spreading gravel!"

"My grandfather was a road commissioner back then. He was paid \$100 a month which was good money for those days.

At that time the government passed a law saying that every road project had to have an engineer assigned to it, and assigned them a pay scale of \$150 a month."

"I will never forget," laughed Cecil, "about my grandfather shaking his head and telling me I needed to be an engineer. 'That's where the real money is,' he told me."

In 1937 Cecil graduated from Riverton High School and went to work for Arthur Milsap helping run a general store in Maysville. As part of the Federal Farm Program the government was paying farmers a certain amount per acre not to plant certain crops, but they insisted on accurate surveys before that could happen. In 1939 and 1940 he worked on this program.

"I got to know every creek, hill and hollow in that part of the county," Cecil said. "One thing I noticed was that much of the land was worthless be-

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Betty's life was saved."



Steadman, Dr. Gilbert and Karen

cause it flooded during every hard rain."

"Everyone knew war was coming," remembered Cecil. "I knew it was just a matter of time before I got drafted so I decided to enlist so I could pick my branch of service. They asked me what experience I had. I replied I had been a surveyor, so they said they were going to make me an engineer."

"They sent me to Engineering School at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. It was hard but it was also probably the best education money could buy. As part of our class work we visited the New Jersey Turnpike that was under construction. It was amazing! Thousands of cars going back and forth on well built highways while back home we couldn't even go to town unless we carried a shovel to dig ourselves out of mud holes!"

"I knew right then that someday I was going to build roads in Madison County."

After finishing school he was sent to a camp in Louisiana where they were issued summer uniforms.

"We were supposed to have been going to Trinidad, in the Caribbean, but when we got on the train and it started in the opposite direction I told the boys, "This doesn't look good!"

A few days later they ended up in Cold Bay, Alaska, in the Aleutians, where the Army had decided to build an air base.

"That was about the most miserable place in the known

world," Cecil remembered. The closest town was about thirty miles away and it wasn't really a town; just a fish canning factory. The only thing to do was work and play poker."

"I had a Major who stayed drunk all the time and a Colonel who didn't care so they just let me build the air base anyway I wanted to. I made every mistake in the book but I learned from my mistakes."

"There weren't many books to tell you how to build an air base on a frozen island. That was really 'on the job training.'"

In 1944, while home on leave, he married his childhood sweetheart, the beautiful Margaret Goodson.

The honeymoon was brief, however, as he soon received orders for France where he was assigned the task of helping rebuild the bombed out docks and shipping ports.

"It was a huge job," remembered Cecil, "but we had all the help we could use from the nearby German POW camps. Sometimes I would be the only American on the job with hundreds of POWs working for me. I didn't worry about them escaping, though. Their homes were behind the Russian lines and that was the last place they wanted to go."

After returning home in December of 1945, he talked to his uncle, Pat Gray, about the possibility of going into the road building business. Gray also

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had a certain amount of experience, having worked on the massive TVA project in Knoxville.

A short time later they formed the partnership of Ashburn and Gray.

"We had a business," recalled Cecil, "but no equipment and no customers. All we had was an old pick up truck and a little money I had saved from playing poker while in service."

"We heard about a government surplus sale in Atlanta where they were selling equipment. We drove over there but couldn't afford a hotel room so we slept in the back of the pick up. The way the sale was set up, we went to the desk, looked at the listings of what was for sale and then went out to the yard and inspected the equipment. Once we found what we wanted we went back to the desk to pay for it."

"The first day we went in, inspected the equipment and went to pay for it but they told us it had already sold. The second day we got there at the crack of dawn but the same thing happened - it had already sold. We quickly figured out that someone

had inside information and while everyone else was out inspecting the equipment, they were paying for it."

"That night we parked our pickup right in front of the door and when it opened the next morning we were first in. We scanned the list as fast as we could, picked out a couple of pieces of equipment and told them we wanted to pay.

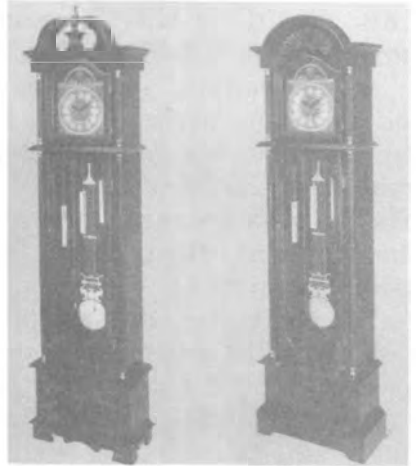
"Aren't you going to inspect it?" they asked. "No," I said, "I'm first in line and I want to buy it."

"They weren't very happy about it but we got a bulldozer and dragline for \$1,600 - the rest of my poker winnings."

The first job they got was cleaning a ditch in Hurricane Creek. As part of the Government Flood Control Plan the government was paying half the costs for landowners to dredge creeks and ditches to prevent flooding. Their first job was for \$40 but when the owner said he couldn't afford to pay his half, Cecil agreed to do it for the \$20 the government paid.

Cecil remembered his days as a surveyor when much of the

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land he walked over was useless because of flooding. During the next year he talked to about every farmer in the county explaining how the government would pay half the cost and their land would be worth much more.

As the reputation of Ashburn and Gray grew, they began to attract other jobs. At first it was small jobs - driveways, clearing lots or straightening creeks. Then they decided to get in the pavement business.

"He had built a company that was already the envy of most businesses," recalled a friend. "But he wasn't satisfied, he wanted to build roads."

At that time many of the road builders, asphalt plants and concrete companies were conspiring to keep prices high. The closest asphalt plant was in Birmingham and if a road builder got a contract in North Alabama he had to pay shipping fees to have the asphalt shipped in by rail. This could add millions of dollars to road projects.

Cecil solved the problem in a manner that would become his trademark. He built his own asphalt plant. In the next few years he applied the same philosophy to other parts of his business. If he needed fill dirt he would buy the land rather

than the dirt. If he needed gravel he would purchase his own gravel pit and have his own trucks haul it.

In the early 1950's Ashburn and Gray was awarded the contract to build a 27-mile highway through Bankhead Forest, a job that would take almost two years to complete.

"It was the kind of job Cecil had always wanted," recalled a friend, "and he never looked back. After that job there was no stopping him!"

As Huntsville began to grow, so did Ashburn and Gray. Thousands of people were flocking to Huntsville to work on the space program and they needed lots cleared, roads paved and highways built. Before long it was almost impossible to go

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2. *The Civil War Journal of Mary Jane Chadick; Huntsville during the Civil War.* by Nancy Rohr \$16.95

3. *Eden of the South: A Chronology of Huntsville. Al. - 1805-2005* by Ranee Pruitt \$29.95

4. *Why is it Named That? 250 Place Names in Huntsville/Madison County* (new edition with a few corrections) by Dex Nilsson \$13.95

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

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anywhere in Huntsville, or on the Arsenal, without seeing a piece of equipment with the name Ashburn and Gray on it.

The rocket program changed the face of Huntsville but it was "Big Jim" Folsom who changed the roads.

While Folsom was running for Governor in 1952 he spent a lot of time out in the county shaking hands and introducing himself. Most of the roads, once you left the city limits, were either red clay or gravel. In dry weather cars would raise billowing clouds of red dust behind them. Folsom noticed how every time the housewives saw a car coming in the distance they would rush to get their clean laundry off the lines before the dust settled on them.

The promise of good roads (and clean laundry) became a major part of Folsom's campaign and he easily carried the rural votes. After being elected he sent his Highway Director Herman Nelson to Huntsville with simple instructions, "Get the roads built!"

The next decade saw one of the biggest road building

projects in Alabama's history, with Ashburn and Gray doing much of the work. The company quickly grew to become one of the largest in the country with branch offices in other cities and jobs spanning all of the southeast. Their projects included everything from simple driveways, rocket test towers, highways and even airports.

Of all the projects Ashburn and Gray was involved in, it is probably the Parkway that most people remember. Ironically, it could have been their last. The day it opened two deer hunters ran off the pavement and into one of the company's Caterpillars. A lawsuit was filed, but fortunately the company won.

Bill Miller recalls Cecil helping many people get a state license while serving on the state licensing board. "I remember when I approached Cecil he said,

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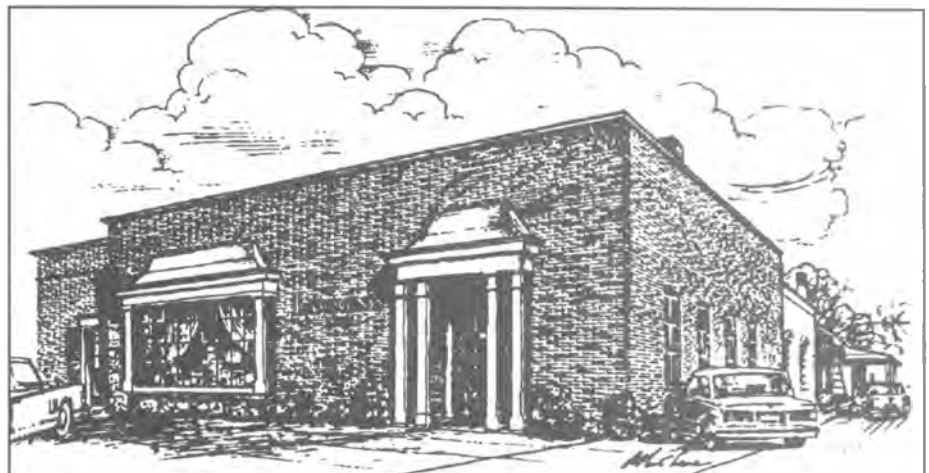
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"Cecil was always thinking about business," remembered a friend. "Once we were watching a baseball game and he made the comment that there was a lot of money to be made in that business. I thought he was talking about playing baseball so I didn't think anything of it. A few months later I learned he had signed a contract to supply Major League baseball fields with red dirt!"

In 1970 the company was faced with its biggest crisis when Pat Gray, one of the partners, died. The government levied huge inheritance taxes on his heirs. Their only alternatives were to sell part of the company, go public or close the business, none of which Cecil wanted to do. He decided to borrow the money and

buy the heirs out.

"Mr. Ashburn called a bunch of his key people together," remembered a long time employee, "and explained what he was up against. He told us he couldn't promise us anything right then but if we would help him he would make sure we were taken care of. For the next

year every employee he had must have worked twice as hard. Mr. Ashburn was a man of his word - he made some millionaires and took care of a lot of families!"

It was almost an unspoken rule at Ashburn and Gray to hire college students during the summer. Calvin Perkins remembers



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working for the company while going to school at Auburn. "Mr. Ashburn stopped by the job site one day and asked me how school was going. I told him that I was thinking about quitting and working full time. Mr. Ashburn looked at me for a moment then asked when school started back. When I told him he said, "Son, I hate to tell you this but your job ends the week before school starts. Go on back to school and your job will be waiting for you next year."

Ashburn always attributed his success to his employees and the people of Huntsville. Years earlier he had vowed that if he was ever successful he would give part of it back to the community. In 1993 he donated 100 acres of land to Madison Academy for their new campus. Several years later he gave the land for the Children's Advocacy Center on Pratt Avenue in Huntsville, in addition to donations to numerous other projects.

In 1991 Cecil retired but he left a legacy that will forever be a part of Huntsville. He had built one of the largest road building companies in America and today it is almost impossible to go anywhere in Huntsville or North Alabama without driving on a road built by Ashburn and Gray. It has been estimated that they have employed over six thousand people and paved enough roads to stretch from New York to California and back. He was also the first living person to ever be inducted into the Alabama Roadbuilders Hall of Fame.

In 2002 the Huntsville City Council, acting on a resolution introduced by City Councilman Glenn Watson, named a road in his honor. The very scenic road, Cecil Ashburn Drive, crosses Huntsville Mountain to Big Cove.

At the official dedication, Cecil sat on the stage with his wife, Margaret, surrounded by well-wishers and life-long friends. There was a marching band and politicians made speeches. Everyone agreed it was a fine day.

All during the ceremony, however, he kept looking over his shoulder at the mountains behind him with a far-away look in his eyes. Perhaps he was remembering his ancestors who crossed the same mountains almost two hundred years earlier.

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## Writers

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# Looking For a Horse Thief

November 23, 1827

Be on the lookout for J. Wilbond, Huntsville horse thief.

On the 23 of October last, a man who called his name J. Wilbond sold me a Horse and said he was going back to Huntsville, from which place he came here; I paid him, he then took the stage, went a few miles, whereupon the driver said he got out and went into the woods.

That night my stable was broken open, and the horse I bought from him was stolen out, with a new saddle and bridle.

As said Wilbond has not been heard of since, no doubt but he returned that night and stole my horse. Wilbond is a large man, blue eyes and fair complexion, and says but little. He usually wore a black cloak, and black cloth coat.

Since he was a saddler by trade, he no doubt recognized the value of the article. His name was Thos. J. Wilbond, had on a brown or red brown set of pantaloons, probably pirated from someone else.

I will pay \$50 for the delivery of said Wilbond and the

horse to me, living at the Bell Tavern in Winchester, Tennessee, and for the horse alone, \$25.

Wm. Rawkins.

## He Needs to Find Another Job

from 1912 newspaper

Martin Johnson, a would-be desperado, was injured yesterday during an attempted armed robbery of Yarbrough Grocery.

While in the act of pulling a pistol from his pocket the gun discharged, shooting him in the foot. He then dropped the gun to the floor where it discharged again, sending another ball into his right arm.

He is currently an unhappy guest in the city jail.


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# Memories of Old Huntsville

by Rufus Leon Crowl

I was born in Huntsville, Ala. at home on August 30, 1932. The doctor was Dr. H. O. Walker and it only cost \$15 back then. Our home was on what they called Cotton Block, real name Mill Street. I guess because it was close to a cotton mill, where my mother and father worked.

My father and a few other people were holding a revival at home when I was born. Not sure if this is true, but my younger sister told me years later that all the babies would be placed on a bed in the home holding the revival, and when it was over your family had the choice to come pick the baby off the bed, or just to leave it for someone else.

In 1932 or 33 there was a really bad storm, I was just a baby so I don't remember it much, but it blew our house away, and the milk cow that my father had was found 2 blocks away. But we survived, so that is what matters.

We lived in a cotton mill house, on one side, while another family lived on the other side. I remember one day me and Alton, the boy on the other side, found some pokeberries outside and they looked really good. We ate so many that we were covered from head to toe in pokeberry juice, and my mother got butter, grease and I don't know what else to get it off. Alton got pretty sick, and I don't think I ever ate another pokeberry after that.

I don't remember the year that the fair caught on fire, but I sure remember how Dad and mom got all of us kids together, and started walking towards Huntsville. We lived on one side of the Sinclair Oil Company, and the fair grounds were on the other side. I'll never forget that day. The fire didn't get to the oil company, but I'll bet there was a lot of praying going on that day.

My parents told me that one day I went missing. All the people in the neighborhood were out looking for me, people really stuck together in those days

and always helped their neighbors. I had gotten really tired and crawled under my bed to go to sleep. Back in those days, beds were high enough so that you could get under them.

In the late 30's my father bought a farm on Charity Lane in Hazel Green. We lived about a mile from what is called Lick Skillet.

I started school in the old New Sharon School. In the mid forties Dad sold the farm and bought a place just outside of



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Huntsville. He went back working at the Dallas Mill. We moved later to Stevens Ave. (mill house). Then Dad bought a lot on Rison Avenue and built a house. Back then, this house was still in the county, and the great expansion of Huntsville was yet to come.

I went to Rison School where Mr. Cecil Fain was principle. Mrs. Fain was my teacher one year, and a good one. I didn't finish school at that time, but did finish on the GI bill later.

The Korean War was being fought when I registered. I was drafted in 1953. I never went to Korea, as the President got the peace agreement signed, but I did get to travel some. I went to Paris, France and Orleans, the place where Joan of Arc had a big statue. She's the one that was burned at the stake in Orleans, France. I saw Frankfurt, Germany too, and drove on the highway that Hitler built.

I saw many famous landmarks, but the greatest experiance was coming home to

the States.

I landed in Dover, Maine, at the Air Force base there, and called my mother and dad to let them know I was OK. What I heard on the phone I'll never forget - the old Mill Whistle blowing. That was the greatest sound to me.

I worked at many places and had many bosses, but one stands out in my memory.

In 1970-71, I was working for Mr. W. L. Halsey at Halsey Grocery, and had a bad accident at home. We had insurance that covered some of my expenses, but Mr. Halsey and my fellow workers pitched in by giving blood, and saying lots of prayers for me.

I'll never forget the love they showed me. To me, this is what Huntsville is all about, showing love for each other and no matter what race or religion you are, you get treated the same.

Let's keep that Huntsville spirit alive!

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# Tips From Liz

- You can remove those sticky labels on glassware by rubbing with plain old peanut butter.

- Honey is great for allergies and arthritis - and local honey is the best. I found some really good local honey recently at Taylor's Produce at the Cook's Avenue Farmers Market.

- Also, an old remedy using honey is a glass of cold water, 2 tablespoons of honey and 3 tablespoons of cider vinegar, mixed well. Drink a glass every day for good health!

- It's always good to eat as healthy as possible - one way to do that is check the ingredients on packaged food - pick ones that have the fewest ingredients.

- Make your spaghetti dinners more interesting by using differ-

ent kinds of pasta - rotini, shells, or bowties are all good.

- Remember that you shouldn't take your calcium at the same time you take vitamins - the calcium coats your stomach and the vitamins will pass right through - take your calcium either earlier or later than your vitamins.

- I recently met a man who saves money on his hubcaps - if he loses one, instead of buying 4, he just buys 2 so that each side matches. No one looks at all 4 wheels at once!

- Feed your pet several small meals a day rather than one large one - this will reduce chances of a heart attack. Also, get in the Omega-3 by feeding a few cans of tuna or salmon a week.

- Plain yogurt, applied to your face and left on overnight, will greatly reduce blotchy skin.

- Honey is a great face moisturizer. Apply it warm to your face, leave on for 15 minutes, then rinse well. You'll feel like a new person!

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# Make Me!

by Judy C. Smith

Growing up in Huntsville did have its advantages in the fifties. One could walk anywhere they wished to go. It was 1959 and we lived on White Circle that was a good walk into town, but certainly within walking distance. However on this particular day, my sister Melinda, age eleven and whom I dearly loved, and would do anything for, wanted to go shopping at Parkway City.

Parkway City was just a strip shopping center, long before the 1974 tornadoes tore it up and it later was made into a mall. It was much further away than downtown and one had to drive there, not walk.

I had a 1937 Chevy and my father was at work with the only other car. The '37 Chevy was a straight shift and my mother couldn't drive it. So I was the only one who could satisfy

Melinda's request.

I was seventeen and had been driving since I was fifteen, having visited my grandmother in Mississippi and told everyone I had gotten a license to drive in that state. I had obtained an old license from a friend there and written my name on it. The paper licenses were easy to change in those days.

I got my driving experience from driving Sally Fleming Walker's father's truck in a sheep field. The field was across Whitesburg Drive from the

Fleming home in what is now Piedmont Estates.

At the time Melinda wanted to go shopping, I was designing a dress for home economics class and didn't hurry fast enough. After a big confrontation, which was unusual for us because we never fought, I uttered the famous words YOU MAKE ME, with that she brought forth a base ball bat, swinging it full force, hit me in the right temple, and knocked me to the ground.

As I lay semi-conscious, Melinda was standing over me,

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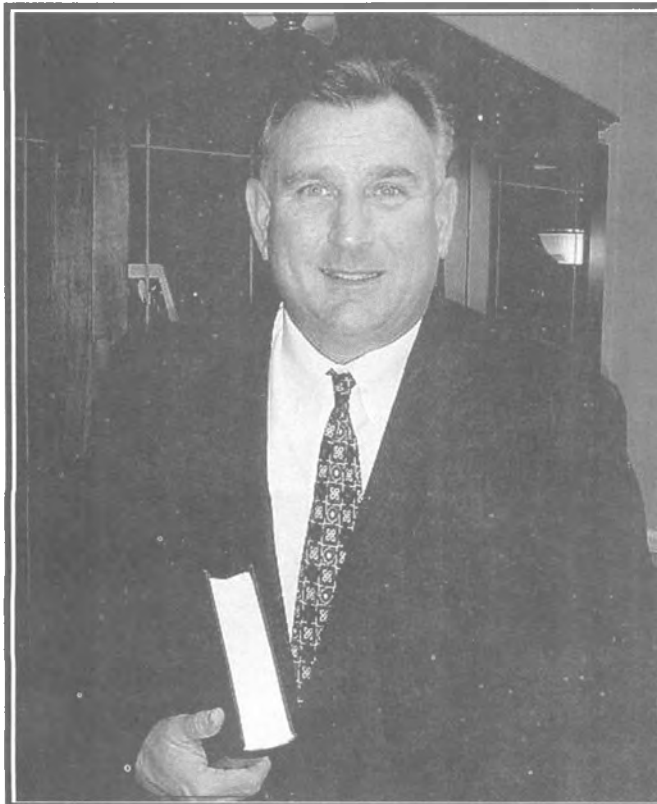
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saying, "PLEASE don't die, I'll give you anything or do anything, just don't tell Mom or Dad."

It was decided that I would say that I fell down the stairs and that would explain how the mysterious baseball size knot appeared on my temple, but in return for keeping my mouth shut, Melinda would give me her whole months allowance.

A deal was a deal. I kept my mouth shut. But believe me, I learned the hard way; I will never utter the words to anyone again, "YOU MAKE ME!"

## News From 1899

- John Kenny was charged \$20 yesterday in court for beating his mule in front of the courthouse. He was arrested last month for beating his wife.

- Charles Hawk, a young painter of Huntsville, about 24 years old, while attempting to jump on a running freight train that was passing Dallas Mills Sunday afternoon, missed his footing and fell with his right leg under the wheels. It was so badly crushed that it had to be amputated three inches above the knee.

- On Thursday last, Mr. John Hertzler was riding in a buggy on Clinton Street in this city. His horse took fright near the Baptist Church, ran away, and ran the buggy against a tree on the opposite side of the street, throwing Mr. Hertzler out and breaking loose. The horse ran off. Mr. H. was knocked insensible, was taken into Mr. Thos. Jamar's house where he remained there for two days.

Lem Johnson, of Knoxville, was arrested for picking pockets near the Post Office. Apparently he picked the wrong pocket as he is now in jail under the care of a physician.

- In search of Mrs. Frances W. Gerkin, a music teacher, nearly blind, who left Norfolk, Virginia some years ago and is reported to have been drowned while crossing the Tennessee River, four or five years ago.

- A son of Lira Elliot, of Lincoln Village, aged ten years, was ill for a year and although having a ravenous appetite, grew emaciated. His physician gave

him some medicine that produced nausea and he was choked by the appearance of a snake which required all the doctor's force to draw from his mouth. It was striped and eighteen inches in length. The lad recovered and is better.

- Miss Myrtle Halloway, a resident of Knoxville, is visiting Huntsville with the goal of securing a husband. So far suitors have been far and few between.

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# Heard On The Street

by Cathey Carney



We had a correct guess for the Photo of the Month in May. That sweet girl was none other than **Sara Baker**, whom many of you remember wrote the Society column for the Huntsville Times for years. Our winner is retired LPN **Carolyn Morrison**, who worked for the Clinic for Women for 12 years. Congratulations Carolyn!

We were sorry to hear that **Jason Basham**, 29, died in his sleep in May. Jason's aunt is **Linda Drake** of Huntsville. We send our sympathy to the family.

A reader, **Doug Raney**, who lived in Huntsville for 25 years, is looking for a copy of the jingle "**Rocket City U.S.A**" that was played here on the radio in the '60's & 70's - if anyone has a copy please let us know.

Congratulations to **David Adam Stolz** who recently celebrated his 12th. birthday. We know his family is proud of him!

We hear that our friend **Walker McGinnis** is running for Place 4 on the Huntsville School Board this summer - good luck to you Walker!

**Tim and Joy Hicks**, of Hicks Home Furnishings, couldn't be

prouder! Their first grandchild, a boy named **Matthew Tucker**, was born in April. Parents are daughter **Kelly** and her husband **Jeff**, who is the very popular mail carrier downtown. Tim and Joy's other daughter, **Katie**, just returned from Italy and is now working with Tim at the store.

It was great to see **Albert Hall** recently when he stopped by. He has spent the last 28 years as a **State Representative** and is running again - he must be doing something right for the folks here to keep re-electing him!

We were deeply saddened to read that our sweet friend **John M. O'Neal** had died in a terrible traffic accident a block from his home in Paint Rock. His beloved dog **Jake**, who went everywhere with him, also died in the wreck. We send our condolences to his family and many friends everywhere. He was the best.

**Karen Pearce**, who works in Customer Sales at Colonial Bank, said she really enjoyed the Boots Restaurant issue. **Boots Ellett** is

her uncle and her mom **Carline Kessell** is his sister. Karen's son is **Phillip Pearce**, who is 12, and her husband is **David**.

A big hello to **Edna Stone**. She sure loves gardening, and manages to freeze fresh veges so she has them all year long! Her son **Walter Stone** said she is the best cook ever!

**Edna Pierce** just had knee surgery and lives in Orange Beach with her hubby **Dub**. Get well quick, Edna!

**Craig Story** is in great shape for an old man of 45! His sweet wife **Angie** hosted a birthday party for him at Furniture Factory along with many of their good friends.

We recently met up with our friends **Kim and Terry Davis**. Terry is currently running for Madison County School Superintendent and is a super guy. Kim is Marketing Director for Redstone Village.

## Photo of The Month

The first person to correctly identify the youngster below wins a 1-year complimentary subscription to "Old Huntsville" magazine.

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Hint: This little girl taught swimming, dancing, raised 8 children and cooked dinner for everyone each night, including the housekeeper who cleaned the house but couldn't cook.



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**Chuck & Annelie Owens** are hosting Chuck's brother, **Joe Owens**, who lives in Florida. Welcome Joe! We hope you brought the good weather with you!

A lifelong resident of Huntsville, **Bobby Frazier**, who was living in Knoxville, died recently. His cousin **Nolan Myrick** says that Bobby was a fine person. He will be missed by family & many friends.

For many of us who listened to the radio years ago, it was sad to hear that **Bill "Buckshot" Lane, Jr.** had died recently. He and **Arnold Hornbuckle** were household names in the music world, and Arnold enjoyed being in business with Bill for 40 years. Our sympathy to Bill's sweet wife **Ann**, and their friends and family.

Hello to our dear friend **Floyd Hardin**, better known as **Mayor of 5 Points!**

**Sam Keith** is one proud Grandpa. His daughter **Rebekah McKinney** and her husband **John McKinney**, a vocational consultant, had twin boys on March 8. Their names are **Griffin Charles McKinney** and **John William McKinney IV**. They join brother **Sam**, who turned 2 on May 18. Also thrilled are grandparents **Buck** and **Janet Watson**.

That adorable little boy **Evan Troup** turns 3 in June, and his proud parents **Stef** and **John Troup**, along with sister **Hannah**, are planning a fun pool party & barbeque for him at the family's home.

Another important June birthday is that of **Louise Avery**, who is fondly known as "**Moo Moo**" by her grandkids. Happy Birthday Louise!

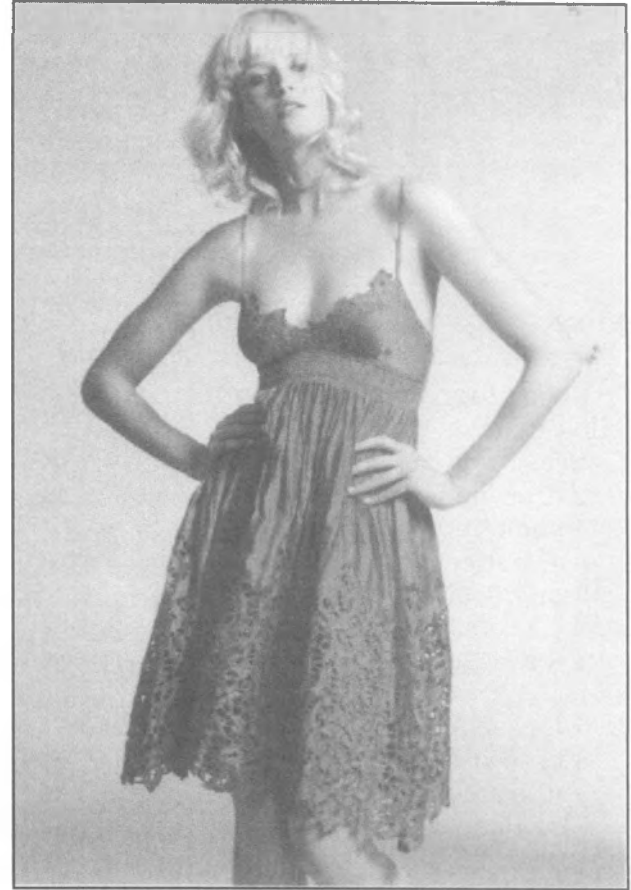
I joined some handsome men for lunch recently. **Robert Martin, Sr.**, **Doug Hall**, **Bud Vaughn** and **Howard Camp** were remembering back when Huntsville's was still a small town! Hard to believe with all the progress we're seeing now.

Congratulations to the **Golden K Kiwanis** who just celebrated their 20th anniversary with a luncheon recently. **Randy Cross** of Decatur entertained with old stories, and **Bill Russell**, **Archie Murchie** and **Hank Miller** (current President) welcomed members & guests, including **Mary Anne Zollar**.

The flowers are so pretty downtown. Go check them out! We are proud of **Mayor Loretta Spencer** for keeping our city so clean and beautiful!

Don't forget the **Hidden Garden Tour** in historic Huntsville's Old Town on Sunday, June 4! See you there!

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# Spicy & Fresh

## Mixed Squash Casserole

3 ea. large zucchini and yellow squash, sliced  
 Seasoning Salt  
 2 c. seasoned stuffing mix  
 1 stick butter, melted  
 4 T. butter  
 1 onion, chopped  
 4 carrots, grated  
 1 can Cream of chicken soup  
 1 t. cayenne pepper  
 1 c. sour cream  
 1 c. grated Cheddar cheese

Boil zucchini & squash in water with a little seasoning salt, for about 5 minutes. Combine stuffing mix with melted butter, place in bottom of buttered casserole. Saute onion & carrots in butter, add zucchini & squash. Combine remaining ingredients, mix all & pour over the stuffing. Bake uncovered for 30 minutes at 350 degrees.

## Eggplant Parmesan

1 eggplant, peeled  
 Cracker crumbs  
 Parmesan cheese  
 Your favorite spaghetti sauce

Peel & slice eggplant in thin slices. Dip them in melted butter and place in a deep baking dish. Sprinkle slices with cracker crumbs to cover. Pour your favorite spaghetti sauce over the layer. Sprinkle with a few drops red Tabasco sauce. Continue procedure with remaining eggplant slices. Sprinkle liberally with the cheese. Place in 350 degree oven and bake covered for 60 minutes.

## Armadillo Eggs

24 fresh jalapenos  
 2 lbs. Monterey jack cheese  
 2 c. Bisquick  
 1 lb. hot sausage  
 1 lb. cheddar, shredded  
 1 T. cayenne  
 1 T. garlic salt  
 1-2 T. milk

Slice each jalapeno and remove the seeds. Rinse and drain well. Cut the Monterey Jack cheese into 24 cubes, insert one cube in each jalapeno. Combine Bisquick, sausage, cheddar cheese and spices in large bowl, mix. Add milk slowly, kneading the dough. Shape 1/4 cup of the dough into 1/4" thick pancake. Place jalapeno on pancake, wrap to enclose pepper forming into egg shape. Repeat with remaining peppers. Place seam sides down on oiled baking sheet and bake for 30-35 minutes til browned.

## Spicy Pintos

To your regular cooked pintos, just add some cumin powder, garlic powder and cayenne for a zesty, smoky hot taste.

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## Garlic Noodles Romanoff

- 2 1/2 c. Rotini noodles
- 1 c. cottage cheese
- 1 c. sour cream
- 1 1/2 t. seasoned salt
- 1 t. dry minced onion
- 1 t. Worcestershire sauce
- 1 t. minced garlic
- 1/2 t. cayenne pepper
- 1/3 c. cheddar cheese, grated

Cook noodles for about 6 minutes, drain & set aside. Combine remaining ingredients except the cheese. Add noodles and mix. Grease a 1 1/2 quart casserole and pour in the noodle mixture. Sprinkle with grated Cheddar cheese. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes and cheese melts.

## Spicy Noodles

- 1 large bag wide noodles
- 1 stick butter
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 t. garlic powder
- 1 t. black pepper
- 1/2 t. cayenne pepper
- 1 head cabbage, chopped

Cook noodles just til firm-tender. Saute onion in butter and garlic powder, then add cabbage and cook til tender. Add noodles and toss gently. Add salt and peppers to taste.

## Baked Garlic

Buy large garlic heads and slice the tapered end off each one. Place the garlic in a garlic baker or small muffin tins, cut end up, and drizzle either olive oil, flavored oil or butter on the cloves. Sprinkle with rosemary and seasoning salt. Bake, covered in a 350-degree oven for 30 minutes.

Now you can spread the soft garlic cloves on bread, or rub them on pizza dough, or in salad dressings. Use your imagination!

## Fried Green Tomatoes

- 5 large green tomatoes
- 2 c. yellow corn meal
- 1 t. black pepper
- 3/4 t. salt, or to taste

Slice the tomatoes into 1/3" slices. On a large platter, mix the meal, salt and pepper. Coat the slices with the meal and place them into a large skillet that you have heated with about 1/2 cup extra-light olive oil. Make sure your oil is hot and that the slices sizzle when you put them in the pan. Cook over medium-high heat, turning when each side gets medium brown. Remove from pan and place on paper to drain. Serve with a good country dinner!

"I'm not sure how clouds are formed. But the clouds know how to do it, and that's the important thing."

*Hannah Troup, age 5 1/2*



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# Husband Gets Rotten Eggs for Slandering His Wife

*from 1881 newspaper*

A man living near Gurley has had something of a sensation.

A year ago Abraham Meyers, a tailor, left the town, deserting his wife and little son. Recently he returned, accompanied by a lawyer, and announced his intention to secure possession of his boy and take him to another State.

The deserted wife bears an unblemished reputation, and when Meyers and the attorney were heard questioning her chastity they soon found themselves surrounded by a crowd of determined men armed with some antiquated eggs.

The lawyer pleaded so hard that he was not molested after he promised to leave the town. Meyers, however, became the very unwilling target for the eggs and was a sorry sight when he got on board a passenger train to leave. The conductor at once put him off, out of consideration for the other passengers who immediately began to complain of the smell. Meyers escaped by the aid of a brakeman on a freight train, who loaded him in a box car and hauled him out of town. There was no attempt made to arrest any of the participants in the mob, and their work is generally approved in the town and vicinity.

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# A History of Monte Sano

Descendants of Thomas Fearn were told by their parents that this ancestor gave Monte Sano Mountain its name. He had a sick child whom he was convinced the mountain air would help cure. After doctoring the child for a long time without success, he built a cabin on the mountain and carried the child and its nurse up there on horseback. In a few weeks the child was cured, so he called the plateau, "Monte Sano."

This is likely true as Thomas Fearn was a physician and familiar with the Latin language in which Monte Sano means "mountain of health."

The mountain must have received its name in the mid 1820s as the first printed reference to Monte Sano was in an advertisement relating to the Monte Sano Female Academy, which was founded in 1829.

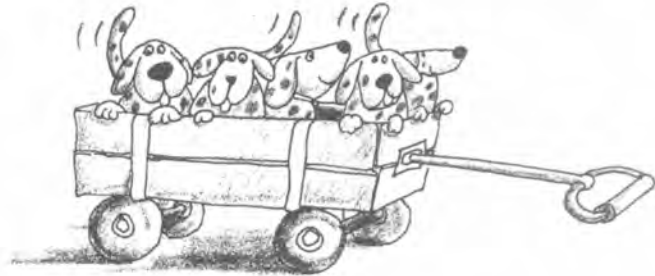
The first recorded purchase of land on the mountain was by Charles Cabaniss, on Sept. 18, 1809. Two years later William Patton acquired forty acres, and

shortly afterwards Judge William Smith, a U.S. Senator from North Carolina, purchased another 160 acres.

Though a few families had already settled on the mountain, it was the purchase of 80 acres in 1814 by John Martin that

started the development of the mountain. Lots were laid out and roads were built for the community that would soon become known as Viduta.

Huntsville was taken over by Federal troops in 1862 and maintained as their headquarters un-



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til the close of the war. With this situation, many Confederates traveled to a vantage point on the mountain to get a view of conditions in the city.

During the war things were rather quiet on the mountain. Occasionally, some roving band of Yankees scoured the top in search of food or Rebel sympathizers, but, on the whole, it was no place for fighting. Not even a skirmish occurred there.

The Yankees, however, destroyed many of the homes on Monte Sano, especially those in Viduta. These went at different times, depending on the mood of the particular band making the visit.

A Federal hospital was erected during the war in the upper end of Fagan's Hollow, then called Hospital Hollow. This building was located near the spring and was one of the few structures built in this section by the invaders.

In May of 1862, before the war had actually been felt in this part of the country, Jonathan Broad, an Englishman, was hired by Messrs. Baker and Conway to mine coal on the mountain.

When the Yankees located their camps around Huntsville they found they needed coal for their tents and barracks, so they commandeered the mine Broad

had started. Thirty soldiers were detailed to work there.

Despite the fact that Broad had only been in this country a short while and still had not obtained his citizenship papers, the Yankees still called him "a damn old secesh," and put him to work hauling the coal as it was excavated.

As the war came to an end, recalled W.T. Bennett, a Confederate veteran, his company was ordered to surrender to a Federal force at the spring on the mountain. On May 11, 1865 they marched to the spring and stacked arms. Five gallons of brandy and honey, brought from Huntsville by the Yankees, awaited them there. They drank greedily in the heavy rain he remembered was falling that day.

Then they marched to the present day site of Huntsville Hospital where they were assigned to different homes to be fed and housed for the night.

Monte Sano had no reconstruction period. Buildings burned during the war were left a mass of ruins. After all, the mountain was considered a resort and people had no time for "resorting"

Jonathan Broad, left with his wagons and team when the Yankees departed, resumed his coal mining operations. This industry became a lucrative business.

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Much of the coal was sold right at the mouth of the mine, while orders soon increased to the point where as many as thirty wagons a day were employed in hauling the fuel to Huntsville.

Laborers flocked to the mines where the high wages of \$1.00 per hundred pounds was paid for digging. Some workmen earned as much as \$33.00 a day in this manner.

With coal mining such a lucrative business, others came to share the profits. John Sullivan opened up several mines, one of which extended through the plateau. Another mine, though much smaller, was operated by Tommy Mennard.

As the mines were started, they were named after the man who first opened them. Some of the mine's names were the "Dick Rice," "Valentine Wool" and the "Matt Blanford."

The vein of coal, never very large, had become unprofitable to mine by the 1890s. In 1899, Jonathan Broad closed his operation and coal mining on Monte Sano came to an end.

In 1878, there began a continuous train of publicity which was to lead in a few years to the erection of an immense hotel.

Two wealthy New Yorkers, James and M.J. O'Shaugnessy, supplied the capital. As a sign of their faith in the community, they also built their homes here. James remodeled the Fearn cottage on the mountain while M.J. erected the residence on Meridian Pike known as "Kildare."

On Feb. 16 a group of men visited the mountain and selected a spot for the hotel. One week later, 16 teams were busy hauling lumber, lime, cement and other building materials to the site. Over 60 men were employed continuously in the construction.

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the hotel with water, the improvement company installed a pump at the Big Spring. Water was then pumped up the side of the mountain to a reservoir in front of the hotel. By means of another steam pump, water for drinking purposes was obtained from Cold Spring and distributed to all parts of the hotel.

A laundry and servants quarters were placed some distance to the rear of the hotel, but close enough to enable the help to be summoned with little trouble. Other amenities included landscaping done by a landscape artist imported from New York and twenty miles of bridle paths with numerous places for viewing the spectacular scenery from atop the mountain.

An event widely applauded, judging by the amount of press in the local papers, was the hiring of S.E. Bates as manager of the hotel. He had just closed the Continental Hotel in Pensacola, Fla., a resort where he had attracted over 2,500 guests during the winter season. His motto was, "The kitchen is the foundation of every good hotel."

Finally after a year and half of construction, the hotel was opened. It fast became a mecca for the elite, with its guest register reading like a Who's Who of wealthy and prominent names. Some of the guests who stayed at the hotel were the Vanderbilts, William Waldorf Astor and J. Gould.

In 1889 a dummy line for a railroad was built up the side of the mountain for the convenience of tourists and sightseers. The railroad, due to a series of accidents, never completely won the public's approval.

Spanish American War soldiers who camped on the mountain during 1898 were largely responsible for activities that year. One military ball that season attracted 1,250 persons, among them 32 officers. Another outstanding event that year was the introduction of electricity to the mountain.

The hotel opened for its last full season in 1900. Transportation and other problems combined to account for its drop in popularity. Though a large number of guests had registered that year, the hotel's death knell had sounded.

During the year 1909 the hotel was sold to Mrs. Lena Garth who turned it into her summer home - a rather large one!

The next twenty years saw the small community

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atop the mountain began to decline. Many of the people who lived there moved to town and houses began to fall into disrepair. Casual sightseers found it increasingly difficult to enjoy the spectacular view after the railroad was abandoned. The wagon road, leading from Huntsville to the mountain, became rutted and overgrown.

Ironically, the Great Depression, which devastated much of the country, proved to be Monte Sano's salvation. The government, in an effort to create employment, declared much of the mountain to be a state park and established a CCC camp there.

Years later, one member of the CCC would remember that the roads were so bad they actually followed the telephone lines up the mountain.

Over the next several years the park began to take on a different appearance. Members of the CCC rebuilt many of the roads on the mountain and constructed guest lodgings that are still in existence today.

In 1938, the largest outdoor

pageant ever held in North Alabama was held on Monte Sano. The pageant, entitled "Huntsville Moves On," drew a crowd estimated at over fifteen thousand people. Opening with the Indian legend of Monte Sano, the pageant lasted more than three hours, with some 600 characters being enacted.

High spots of the pageant included the Big Spring scene of 1805 when John Hunt first settled in Huntsville, arrival of the settlers, the land sales of 1809 and 1819 and the visit of President James Monroe. The Civil War scene, during which Confederate soldiers returned to their homes, drew special interest.

In this episode, the speaker for the returning soldiers, Douglas Taylor, dressed in a gray uniform, wore the sword used by his father, Captain Thomas J. Taylor and carried a canteen his wife's father had used during the Civil War.

A "Gay Nineties" scene taken from the old Monte Sano Hotel drew loud applause when the dancers presented a colorful performance in their exquisite costumes.

Episode 111, in which the CCC camp on the mountain was the whole show, gave the spectators a brief idea of the life of a CCC worker and the responsibilities placed upon the shoulders of those in charge of the camp. One

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hundred CCC boys, dressed in brown uniforms, made their appearance on the stage during this scene, receiving orders from their superiors.

Throughout the entire performance the audience was entertained by soloists, including Miss Frances Roberts, Miss Nell Esslinger and Miss Estelle Cicero.

All in all, it was a performance worthy of the grand mountain on which it was performed.

With the renewed interest, people once again began building homes and the mountain began to take on the look and feel of a small community. Bankhead Parkway made it possible to travel to Huntsville in a few minutes and the mountain slowly became a desirable place to live.

The next chapter in the history of Monte Sano Mountain would not be written until the early

1950s, when many of the German rocket scientists made their homes there.

But as one historian has said, that is a chapter for another book.

## USEFUL HINTS

\* Use shoe polish to touch up scarred wood furniture or floors.

\* Fill jar lids with Miller High Life beer to kill slugs outdoors.

\* Cut a birthday cake with waxed dental floss.

\* Clean brass, copper & stainless steel with a paste made from ReaLemon juice & salt.

\* Fill cracks and make a line with flour where ants enter - they will not cross through flour.

\* Peanut butter works well in rat or mouse traps.

\* Deodorize your fridge with a paper bag full of charcoal briquets.

## Tortellini with Cream Sauce

1 lb. fresh or frozen cheese tortellini

2 t. unsalted butter

6 scallions, thinly sliced

2 medium tomatoes, cored, seeded and diced

2/3 c. sour cream

2 T. grated Parmesan cheese

1/2 t. salt

Freshly ground black pepper

Cook the tortellini til tender but not mushy. Melt the butter in skillet, add scallions and tomatoes, saute 2 minutes. Set aside. In another bowl mix the sour cream, Parmesan cheese and salt/pepper. Drain the tortellini well, return it to the pot. Pour on the sour cream mixture, toss well. Spoon the tortellini onto serving plates, spoon some of the tomato/scallion mixture in the center of each serving.

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# Heard On the Street in 1899

- A large crowd participated in the supposedly mad dog chase near the jail last evening. After one of the officers had shot the canine twice and failed to put it out of its misery, it was chased to the suburbs and some younger men killed it.

- Mayor Moore will issue a proclamation forbidding the shooting of fireworks of any description on the streets until after the holidays.

- All of the new hose for the Fire Department has arrived and the only thing now lacking is the chemical engine which is expected the early part of January. The fire laddies are in their new quarters and are preparing for any fires that may occur.

- The completion of the Jewish Synagogue is close at hand and when completed, it will be one of the prettiest church edifices in the south.

- The beautiful residence of Mr. J. N. Mazza being erected on

Randolph street will soon be completed.

- A new industry for the city has been secured for North Huntsville through the efforts of Mr. W. S. Wells. It is a hoop and barrel factory to be established by Messrs. S. H. Allen & Co., and will employ about twenty-five hands.

- The \$1,000 street roller which was purchased some time ago to put the finishing touches on streets after crushed rock had been spread will finally be used on the public thoroughfares.

- The rainy season has come and caught the approaches to the Colored City School in a very bad condition. Our city ought to take more pride in its schools.

- What has become of the beautiful fountains that were supposed to be placed in the park at Southern depot?

**"It is best for my employers if I don't work with people."**

**Seen on local resume**

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# Days of War

by Dottie Cutts

There was only one time in my life that I wished I had been a man.

That was on Sunday, December 7, 1941. The Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor and almost all the men I knew had soon afterwards enlisted. The only avenue left for the women was to man the home front.

We went to work in the defense plants to back up our men and keep the supplies rolling. My first job was with SKF ball bearings. Then I transferred to the Budd Company where I advanced up to welding supervisor on the cargo plane. But this was not the Army! A bill had been introduced to Congress in May of 1941 to establish a woman's Army Auxiliary Corps, but it failed to receive serious consideration until after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

Finally on May 15, 1942, President Franklin Roosevelt signed the bill into law, and set a recruitment goal of 25,000 for the first year. That goal was reached by November and I was one of the early lucky ones. Fort Des Moines, Iowa, was the first training facility. It was an abandoned cavalry post from WW I. Our holding area was one of the huge stables. Rows and rows of double bunk beds.

I still don't know how we knew which bed was ours. Maybe we didn't - a bed was a bed. We were told to bring no extra clothes, as we would be issued uniforms. However, a real problem arose. The corps grew faster than they could make the uniforms. Our first issue was a man's HEAVY all-wool khaki overcoat. Now I'm 5' and it just did not fit. The sleeves had to be rolled up so I could find my hands. The bottom was almost level with the ground and acted as a snow plow and pushed the snow up my legs. Iowa can be very cold in the winter!

After a few days we were separated into companies and graduated to the barracks. Still rows of

beds, but single this time. Community showers, which were very hard for most women to get used to. Still no uniforms. Finally our first issue came, and we received complete sets of underwear (all khaki), not my favorite color.

One of our first classes was on saluting. After the lesson we were told to go out and salute the first officer we came to. I still had my famous overcoat on and a wool knit cap with a visor. I smartly saluted my officer, hit the visor of the cap, knocked it off into the snow, and promptly tried to retrieve it. That left the officer returning the salute to my derriere. We both had to giggle at that one.

Gradually our uniforms arrived piece by piece. A khaki shirt and necktie, then our dress

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overcoat and hat. The shoes were heavy brown leather oxfords and it took many blisters before they were broken in. The skirts were the last of the dress uniform to arrive. They really were nice uniforms when they all were together. We had received striped seersucker dresses for every day.

My first Christmas away from home was spent on KP. I volunteered because I knew it would keep me busy and keep my mind occupied. We used the same metal tray that the men used and were served in the same haphazard way. It all ended up in the same place anyway. A special duty that morning was to separate the coffee grounds and egg shells from the grease barrel.

Grease was a valuable recyclable. We did a lot of it then. Fortunately, it was cold and the grease had solidified, so it wasn't too hard. In the afternoon I called home and mother and I both had three minutes of serious crying.

After basic we were divided into different schools. Our job was to replace the men in the mundane duties (that they loathed) and send them off to war. Some of us went to cooking school, filing, clerks, P.O. workers, telephone operators, etc. I was sent to Administration School in a hotel in Des Moines. There were four of us in a small room, one sink, no bathroom. It was down the hall. At graduation, since the O.C.S. was not ready for the next class, they asked me if I would like to join a Medical Corps that was leaving that night.

We traveled by train (darkened) and night and arrived the next day at Ft. Oglethorpe, Georgia. There I was assigned to the

**"The peacemaking meeting scheduled for today has been canceled due to a conflict."**

*Seen in Athens church bulletin*



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clinic where we took blood from the men and the women. My medical skills were limited, but with the help of an orange, a syringe and needle and water I soon learned to give a shot with the best of them. We especially looked forward to giving the men recruits their welcome shots. One of us would be on one side with the tetanus shot and the other with the typhoid shot. The tetanus really stung and we had many a man drop to the floor with the needle still in his arm. The typhoid didn't hurt at first, but by night you were in a lot of pain.

Ft. Oglethorpe was also one of the early WAAC Centers, and we had our own ward at the hospital. I was transferred there and had the opportunity to work with a wonderful doctor and nurse.

On July 3, 1943 the WAAC became law. No longer an Auxiliary Corps, but a part of the Army with the same benefits and privileges as the men. At this time we were given a choice of becoming part of the Army or going home.

In the meantime the Public Health Service had started a Cadet Nurse Corps, with a plan to provide the Army with more


Registered Nurses. With the encouragement of both my doctor and nurse, I resigned the WAAC and entered the first open Cadet Nurse Corps at Episcopal Hospital.

Before I graduated the war was over, but while I was at the University of Pittsburgh, during the Korean War, I received greetings from Uncle Sam, and my dream of being an Army Nurse was finally realized. My tours-of-duty were Walter Reed Hospital, in Washington, D.C. and Tripler Hospital in Honolulu. After over 50 years I look back on my WAAC days as very important in the shaping of my future life. I'm proud to have served.

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*Anonymous*

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# Military Punishment

*from 1864 military records*

Huntsville, Al.

Sarg. Thomas Riggs, K Company, 13th Indiana Cavalry Regiment, having disgraced himself and the regiment to which he belongs by having been found guilty of theft is hereby reduced to the ranks.

He will be placed on a barrel head in front of Regimental Headquarters to stand one hour on and one hour off for twelve hours. He will also be worked for nine days at hard labor on fortifications or at other work and kept in close confinement under guard while not at work.

It is with feelings of the greatest regret and mortification that the Major Commdg. is compelled

to resort to such punishment but the habit of the men are too readily falling into of pilfering and stealing must and shall be stopped.

By Order of Major L. Stout  
Commdg 13 Ind. Cav.

*Note: "Standing on a barrel head" was a common punishment during the Civil War and consisted of being forced to stand at attention, in full gear, on top of a barrel. Thomas Riggs, evidently disagreeing with the sentence, deserted the same day. A picture of Major Stout was drawn on a wall inside the Huntsville Depot during the period it was occupied by Federal troops and may still be seen.*

**"Healthy appearing decrepit  
69-year old male, mentally  
alert but forgetful."**

*On patient's chart*

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*from 1879 newspaper*

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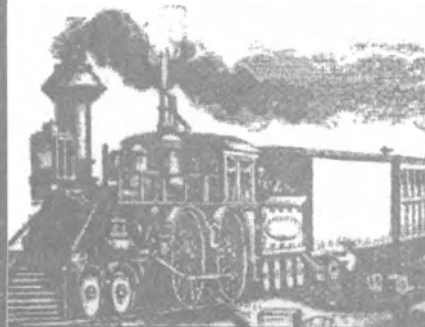
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# Major John S. Dickson

by **Alonzo S. Elliot**  
(written in 1914)

John Steele Dickson, citizen, closed his hardware store in Huntsville, and obeying the first call to arms, enlisted as a Lieutenant with the historic Madison Rifles, and under the command of the gallant Captain John G. Coltart. He left Huntsville, and home, bearing the distinction of being among the first troops to leave Madison County for the front.

The enlistment of one year soon expiring, Lieut. Dickson returned to Huntsville with a Captain's commission to raise a company of volunteers to serve three years - or for the duration. This was his second enlistment.

It was the 22nd of March, 1862, and that portion of the Courthouse Square along the sidewalk and fronting Bank Row presented a scene that stirred the hearts of men, women and children gathered from all parts of the county. Varied were the emotions of each one, according to age and temperament, at the time.

As a wee small boy the writer

of this saw Capt. Dickson in plain citizen's dress, with a small walking cane in hand, walk back and forth along the street from the National Bank corner to the old Huntsville Hotel, calling for volunteers.

"Volunteers for the war," he cried. "Volunteers for the War!"

And thus the company was made up, men stepping forward and falling into line, marching behind one another until the company was made up.

Among so many we knew and loved going forth into battle for their beloved State and Southland were Spotswood, Patterson, McDavid, Elliot, Hudson Brown, and Newman. There may be others yet living who can supply the full muster roll.

On the 5th of April, 1862,

## DRISCOLL COMMUNICATIONS

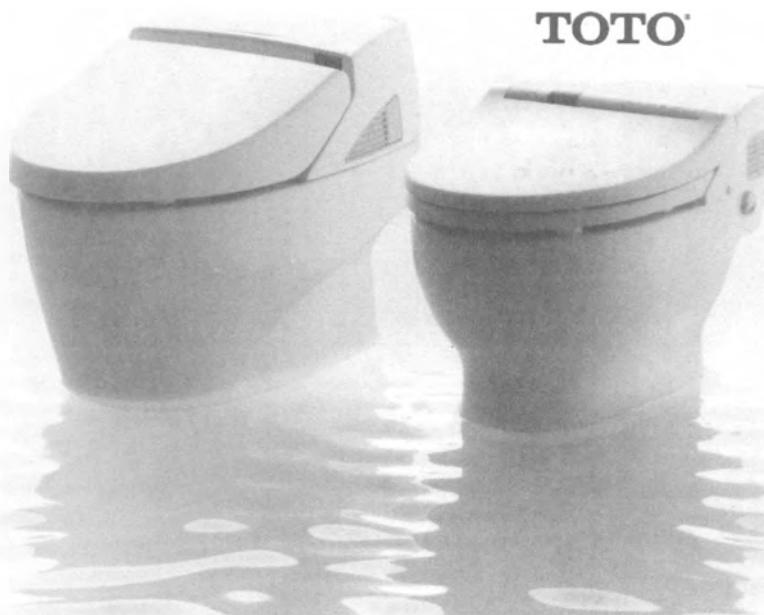
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this company left Huntsville, and so close were the Federal army of invasion upon the scene that six days afterwards Gen. Mitchel's command occupied Huntsville, and blue coats took the place of the gray in our midst for the next five long months.

I now return to the subject of our communication. The Southern historians have followed the marches, the privations and the battles of the 35th Alabama through the war from Corinth, Vicksburg, Jackson, Champion Hills, Franklin to North Carolina and Joe Johnston's surrender. Let us keep fresh the memory of the gallant and self sacrificing Dickson, that noble martyr to the Southern cause, for as a Major, to which position he had won his way, he fell while bravely leading his men in the desperate battle of Franklin, Tenn. on Nov. 30, 1864.

Like another of Huntsville's noble, the immortal Col. Egbert Jones, he sleeps peacefully with many of his comrades in beauti-

ful Maple Hill Cemetery.

May the present generations continue to honor their virtues as soldiers of war and citizens in peace.

## Huge Snake Killed On Monte Sano

*from 1907 newspaper*

One of the largest rattle snakes ever seen In this country was killed yesterday afternoon by one of Mr. Pulley's Negro employees on Monte Sano. The snake measured 9 feet in length was 15 inches around the body, its head was 4 inches wide and it carried 16 rattles. The Negro had no weapon of any kind when he found the snake and his efforts to kill it with sticks and stones were unavailing. Finally the Negro ran to the house and returned with a shotgun with which he killed the big reptile.

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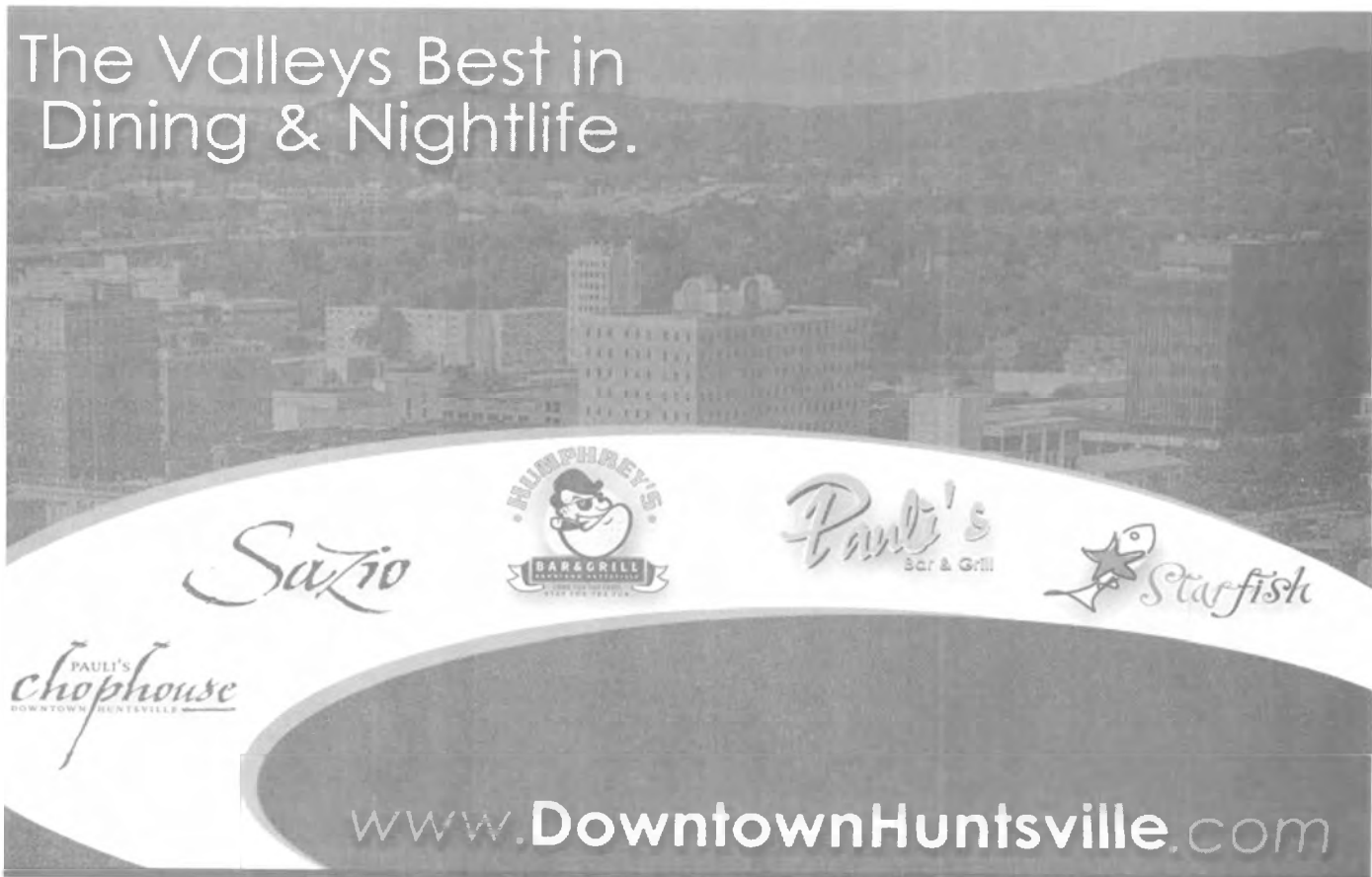


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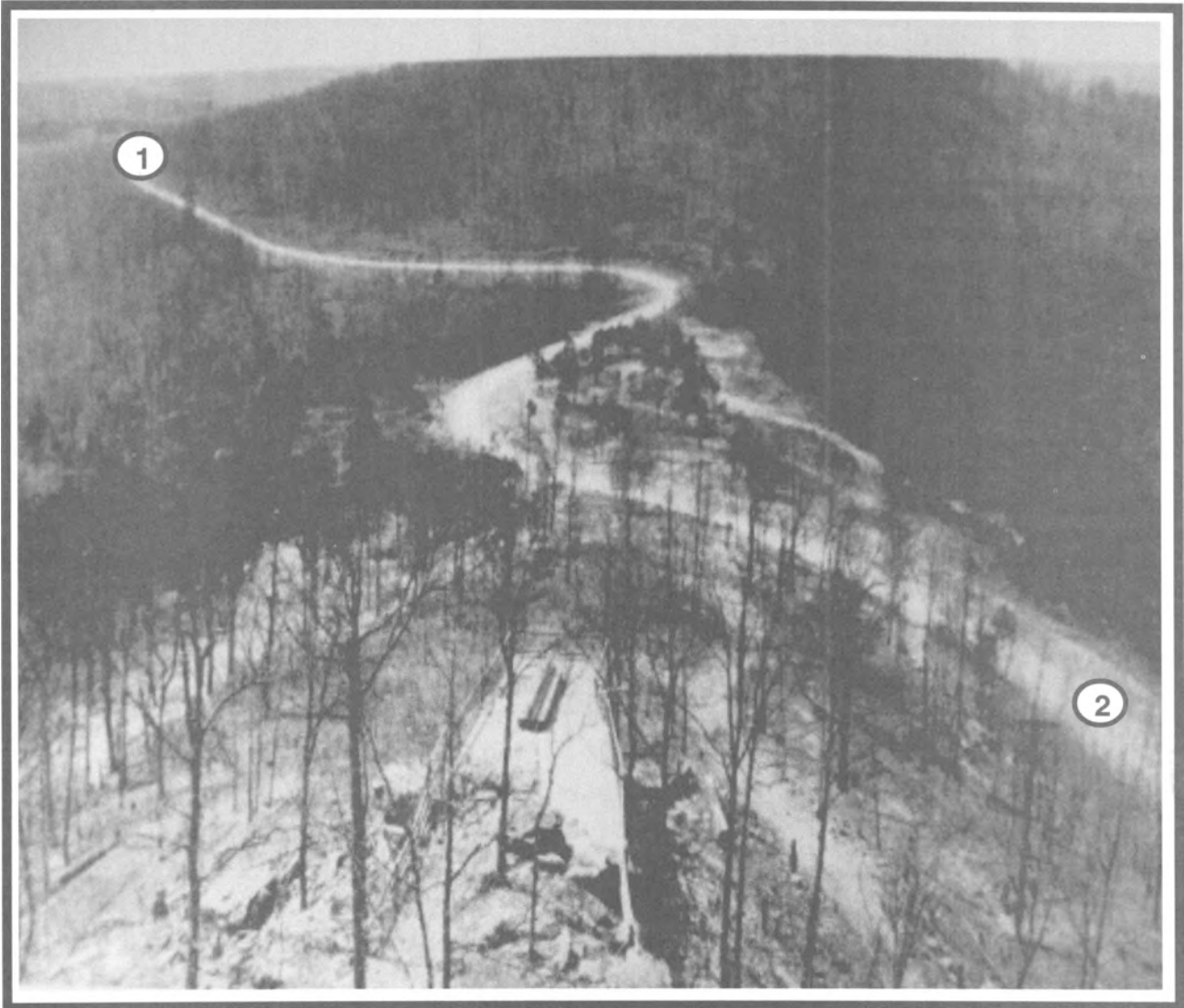
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# News From The Year 1958

## News From Huntsville and Around The World

### Submarine Sails under Pole

The crew of the nuclear submarine Nautilus was honored by a New York ticker-tape parade today for making history's first undersea voyage across the North Pole. The voyage took place last summer, but it was disclosed by the White House only this month.

The Nautilus began its historic trip on July 23 at Pearl Harbor and cruised north through the Bering Strait. It went under the polar ice cap at Point Barrow, Alaska, and remained submerged thereafter, sending its periscope up only once to check its bearings. The Nautilus passed beneath the polar ice pack at the North Pole at 11:45 a.m. August 3. Its trip across the polar region took four days, and the Nautilus ended its voyage at Iceland on August 7. Cmdr. W.R. Anderson, skipper of the Nautilus, was given the Legion of Merit medal, and all 116 crew members and observers were honored with citations.

Experts say the Nautilus'

polar voyage, which broke all records for submarine travel, has immense strategic significance, since it could open the Arctic for launching guided missiles from submarines. The trip also has potential commercial implications. It blazed a path that could be followed by cargo-carrying submarines. New Yorkers viewing today's parade cheered not only the submarine's crew but also Rear Admiral Hyman Rickover, the man given most credit for bringing the Navy's nuclear submarine fleet into existence.

### Little Richard enrolls at Oakwood

News of Little Richard giving up Rock and Roll has stunned his thousands of fans. The legendary performer has denounced Rock and Roll, calling it sinful and has announced plans to enroll at Oakwood College in Huntsville, Al., a prominent religious school.

### W. C. Handy, Father of the Blues Dies at 84

"The blues come from the man furthest down, the blues comes from nothingness, from want, from desire ..." So wrote W.C. Handy, a prolific composer who died today in New York. He was 84. Handy wrote "Memphis Blues," "St. Louis Blues" and many other enduring melodies.

Handy was born dirt poor in Alabama to a strict Methodist family that frowned on music. He served briefly as a music director in Huntsville, Alabama at A&M University. At age 31 recalling lean years as a trumpeter in St. Louis, he wrote his immortal song about the city.



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# Elvis Drafted

Elvis Presley traded in his rock-and-roll crown for a set of Army fatigues this morning when he reported to Local Draft Board 86 in Memphis, Tennessee.

The 23-year-old singer, who stands at the pinnacle of recording and movie stardom, arrived in the drizzling rain at 6:35, accompanied by his parents and manager, Colonel Tom Parker. He was met by hordes of newsmen, photographers, and teenaged fans distraught over the prospect of losing the pop idol to the armed services for the next two years.

Presley's monthly earnings will plummet from more than \$100,000 to just \$83.20. But the star, who sold over 40 million records in the past two years and just finished his fourth movie, seemed unperturbed.

"I'm looking forward to serving in the Army," he remarked. "I think it will be a great experience for me."

He will not get any special treatment," said an officer.

## Governor Closes Schools in Little Rock, Ark.

For the second year in a row, Little Rock, Arkansas, high schoolers look at the fall term with trepidation and uncertainty.

The Supreme Court unanimously voted today to reject an appeal by the Little Rock school board for a delay in racial integration of Central High School. Governor Orval Faubus, upset with the ruling, ordered four Little Rock high schools closed next Monday when the new term is to commence.

The governor's reply sets in motion a new political battle between the federal and state governments, the outcome of which will determine the future of school integration in the South.

## Vital Statistics

In the year 1958 Huntsville had:

- \* 825 marriages
- \* 298 divorces
- \* 6,800 people arrested
- \* 1,800 car wrecks
- \* 34 people killed in wrecks
- \* 6 murders
- \* 855 calls for firemen
- \* 11,279 students enrolled

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*Mikey, age 7*

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# Suicide Before Dishonor

by Mike Hall

Suicide is the outward manifestation of one's deep inner pain. Perhaps this is what Drs. Dement and Lowery were thinking as they quickly made their way to the cell where the prisoner lay bleeding.

Though the winter of 1886 had been relatively mild, the Huntsville jail was cold. All jails are cold, the doctors had decided. Cold, damp--no matter how attentive the jailers are to maintaining the building, the floor of a jail cell was always cold.

George T. Foote had been arrested earlier in the week and was being held for trial in the murder of a man known only as Phillips.

Phillips' charred body had been discovered in the ruins of the Calaboose (a small jail) at Gurley's Station. The initial in-

vestigation revealed that Phillips had been murdered and the Calaboose set ablaze in an attempt to make Phillips' death appear accidental.

Local citizens, when questioned, described the victim as a "harmless old citizen." Two men had been arrested in the case. Each were said to have known Phillips and were aware of the fact that he was thought to have money on his person. Each of the suspects had implicated George Foote as having been involved in the murder and in the burning of the Calaboose at Gurley's Station.

As Drs. Dement and Lowery

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entered Foote's cell, they found him lying on the floor bleeding profusely from a horrendous gash on his throat. Somehow, the forty year old prisoner had smuggled a horse fleam (a long dagger-like instrument veterinarians used to sever the artery of a horse needing to be bled) into his cell and used it to slash his own throat.

It was no surprise to the doctors that a killer would attempt to kill again. But the man whose throat they were hurriedly stitching was no killer. The fact that Foote had been driven to take a life was obvious. That he could stand accused of inflicting pain upon anyone other than himself was beyond their comprehension. For doctors Dement and Lowery, the surprise was not in Foote's attempted suicide. The surprise was that he had been incarcerated in the first place.

The Foote family name had denoted wealth and prominence for centuries. Their's had been a family of firsts. Richard Foote had been one of the first settlers of colonial Virginia. The Footes of England had been one of the first families to lose their wealth due to the War of the Roses. The substantial character of the family had taken them from poverty to riches in the new colonies of America.

George Foote was born and raised seven miles south of Athens, Alabama. His parents, Levin and Margaret Foote, had provided George with every advantage their wealth would allow. As a young boy, he had been raised in the midst of culture and refinement.

In 1861, Alabama seceded from the Union. At the age of fifteen. George was one of the first to join the group of young men taking their place in the Confederate army. For four long years, George Foote served with distinction.

Upon hearing of the charge against Foote, a former comrade in arms stated, "It is absolutely untrue! George Foote was too

brave a man to murder anyone. I am for him, and would acquit him if every man in Gurley swore to his guilt. I remember well when our army was retreating from Corinth, Mississippi. I was a wounded soldier and was left, at midnight, in a cold rain. George Foote came to the platform that I

**"If Lincoln was alive today, he'd roll over in his grave."**

*Gerald Ford*



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was lying on, took off his rubber coat, and spread it over me. He gave me half a loaf of sour bread -- all he had on this earth, and rode off with the retreating army in his shirt sleeves. That kind of a man don't murder or burn."

In 1864, after a long illness. George's father, Levin, died. There was no Will and everything but the original homestead was sold to pay off Levin's debts. Margaret would die five years later.

Like so many others returning from the war with no marketable skills, George soon fell prey to alcohol. A journalist of the day wrote. "He was an easy victim to the habit of intemperance, but never, even in drunkenness, did he forget the instincts of a gentleman, or fail to lift his hat and show every courtesy to a lady."

It was only after his attempted suicide that Foote began to relate the events leading up to his arrest.

In an interview, later published in The New South. (A Huntsville, Ala. newspaper) Foote, when asked the reason for his attempted suicide, stated. "I prefer dying to putting the strain on my name as a murderer. I am not guilty and had no more idea that Phillips was murdered than you have. I was drunk waiting for the last saloon to close... I don't know what else. I don't know who killed Phillips. I only remember seeing Childress set fire to the Calaboose while Seward stood guard over me... and this seems like a dream (Childress and Seward were the other two men accused of Phillips' murder). For God's sake, don't let the world think I am a murderer; they may hang me, kill me, do as they will with me -- even cut the stitches and let me die. But, tell the people no blood is on my hands. I was drunk, knocking around in the darkness, and those two scoundrels found me, after

men had gone to bed, and tried to put their crime on me. They could have had no other possible use for me. They could have murdered me or done anything else to me."

It soon became apparent to all that the only thing George Foote could be charged with was public drunkenness. In fact, his inebriated state had almost become the pathway for a perfect crime. After examining all the evidence, investigators pieced together the following:

On the night in question, Childress and Seward robbed and murdered Phillips. They left the scene long enough to find Foote, whom they had already spotted wandering aimlessly through the darkened streets in a drunken stupor.

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They then led Foote back to the scene of the crime, where Childress set fire to the Calaboose while Seward stood guard over Foote.

The events that unfolded after Foote's arrest could only be viewed as those of a man sorely grieved to have tarnished his family's name.

On January 22, 1886, the Grand Jury reported to the Circuit judge that the evidence was not sufficient to justify the indictment of George T. Foote. The sheriff immediately discharged Mr. Foote who, upon release, left for his home in Limestone County.

Suicide is the outward manifestation of one's deep inner pain. In the case of George T. Foote, it was the key that eventually unlocked the door to his freedom.



## An Odd Incident

*from 1885 newspaper*

Frank Miller of Huntsville was at the point of death recently after a lingering illness and it was reported that his brother John offered up a prayer for him.

In the course of the prayer John Miller said, "Oh, Lord, I am willing to give my life, if it be required, to save my beloved brother." A moment later he fell dead. His brother died that night, and the two were buried in the same grave.

**Before you criticize someone, you should walk a mile in his shoes. That way, when you criticize him, you're a mile away and you have his shoes.**

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At the height of the Confederate immigration, Brazil was involved in a war with neighboring Paraguay. Many of the recent emigres took temporary assignments helping to train the Brazilian army.

In at least one case, when the Brazilians were in danger of being overrun, an ex-Confederate major raised a company of ex-Confederates, and while fighting under the Confederate flag, successfully repulsed the attack.

During the 1st World War, in 1917, several sons of the original immigrants traveled to Rio De Janeiro, where they met with the American Consul, and joined the United States Army.

They listed their nationality as "Confederate."

In 1932, Brazil was involved in a civil war. Many of its states seceded, citing, "states rights" as the reason. The Confederados chose the side of secession but due to a lack of supplies were once again defeated.

If the Rebels had won, the seceding states would have been known as the "Confederate States of America."



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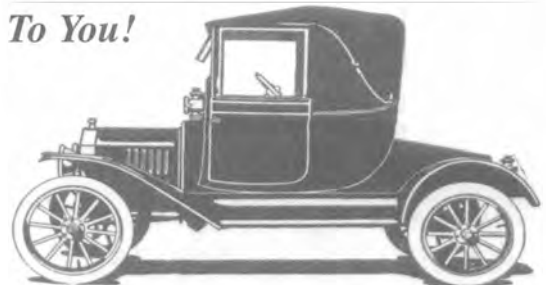
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# The Confederados

This year, in a little church amidst the jungles of Brazil, a small group of people will gather to celebrate their heritage. The church will be decorated in its glory and there will be picnics on the grounds.

The people will sing the songs of the South and will reminisce of ancestral homes. They will feel nostalgic for a time and place in Alabama, made familiar to them only by the stories handed down by their ancestors. Some of the people may talk wishfully of someday visiting Alabama, to pay respects to their forefathers and their heritage. But in the deepest parts of their minds they know it will never happen. They can never go home.

They are the Confederados.

Contrary to most published accounts, the Federal troops were not benevolent occupiers of the South at the close of the Civil War. If anything they were one of the most brutal occupying armies ever to set foot on American soil. Former proud Confederates were imprisoned, their homes burned and their wives and children made destitute. What few possessions they had managed to hang on to during the long war were now pillaged and destroyed by the blue-coated hordes.

Mere privates in the Union

army and petty officials of the Freedman's Bureau now held the power of life and death over men who had once led tens of thousands of soldiers into battle. The right to vote was lost, there was no appellate court system and often the ex-soldiers had to get permission to travel even a few miles from home.

Most appalling to the Confederates, however, was the hated oath of allegiance on which the Federal's insisted. Many Southerners saw the oath as a repudiation of everything for which their loved ones had fought and died.

From the moment General Lee surrendered at Appomattox, many Southerners had decided to immigrate to a distant country rather than live under the iron heel of the hated "d a m n yankees."

The first major exodus occurred



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when General Joseph Shelby, along with the remaining generals, met with seven Confederate governors to make plans at Marshall, Texas. After weeks of debate the group decided to cross the Rio Grande into Mexico and offer their arms to Emperor Maximilian rather than surrender. At the Fort Duncan Club at Eagle Pass, Texas hangs an oil painting of the event. It shows the tattered Confederate troops, drawn up in columns and standing at attention as the Stars and Bars were furled for the last time.

The brigade, complete with artillery and wagon trains, were attacked countless times on the 1,200 mile march by Juarist forces opposed to Maximilian. Though suffering numerous casualties, the brigade arrived intact in Mexico City in August of 1865.

Emperor Maximilian, impressed with the determination of the Confederates, offered them the protection of the Mexican government and cheap lands to colonize. Most of the ex-soldiers chose to settle at Carlotta, an area that reminded many of the colonists of their lost southern homes.

Unfortunately, within a short time the emperor was overthrown, throwing the country

into chaos. Many Mexicans, remembering the war they had lost to the United States years earlier, took their vengeance on the new colonists.

What happened next is best described by quoting A.F Rolle, one of the exiles who later wrote of his experience:

"The colony was destroyed almost overnight. With few weapons, supplies and practically no earth-works, the defenders grimly dug hasty defenses along the beaches. The situation became progressively more desperate. Some of the boats on which the Confederates hoped to escape were captured by hostile natives who put the colonists to the torch and threw the corpses into the ocean."

Many of the ill-fated colonists reluctantly returned to the United States. The majority however, chose to look elsewhere, preferring to face the unknown rather than return to a land on which they had turned their backs.

Dom Pedro II, the Emperor of Brazil, had for years been trying to lure American colonists to settle the wild regions of the Amazon jungle. With the collapse of the Mexican colony, many of the Confederates began seriously considering the South American country as a possible

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home. Emissaries from Brazil offered the colonists cheap land and agreed to help subsidize transportation costs for those willing to make the journey.

Another factor that undoubtedly helped persuade many of the Southerners was the fact that slavery in Brazil was still legal. Also, especially appealing to them was Dom Pedro's decision not to make them swear allegiance to Brazil.

Immigration companies began springing up all across the defeated Confederacy. Such notables as Col. William Norris, an ex-Alabama state senator and Ben and Dalton Yancey, sons of the indomitable William Lowdes Yancey, sold what few possessions they owned and chartered passage for the new land.

The voyage of one ship, The Derby, was probably typical in many ways of all the groups who made the exodus. Though most of the passengers had once been wealthy, they now possessed an average of less than \$200 per person. The ship carried 154 passengers and was crammed with household goods and farm implements. Almost all of the immigrants, unsure of the dangers that lay ahead, carried firearms and a plentiful supply of ammunition. Others, less practical, insisted on taking their dogs and cats with them.

The United States government, wary of so many people immigrating to a foreign country, tried to stop the exodus. Earlier it had sent General Sheridan to pa-

**"Marriage changes passion. All of a sudden, you're in bed with a relative."**

*John Nelson, Arab*

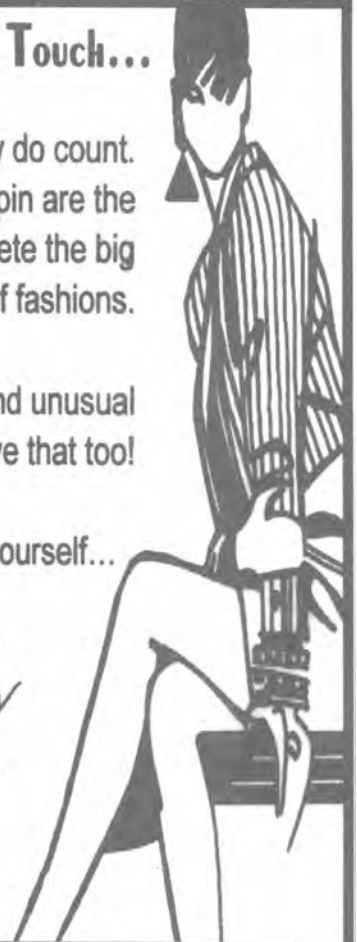
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trol the Mexican border and block the efforts of Confederates trying to leave. Now with the Brazilian exodus underway the U. S. government began using different tactics. Port authorities condemned ships waiting for passengers and emigres were turned back for not possessing passports.

Legally, the only way the colonists could leave was to have passports, which Federal authorities refused to issue. Fortunately, the moral qualities of the occupying Union officials were such that a standard \$500 bribe usually sufficed for the ships to leave ports unhindered.

Just how many Confederates chose exile in Brazil has always been a question shrouded in mystery. Charles Nathan, a resident of Brazil in the 1870s estimated 12,000 Southerners immigrated through the port of Rio De Janiero between the years 1867 and 1871. Brazilian authorities, carefully noting the

many ports the emigres entered, have estimated that possibly as many as 20,000 Confederates and their families made the voyage to Brazil.

United States records are strangely quiet about the subject.

Upon arrival in Brazil, the first stop for many was the Government House, a large hotel in Rio De Jantero that the Brazilian government had placed at the disposal of the Southern immigrants.

There the immigrants were first exposed to the culture and habits of the country that was destined to become their home. Some of the customs astounded them, as Eliza Kerr wrote soon after her ar-

rival. "I shall never forget," she penned after witnessing her first torrential downpour during the rainy season, "seeing a procession of huge African Negroes carrying elegantly dressed

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gentlemen across the streets. The gentlemen, wearing silk hats and carrying umbrellas, would stand bolt upright, holding themselves stiff, and the Negroes would pick them up about the knees and wade the torrents, carrying them safe and dry to the other side."

Brazilian natives, unable to pronounce the word confederate, soon dubbed the exiles "the Confederados."

The first immigrants usually settled far inland, away from civilization. Charles Gunter, who led a group of 200, mostly from Alabama, settled in a wild, untamed region known as the Rio Duce. The trip required many days travel by canoe, with the families camping on the mosquito infested river banks at night.

Much as their forefathers had done years earlier in Alabama, the settlers began building homes and clearing fields. Within a short time, as more settlers arrived, a prosperous community was born, complete with a school, shops and a flag pole with the Confederate banner proudly proclaiming their heritage.

Gunter's group, like many others, had settled on land that was extremely fertile. The rich soil and moderate temperatures allowed for a yearlong growing season, which produced an abundance of crops during the first years.

Sad to say, there was no place to sell the crops. Roads that had been promised by Dom Pedro never materialized (some of the areas would not be reached by roads until 1972). The only other way to reach the markets was by river which was

too shallow for large boats and often times treacherous for canoes.

Within a few years many of the families began moving to an area near Santa Barbara where a railway was being built.

The new community, simply called "the station" for many years, soon became the nucleus of the Confederate immigrants. Cotton fields were planted and

elegant homes, reminding one of Vicksburg or Montgomery, were built. A cemetery came into being when a local Catholic official denied burial to a deceased exile. A small chapel was later built on the grounds that to this day serves as the official Confederate church.

Brazilian authorities, impressed with the Confederados, soon renamed the station to



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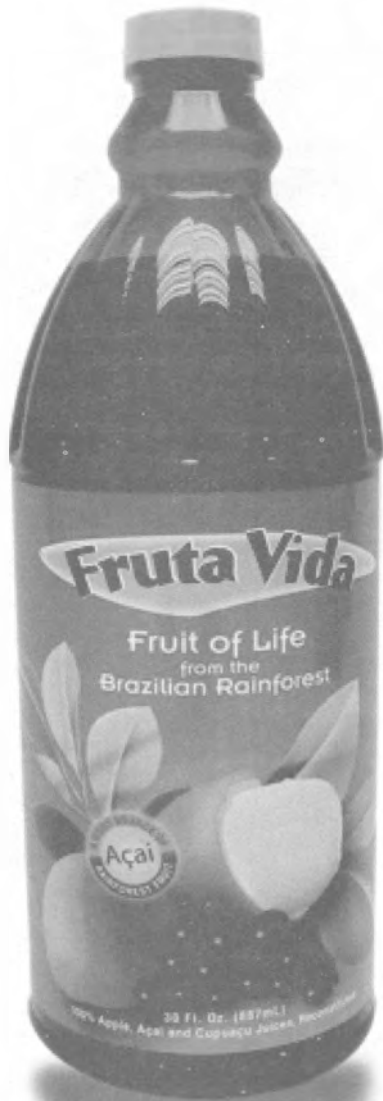
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*Philip Taylor, age 12*

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"Americano," in honor of them.

The exiles still considered themselves American, however. They were Confederates, but still Americans. Many of them still held a vague hope of some day returning home when conditions in the South improved. It only took two weeks for a letter to reach them from Alabama and every piece of news from "back home" was eagerly digested.

Unhappily, newspapers in the states were entering a phase of yellow journalism, complete with lurid accounts of lynchings, race wars and criminal politicians gracing the front pages of every edition. For the exiles in Brazil, the newspapers only served to reinforce their belief that anarchy was running amok in the states.

Slowly the years passed, with

the Confederates remaining a culture unto themselves. The children were bound by oath to marry none but Americans, a tradition not broken until well into the twentieth century. Most of the settlers

had become fluent in Portuguese, but refused to speak anything but English at home.

General Robert E. Lee's birthday was observed as a holiday and the speeches of Jefferson

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Davis and William Yancey were taught in the schools. On special occasions the old Confederates would don their gray uniforms and recount stories of valor on far-away battlefields.

Time was standing still for the Confederados.

As the world entered into the twentieth century, many of the exiles, now growing old, began to dream of returning home before they died. Though they were still unsure of the news filtering back from the states, their biggest concern was whether or not they would be welcomed back into a society they had turned their backs on.

In 1906, Elihu Root, Secretary of State for the United States, paid an official visit to Brazil to attend a meeting of the Pan American Union. On the agenda was a train trip, with scheduled stops at many stations along the way.

Word was received by Root that a delegation of Americans, at Americana, wished to speak to him. Though Americana was not a scheduled visit, Root nevertheless ordered the train to stop.

Waiting for him on the platform was a delegation of almost 400 Confederados and their families. A large Confederate flag adorned the front of the station.

Root's official biography, written by Ambassador Phillip Jessup, describes the event:

"Secretary of State Root had an experience

which after twenty years he still could not describe without a break in his voice and tears in his eyes. A request was made that the train be stopped at a little station known as "American City." There, after the Civil War, had settled one of those small groups of Southerners who believed exile was preferable than

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to live under the "Yankees." Most of them were from Alabama.

"It was after dark when the train stopped at the little shack of a station several miles outside of town. The whole population was assembled, old white-haired survivors of the original exodus from Alabama, their full grown sons and women with babes in their arms, standing in a mass looking up at the cabinet official from their old fatherland, their faces lighted by flickering torches and lanterns.

"Their aged spokesman said they wanted his advice about returning to the United States. Root was deeply moved as he advised them not to return. They would be strangers in a new South with little chance to fit back into their former life.

"The old men wept and the women wept, and the torchlight glittered on their streaming faces as the train pulled out of the station, the Secretary of State of the United States standing on the rear platform, tears running down his cheeks unchecked."

The Confederados had come face to face with the reality of perpetual exile.

Slowly, with thoughts of returning to Alabama being forced from their minds, the community begin to assimilate itself into the Brazilian culture. "Confederate" colleges were formed with many of its graduates becoming some of the most successful businessmen in Brazil. Elsie Houston, great-grand niece of the immortal Sam Houston, became one of the country's most popular singers. The Pyle

family, originally from Marshall County, began a small company, specializing in a tasty orange drink that would later sell its products in the United States under the name "Crush."

In 1944, the last of the old Confederate exiles died. His body was placed in the cemetery among the ranks of all the other soldiers in gray who had preceded him. His coffin was draped in the Confederate flag.

Though many of the descendants adapted to the Brazilian culture, in their hearts they remained Confederates. The small church was still packed to overflowing every Sunday. Regular fried chicken dinners were still held among the tombstones of

the original emigres. Though no one living in the community had any memories of Alabama, many of the descendants still

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*Becky Prince, Madison*

considered it "home."

In 1972, the governor of Georgia, Jimmy Carter, along with his wife Rosalynn and his aide Jodie Powell were invited to visit Americana during an official visit.

Surprised that such a colony existed, Carter readily agreed to the request. Over two hundred descendants of the proud Confederados gathered at the cemetery to welcome him. As Carter walked slowly through the cemetery reading the names inscribed on the granite stones, he paused at one near the gate. The inscription read, "Private Johnathan Ellsworth, drummer boy of the First Arkansas Brigade."

Overcome with emotion, Carter quickly turned his face from the crowds as tears welled in his eyes.

Though Rosalynn Carter had no idea at the time, the grave of her great-uncle, W.S. Wise, a diehard Confederate, lay only a few feet from where she was standing.

In an interview with the Atlanta Journal, Carter later stated, "None of them looked upon their ancestors as mistaken. They didn't feel any self-pity."

"The most remarkable thing," he went on to say, "was when they spoke, they sounded just like Southerners."

The city of Americana has grown to a bustling metropolis of almost two-hundred thousand people today. There are only a few of the antebellum homes still surviving, squeezed in between office buildings and parking lots.

Traditions of the Old South, once lovingly nourished by its children, are fast becoming a part of Brazil's forgotten history.



## Unusual Display at Theater

from 1923 newspaper

There is an unusual and exceedingly interesting display in the lobby of the beautiful Lyric Theatre during the "Daughters of the Rich" screening, the first to attract attention being a big cake of ice at the top of which appears the sign reading "The Coolest Place in Town", an electric fan playing from behind the big ice cake inside of which is frozen a patriotic display of the American flag, a horse shoe and a beautiful wreath of flowers.

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# Huntsville Laws From ....?

The following are actual laws taken from the Huntsville City Code. What year do you think they were in effect? The answer is on page 59.

- It shall be unlawful for any person who knows, or has good reason to believe, that he has a contagious disease to come within the corporate limits of the city.

- It shall be unlawful for any railroad car or engine to run within the corporate limits at a speed greater than ten miles an hour.

- Any person who exhibits or aids in exhibiting any jack or stallion on the public square shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

- It shall be unlawful for any person to live in adultery or to commit fornication.

- It shall be unlawful for any person to disturb any female by rude or indecent behavior or by profane language.

- It shall be unlawful for any person who is of full age to bet or hazard any money or any-

thing of value with a minor.

- It shall be unlawful for any prostitute or woman of ill fame to ride or walk with any male person over the age of 16 years in any public place in the city.

- No interment of the of the remains of any white person shall be made in any other place within the city other than within the grounds of Maple Hill Cemetery.

- Peddling of farm products in the city between the hours of sunrise and 12:00 noon on any Wednesday or any Saturday is prohibited.

- It shall be unlawful for any prostitute to be found walking the public streets or visiting any public place af-

ter 9:00 p.m.

- Any person carrying a lighted candle or lamp into any stable or barn, unless the same is secured in a tin, horn, glass, or other safe lantern, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.



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- No meat, poultry, fish or game shall be hung or exposed for sale outside of any shop or store.
- It shall be unlawful for any person to bathe in the Big Spring between the hours of 4:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m.
- It shall be unlawful for any person to walk or lie on the grass or lie down on any bench or seat in any city park.
- It shall be unlawful for any female to enter any pool or billiard room at any time.
- It shall be unlawful for any person to carry concealed about his person a bowie knife, pistol, brass knuckles, or other deadly weapon.
- It shall be unlawful for any occupant or a house or tenement to throw filthy water into the streets sidewalks or drains of the city.
- It shall be unlawful for any person to engage in any kind of ball playing on the streets, sidewalks or alleys of the city.
- It shall be unlawful for any male person to be found talking to a prostitute in any public place in the city.

## The Market House Rules from 1870

The city marshal shall have the following powers and perform the following duties:

- He shall, on the first Monday in January every year, rent to the highest bidder all the stalls, tables, benches, and blocks in the house.
- He shall open the market every day in the year, except Sundays, and on every Saturday from one o'clock till dark.
- From the first day of April till the first day of October, he shall open it at daylight and continue it till eight o'clock that evening.
- From the first day of October till the first day of April, he shall open it at daylight and continue it till nine o'clock that evening.
- In each case he shall open and close it by ringing the market bell.
- He shall examine all the meats and other commodities offered for sale, and should he find any of them unsound, tainted, sour, or otherwise unfit for food, he shall order such to be removed from the market.
- He shall decide all disputes between buyer and seller, touch-

- ing the weight or measure of any article sold
- No person shall take any dog into or about the market during market hours.
- No person shall at any hour lounge, sit or lie on the benches in front of the market house.

  
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I was in high school and worked some during the summer months and in a few years, I even got to be a "WAAY Starlighter" (Disk Jockey to most people) known as Dee Scott.

I didn't have a great voice and was assigned the midnight to dawn shift. It didn't matter to me; I got to play the great popular songs of the day and a fair amount of real Rock and Roll which I loved.

A few months after MD III (he was MD III and I was MD IV) took over and changed the format, he said he got a petition from a number of previous listeners of WHBS that wanted him and his Rock & Roll music to leave town. He always said that he knew WAAY had made an impact when he got that petition.

Another feature of Top 40 Radio was the contest and promotions. A promotion was either something on the air or live at a public location designed to attract people and publicize the radio station during the event.

"Promotions" was something MD III and my mother, Kirby Smith, really loved to do. They wanted them to be fun, sometimes silly, sometimes outrageous, sometimes a big prize that could be won or anything that would get talk among listeners and publicity for the Radio Station.

One of the most memorable "promotions" my father and WAAY Radio ever did was a copy of something similar that a station had done in another city. Anyone who remembers this event will be "waay" ahead of me telling this story once I tell you the name of

the promotion was "Dollar Drop." The idea of dollar drop was that WAAY was giving away \$500



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in CASH. That was a very large sum of money in 1959 when this event was cooked up. The cash would consist of one dollar bills and if someone was lucky enough, they might get all one of the bills, but that was not likely as the money was to be dropped off the top of the Russel Erskine Hotel, one bill at a time. MD III figured with enough talk on the radio before the event, it should attract a fair sized crowd and people should be talking about it both before and after the event. He certainly was right about the talk after, but more of that in a moment.

The big day arrives and between every record played, the WAAY Starlighter was announcing the count down to Dollar Drop. Then the broadcast switched to a live broadcast using a two-way radio from the hotel itself. As the moment arrived for the start of the dollar drop, people were walking and running from blocks away. Some people listening on their radio and seeing that traffic was not moving for blocks around the Russel Erskine were abandoning their cars and rushing up to the streets around the hotel so as to get their chance to grab money as it floated down from the sky.

The dollars begin to fall, and people were screaming with glee, and running to wherever bills would fall. Several people were pushed down and it was clear that the event might get out of hand due to the size of the crowd and the lack of any crowd control on the ground. It had never occurred to anyone that they might need police, lots of them, to keep the event orderly and traffic flowing through the city.

### *Answer to "Huntsville Laws"*

These laws were taken from the 1954 Code for the City of Huntsville

As the crowd appeared to be getting totally out of control, and less than \$50 had been dropped, MD III realized it better end pretty quickly or there might be a major riot and fights about the falling money and he and WAAY Radio would be to blame. Plus, the City of Huntsville was grid-locked for blocks around. He ordered all the rest of the money to be dropped as a single handful. It dispersed over a pretty wide area as the Starlighter on the top of the building hurled the remaining wad hard into the air.

The money was quickly all scooped up and no one went to the hospital. The big promotion was over. MD III breathed a big

sigh of relief and said he'd think twice before he'd ever do an event like that again.

But even if he had not concluded to abandon what he had thought might be an annual event, the Huntsville Police Department assured him that he would NEVER do something like that again or he and WAAY Radio would indeed be leaving town, probably on a rail or worse. The Mayor was not thrilled about this either. Mayor R.B. "Spec" Searcy, it seems, did not have much of a sense of humor either. It got major coverage in the Huntsville Times. The newspaper staff people knew that would never have happened un-

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der the old ownership.

M. D. Smith, III was an avid believer in what P.T. Barnum said and he quoted it often, "I don't care what they say about me as long as they spell my name right." He was certainly right about this event and they did spell WAAY correctly.

The station got a ton of publicity and thankfully no major injuries or lawsuits. He had to promise Huntsville Police he'd never do another "promotion" like that again and that he'd have to get permission to stage any kind of promotion on city property.

I believe the next big promotion might have been the arrival of Santa in a chopper at Parkway City (private property) and kids breaking thru the roped off area just as the chopper was landing ... but ... that's a story for another time.

WAAY Radio had certainly come to town and created memories that few will ever forget if they were there.



"Free Ducks. You catch."

Seen in recent classified ads

### Speed Limits

In 1909 the City Council passed an ordinance making it unlawful for automobiles and motorcycles to travel at a speed greater than 12 mph.

It also required that they blow their horns at every street crossing.

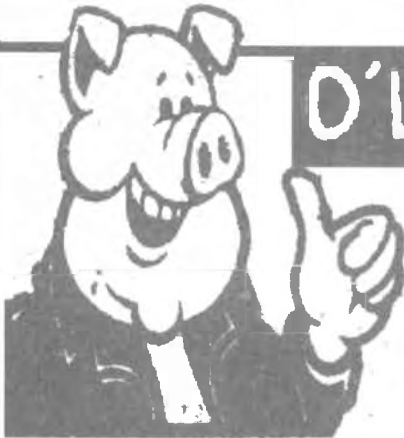
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# 19th Alabama Infantry Regiment

The original 19th Alabama Infantry Regiment was mustered into service 14 August, 1861 in Huntsville, Alabama. It served and fought with the Army of Tennessee through the war, seeing fighting at various battles like Shiloh, Murfreesboro, Chattanooga and Franklin.

They served under the commands of Lieutenant General Joseph Wheeler and General Longstreet.

Lieutenant General Joseph Wheeler, at the time of the battle at Shiloh a Colonel, said this of the Regiment, "The Regiment here exhibited an example of cool, heroic courage which would do credit to soldiers of long experience in battle. Subjected as they were to a deadly fire of artillery and a crossfire of infantry, they stood their ground with firmness and delivered their fire rapidly, but with cool deliberations and good effect."

Of the 650 men fielded those two rainy days at Shiloh 1862, the 19th lost 110 men killed and 240 men wounded.

They fought for four long hard years of the war through famine, untold personal sacrifice and in the face of the enemy. With only 76 men to fill its ranks on 19 April 1865, the Regiment surrendered.

These soldiers of the 19th, along with many other men on both sides of the Mason Dixon Line, fought for what they saw as right. We should not ever forget the sacrifices of all these brave men who fought and served during this bloody time of our nation's history.



## RECRUITS, READ!!

If you have an interest and express the desire to become involved in a growing activity enjoyed by many others like you who not only read and study Civil War history, but want to take the opportunity to re-live it, Contact the 19th Alabama Infantry Regiment Recruiting Officer today. Our reenacting company is a tax-exempt 501(c) (3), non-for-Profit, living history and reenactment organization. Our goals are to educate and inform the general public as to the life and times of the Southern soldier and civilian by our activities in Living Histories, Battle Reenactments, School Programs and Memorial Dedications. In addition, we seek to foster a sense of historical pride in our heritage throughout our county. We also do a Federal infantry impression, as the 42nd Indiana Volunteers. For more information go to [www.19thalabama.org](http://www.19thalabama.org) or email our Recruiting Officer at [rec19thalabama@hotmail.com](mailto:rec19thalabama@hotmail.com)

[www.19thalabama.org](http://www.19thalabama.org)

**Recruiting Officer:**

[rec19thalabama@hotmail.com](mailto:rec19thalabama@hotmail.com)

**Home Base:  
Huntsville, Alabama**



# Living Hard, Dying Young

by Steve Stolz

He was young, handsome and lived life to the fullest. Twenty-four hours in a day was not enough to do everything he wanted to do. He lived on the edge. If thrills and excitement didn't come to him, he would go find them.

My brother, Jimmy Stolz, was born in Huntsville in 1947. He was good looking according to all his girlfriends, with his lean frame, fair skin and dark hair. He was charismatic and made friends easily. He was very mechanical and could fix about anything. He despised school. By the time he reached the age of 16, he had failed school in three different years yet he was far from dumb. He genuinely dreaded school and knew exactly what he was going to do when he reached 16 and that was to quit school. That is exactly what he did.

Normally when you look within a family you see many familiarities. Generally brothers will have similar personalities. His personality and mine were different, if not the opposite of each other. He was 1 1/2 years older than me, so I saw him as a big brother. Naturally I would follow him around when he would allow me.

As children, we would fish wherever we could find water. It is strange but Jimmy is the person that sticks out in these memories. When we were 10 and 12 years old, we went on a fishing trip with three other boys. We fished and camped overnight on Limestone Creek in the Mooresville area. It rained on us all night. The next morning my brother heard a frog croaking. When he found where the sound was coming from he

also discovered a copperhead snake. The snake had eaten the frog. Jimmy killed the snake and cut the frog out of the snake. The frog hopped away.

A year later on a campout in Decatur with just the two of us, it started to thunder about 8:00 in the evening. Remembering being rained on all night long the previous year, he decided he wasn't going to let it happen again. He took off walking and I was right behind him. We walked to our home on 9th. Avenue. We got home at 5:00 in the morning. We had walked about 25 miles.

He loved fast cars. His first car was a 1954 Ford. He took his car to a field in Hazel Green and was out in a field cutting doughnuts, scratching off and going around in circles as fast as the car would go. His day ended when he turned the car over.

His next car was a 1956 Ford with an overdrive transmission. That car would fly. I was scared to death as he got it to 135 mph on Highway 231. He would race his car at the Huntsville Drag Strip in the late 1960's. He won several trophies with his 1957 Ford.

He was fearless. He would not back down from a fight. Once he fought a guy 6" taller than he was. He didn't win the fight but he kept coming back for more.

He married at the age of 20 and had a son. Working in the heating and cooling business, one day he asked for my help with a job atop Monte Sano. After the job was finished and we had pulled his work truck out of the driveway, we ran out of gas. He coasted the truck all the way down Monte Sano Boulevard, running every stop sign and coasted into a service station across California Street.

I married on March 7, 1970. Eight days later on March 15, I received word that my brother was dead. He had died on a camping trip from carbon monoxide poisoning. He was 22 years old. True to his personality, he lived hard and died young. I still miss him to this day.



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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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# When life was simple...



By the 1890's, the Madison County Courthouse was showing its age. It had gone through the Civil War with Union soldiers camped on its grounds. Reconstruction saw politicians making fiery speeches from its steps. Although the roof was leaking and some of the wood was rotting, it continued to be used until 1914 when a new courthouse was built.

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